



JIMMY SILVER'S GUILTY!

(Continued from previous page.)

position. He simply stated that his knowledge was in the hands of the Fourth team.

He was caught on the pole from the ladder and advanced on Rowland.

Rowland looked away, the Fourth team following him up.

There was a line of excitement and anticipation at the sight of a ladder at the window.

The janitor, starting, crowded back.

Rowland came lightning from the study doorway, hurriedly into the passage by the door of the Fourth team.

Rowland called along the passage, and an eye, glared down.

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THE 2nd CHAPTER. MERRY'S PROGRESS.

Merrill was a successful lad. Paul and George, his great friends, regarded him especially. He was just finished in Study No. 4, and Merrington had left a reputation as a student.

The 2nd Chapter. A Precipitous Fall.

Rowland of the Sixth looked up with a smile as he descended without a knock, and Merrington of the Fourth came in.

The 3rd Chapter.

Rowland called along the passage, and an eye, glared down.

The 4th Chapter.

Rowland called along the passage, and an eye, glared down.

Day. "There he is at the window."

The juniors gave a yell.

"Yah! Bulky!"

Beaumont glared out at the crowd. At any other time he would have smiled forth with a cane. But the hapless bully was only anxious now for the affair to drop and be forgotten. He almost trembled at the thought of the Head's wrath if Dr. Chisholm should see the marks he had left on Newcome's back. The juniors had the upper hand for once, and they meant to let the bully of the Sixth understand it. Beaumont understood it only too well.

"Clear off, you fags!" he called from the window.

"Yah!"

"Bully!"

"Rotter!"

"Go and eat cake!"

Mornington, keeping out of sight in the study, grinned. Tommy Dodd's little demonstration could not have happened better for his purpose.

"Order!" rapped out Tommy Dodd. "We've come here to give Beaumont a serenade, not to yell. Now, then!"

"Will you clear off?" howled Beaumont.

"No fear!"

"Yah!"

"Don't you like serenades, Beaumont?" chuckled Oswald. "Go it!"

"Go it!" yelled Flynn. "File in!"

And the fags began to chant:

"Who's the rottenest bully at Rookwood?"

"Beaumont!"

"Who was kicked out of Jimmy Silver's study?"

"Beaumont!"

"Who ought to be sacked from the school?"

"Beaumont!"

"Who's a sneak and a funk?"

"Beaumont!"

"Who smokes cigarettes in his study?"

"Beaumont!"

"Who's afraid to report us to the Head?"

"Beaumont!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Beaumont's face was white with rage. The merry fags were warming to their work, and their united voices rang across the quadrangle. Beaumont was in a momentary dread of a master coming on the scene.

Fortunately for him, Bulkeley of the Sixth was in his study, and he threw up the window and looked out, frowning.

"Silence, there!" he called out.

"Oh, really, Bulkeley, we're only serenading Beaumont!" said Tommy Dodd, in an injured tone.

"Cut off at once!" said the captain of Rookwood, frowning. "Do you hear? I'll be out with a cane in two jiffies!"

"I say, Bulkeley—"

"Cut off!" roared Bulkeley.

The juniors, greatly disappointed, cleared off. There was no gain saying the captain of Rookwood.

Bulkeley, with a dark frown, slammed down his window. Beaumont's humiliation was shared, to some extent, by all the Sixth, and the Rookwood captain felt it keenly.

Beaumont turned from his window, almost choking with rage. Mornington regarded him with a cynical grin.

"You've got a lot of that to expect till it blows over, or till Newcome's back gets well," he remarked.

"Jimmy Silver's at the bottom of it, of course. You know, they'd never dare to back up like this without him."

Beaumont clenched his hands convulsively.

"I'll make the young hound suffer for it!" he muttered thickly.

"I'm showing you the way!"

"Hang you!"

"It's as easy as rollin' off a form," said Mornington. "You'll have to wait a few days till this blows over, that's all, and be a bit civil to Jimmy Silver for a day or two, so there'll be no suspicion. Then you can be down on him, before he gets up to some new trick against you."

"I can't do it. It—it's too risky!" muttered Beaumont.

"No risk for you."

"But, but about the banknote; if it's to be put somewhere—"

Beaumont's scruples had evidently vanished, and he was thinking only of the possibilities and the risk.

"You won't have to do that," said Mornington, sinking his voice. "You'll simply miss the banknote—after takin' the number. There'll be a search, an' it will be found hidden about Jimmy Silver somewhere. You won't know how it got there."

"You mean, you will—"

"Never mind that. I guaranteed that the fiver turns up where it's wanted and when it's wanted. That's enough for you."

"I shouldn't really know whether

he'd stolen it or not, if it's like that," the Sixth-Former muttered.

"Of course you wouldn't," said Mornington, his lip curling. "In fact, you'd know he had stolen it, unless he could explain. If he can't explain, he's welcome to. He'll have a fair inquiry and strict justice."

"I—I'll think about it," muttered the prefect, passing his hand over his damp forehead.

"Do!" said Mornington, rising. "Better think at the same time where you're goin' to get ten pounds from me, if you don't do as I suggest. And think, at the same time, how you're goin' to deal with Juey Hook when he puts the screw on, as he will, at a tip from me."

"Get out of my study, you—you criminal!" said Beaumont hoarsely.

Mornington laughed, and lounged out of the study.

The 5th Chapter. Missing Money!

"Blessed if I catch on!" said Jimmy Silver.

That. He might have been hoping to hear the end of the affair by placing the Co., but as a matter of fact, Jimmy Silver was not joining in the set made against the bully. The Fistical Four considered that they were even with him, and so long as he let them alone, they were willing to leave him alone.

Beaumont's civility was amazing. He really looked as if he had received good from the lesson the Co. had given him, and had resolved to turn over a new leaf.

That was a possible explanation; but Jimmy Silver admitted that it was unlikely. Beaumont was too confirmed a bully to change his habits all of a sudden. Yet he had changed them—at least, so far as the Fistical Four were concerned.

And Jimmy Silver confessed that he did not catch on.

Lovell and Italy and Newcome were puzzled, too.

"Well, if the cad's turning over a new leaf, it will give our study a rest," remarked Lovell. "Let's get down to the footer."

"Beaumont asked me to fag at

Still, you're not my fag, and if you don't want—"

"I don't mind a bit; in fact, I'd like it," said Jimmy.

"Then run up to my study for my ball," said Beaumont.

"Right-ho!"

Jimmy cut off to the house, and Beaumont threw off his coat and went into goal. Beaumont hoped to keep goal for the first eleven that season, and he was somewhat keen on practice.

Jimmy Silver played centre-half in the junior eleven, but he could play forward with distinction, and he was a deadly kick at goal. Even for a senior player it was good enough practice, stopping Jimmy's shots. Still, it was an honour from a Sixth-Former and a member of the First Eleven, and it was very surprising from Jimmy's old enemy.

Jimmy returned with Beaumont's footer in a few minutes, and the practice began. Beaumont found that it was not easy to keep the leather out of goal, though he had only one player to defend against. Jimmy had a trick of changing his

Bulkeley, in his chery way, apparently not noticing the Mollero prefect's sneer. "Beaumont, old man, you'll have to back up a bit if you're going to keep goal for the First. I should hardly have thought you'd let a fag beat you in goal."

Beaumont grinned at his teeth.

"It was really an accident, of course," he said.

"Oh, rot!" said Bulkeley. "Silver is a tricky little beggar; but he beat you fair and square, and you oughtn't to have let him. You'll have to grind a bit at practice."

Beaumont walked away without replying, his brow very dark.

He returned to his study.

His football lay there, where Jimmy Silver had replaced it. Beaumont closed the door, and passed to and fro in the study.

"He's been here, and nobody else with him," he muttered. "He can't deny that. And—and the banknote—when I say it's missing—"

He wiped his brow with his handkerchief. "Hang him! Hang him! He's done me out of my chance for the First Eleven very likely! Hang him!"

Neville of the sixth came into the study a little later, and found Beaumont at work at his table.

"Busy?" asked Neville. "I was going to remind you that you haven't paid your sub."

"I told you this morning I hadn't any change," said Beaumont, without looking up. "Unless you can change a fiver for me, I can't pay up."

"Just what I can do," said Neville. "I've brought you the tin."

"Oh," said Beaumont. "So trot out your fiver, and I'll give you a receipt," said Neville.

Neville was grinning a little. All the Sixth knew that Beaumont had been hard up of late, and Neville half suspected that the story of the fiver was an excuse for gaining time. Beaumont was a good deal late with his subscription for the senior club, and Neville was a businesslike secretary. He had dunned Beaumont for it several times, and he was not to be put off with a story of an imaginary fiver.

"Oh, all right!" said Beaumont. "If you've got change—"

"I've got it. I've brought the club funds along to change your giddy fiver!" grinned Neville. "Shell out, dear boy!"

"Right you are!"

Beaumont rose, and opened the table drawer. He fumbled in it, and then, with a startled look, made a careful examination in the drawer.

"That's queer," he said at last.

"What's queer?" asked Neville grimly.

"The—the fiver doesn't seem to be here."

"I thought that perhaps it mightn't be," said Neville drily. "Look here, Beaumont, if you can't pay up, I suppose I shall have to give you time; but don't epin me any fairy-tales, you know!"

Beaumont flushed.

"I don't know what you mean," he said hotly. "I had a fiver from my uncle, and it was in this drawer. I put it under a book for safety."

"Better have locked it up, I should think."

"I don't see why I should lock my money up. I suppose there isn't a thief at Rookwood, is there?"

"I hope not," smiled Neville. "Well, have another look, and let's see the merry fiver. I'm rather curious to see it."

Beaumont drew the drawer bodily out of the table, and turned it upside down. Then he went over the contents methodically, examining each article separately. Neville watched him with growing impatience. The club secretary's opinion was that Beaumont was stony, and was going through a little comedy for his benefit.

"Well, can you find it?" he asked.

"It's not here!"

"Well, let me have your sub as soon as you can," said Neville, turning to the door. "It isn't easy to keep accounts with fellows keeping their subs back half through the football season!"

"Hold on!" said Beaumont. "Look here, Neville, this is rather a serious matter. I left that banknote in the drawer. It was there when I went down to the footer this afternoon."

Neville turned back, and looked at him sharply.

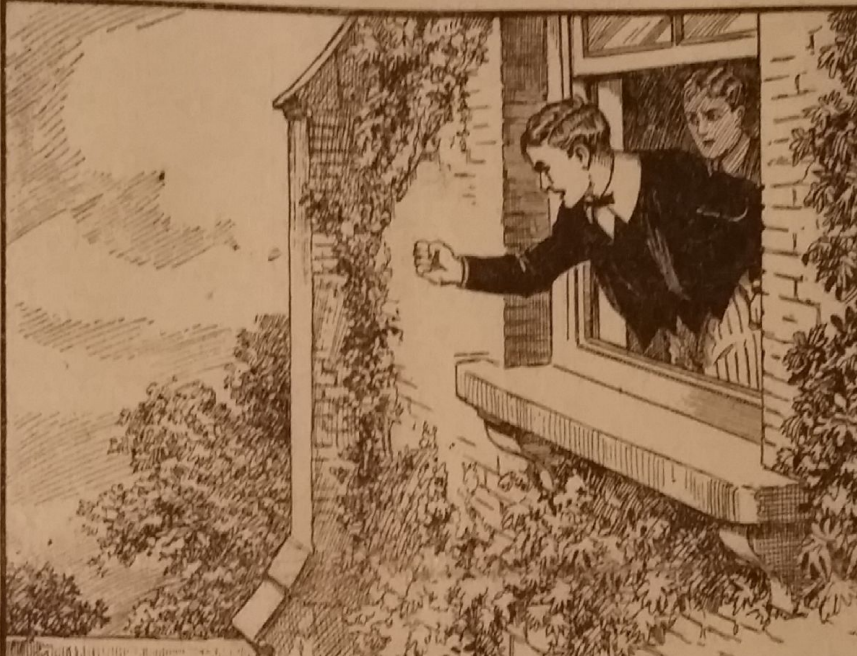
"Look here, Beaumont, did you really have a fiver, or is it some more of your blessed swank?" he asked bluntly.

"I tell you I had it from my uncle!" said Beaumont savagely. "I've got the number here in my pocket-book if you want to see it."

Neville appeared convinced.

"Well, if you had it, it must be here somewhere," he said brusquely. "Better have a good look for it."

"It isn't here."



THE FAGS' CHANT!

"Who's the rottenest bully at Rookwood?"

"Beaumont!"

"Who was kicked out of Jimmy Silver's study?"

"Beaumont!"

"Who ought to be sacked from the school?"

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"Who's afraid to report us to the Head?"

"Beaumont!"

The captain of the Rookwood Fourth was puzzled.

It was three or four days after the affair in the end study, and Beaumont of the Sixth had been reminded of that affair again and again, till he was weary of the subject—quite weary.

The Fistical Four had expected the prefect to be "down" on them with a more terrific "down" than ever.

To their amazement, Beaumont had pulled in his horns, so to speak, in the most remarkable way.

He had shown no sign of animosity against the juniors who had ejected him from their quarters in so unceremonious a fashion.

In many ways the prefect could have made his resentment felt; but he had not done so.

More surprising than all, he had told Newcome he was sorry he had licked him so severely.

That put the lid on, as it were.

It could not be that Beaumont was afraid the chums would sneak on the subject; he knew they would not do

goal-practice with him," said Jimmy.

"Oh, my hat!"

"If he holds out the giddy olive-branch, I don't see why we need be ratty," said Newcome. "Better do as he asks."

"It's jolly good practice, kicking goal against a Six Form player," said Jimmy. "Beaumont is a good goalie, too. He knows I'd like it. But it beats me—the giddy lion has turned into a lamb, and no mistake!"

The juniors walked down to the football-ground. While Lovell & Co. went to Little Side, for practice with the juniors, Jimmy Silver crossed over to Big Side.

Beaumont was there, and he greeted him with a nod.

"I'm ready, Beaumont, if you are," said Jimmy civilly.

Jimmy was not at all the sort of fellow to bear malice, and he was quite willing to forget old troubles.

"Thanks," said Beaumont. "You're a very smart kick at goal, Silver, and I think you'd be useful

foot suddenly in the most unexpected way, which puzzled the goalkeeper. Bulkeley and Neville and Knowles paused to look on, and they grinned when the leather passed between the posts in spite of Beaumont's efforts.

Beaumont gave Jimmy a dark look. Jimmy was doing his best; in his innocence he supposed that Beaumont would be glad of some really hard work in goal. But Beaumont was not at all pleased for the captain of Rookwood to see that he could not keep his citadel intact against a junior.

"That'll do!" said Beaumont curtly. "Take the ball back to my study, Silver."

"Right-ho!" said Jimmy cheerily.

"You can't play Beaumont in goal, Bulkeley," Knowles was remarking as Jimmy Silver walked away with the ball. "Frampson's your man. I suppose you're not bent on putting in a Classical?" added Knowles, with a slight sneer.

"I shall put in the best goalkeeper you can depend on that," answered

Beaumont.

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