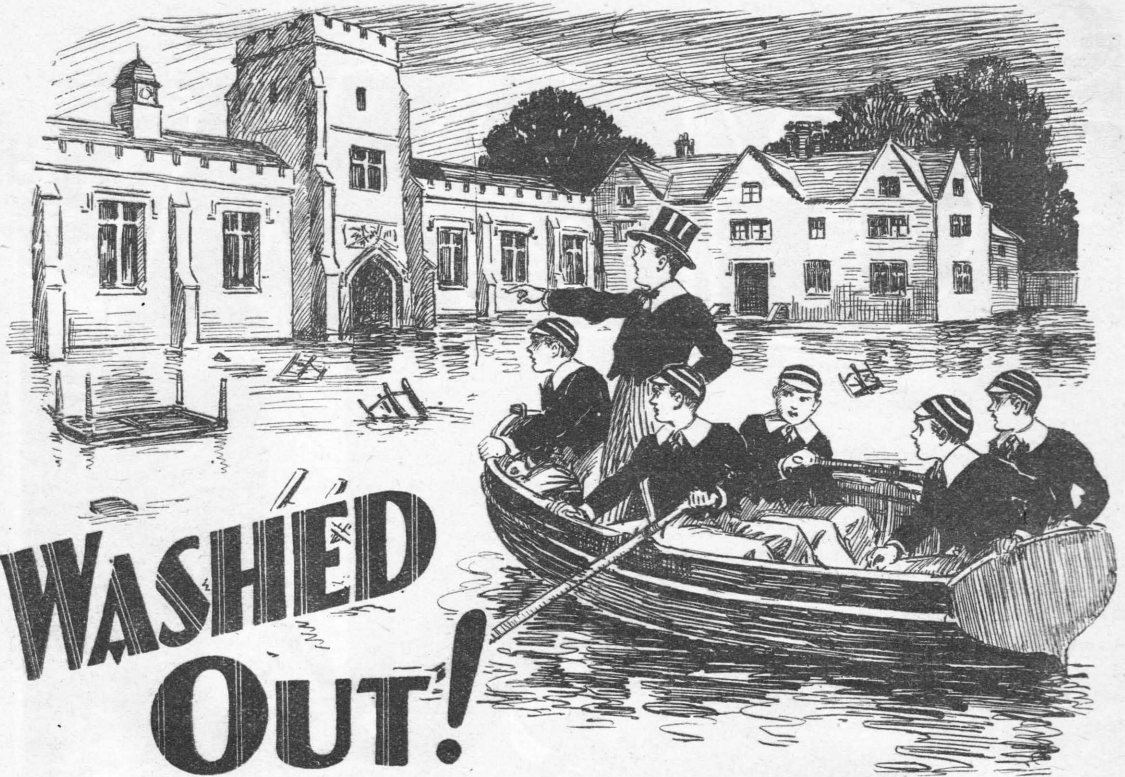


"WASHED OUT!" —SENSATIONAL STORY OF THE  
GREAT FLOOD AT ST. JIM'S— INSIDE.

# The GEM 2!



*Further Outlook  
—Wet!*



# WASHED OUT!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## CHAPTER 1.

### Rainy!

"RAIN!" said Tom Merry.  
"Rain!" growled Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah," said Arthur Augustus disconsolately, "and vevy wet wain!"

A group of juniors stood at the window at the end of the Form-room passage, looking out into the old quadrangle of St. Jim's.

It was raining; it had been raining for days! Football was off—very much off. With inches of water on the playing field, the most enthusiastic footballer felt his enthusiasm damped. Matches had to be postponed; half-holidays were a sheer waste. As Jack Blake remarked dismally, the St. Jim's fellows looked like being reduced to playing marbles in the passage.

"What are we going to do this afternoon?" growled Monty Lowther.

"Blessed if I know!" said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "We can't even raid the New House chaps; it's too wet to get across the quad."

"Yaas, wathah! Chap can't go out without gettin' his clothes wained."

"They say the river's rising," remarked Manners. "The towing-path has been under water for two days now. If it rises much higher we shall get it in the quad."

"Well, there would be some fun in that," remarked Blake, with some interest. "Anybody care for a game of chess?"

He asked the question half-heartedly, and there was a general chorus of negative grunts.

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Nobody wanted to play chess. "What about leapfrog in the Form-room?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, rats!"  
"We shall have to sit round the Form-room fire and ask one another conundrums!" groaned Blake.

Monty Lowther brightened up a little. Monty Lowther was a determined humorist, and he was great on conundrums.

"That's not a bad idea!" he exclaimed. "Why is Gussy like this rotten weather?"

"Weally, Lowthah—"  
"Because one rode a horse, and the other rhododendron," said Blake recklessly.

"Ass! Why is Gussy like this beastly weather?"

"I wufese to be compared to this beastly weathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with dignity. "I considah—"

"Because he never will dry up!" said Lowther.

But nobody laughed. They were past the power of conundrums. But when the humorist of the Shell was once started, it was difficult to stop him.

"Why is a man with a cold like a quadruped?" demanded Lowther.

"Blessed if I know!" said Blake, yawning.

"You are an ass, Lowthah! A man with a cold does not weseemble a quadruped in the least!"

"Because he's a little hoarse!" explained Lowther.

The juniors groaned.

"Don't!" said Manners. "This is worse than the rain!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Why is a high mountain like the tropics?" persisted Lowther.

"Because it's not like the twopics, deah boy."

"Because it's a dangerous climb," said Lowther cheerfully.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass inquiringly upon Lowther. He seemed to be trying to make it out.

"I do not wegard that as an answah, Lowthah," he said. "I'm willin' to admit, for the sake of argument, that a high mountain may be a dangewous climb, but how can the twopics be a dangewous climb?"

"Clime!" explained Lowther. "One's a climb with a 'b,' and the other's a clime with an 'e'!"

"I have nevah heard of anybody climbin' with a bee—"

"B, idiot, not bee!" said Lowther.

"C-l-i-m-b—see?"

"C-l-i-m-b-e!" exclaimed D'Arcy, in surprise. "That does not spell a word at all."

"My hat! C-L-I-M-B!" roared Lowther. "Do you know what that spells?"

"Yaas."  
"And the other is C-L-I-M-E. Do you see it now?"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"No, I don't quite see it, deah boy, but I'm willin' to take your word for it."

"Oh, you ass! Listen, and I'll explain again!"

"Pway don't twouble, deah boy! I'm perfectly willin' to accept your assuavance."

"One is a clime, and the other is a climb—"

# BUT TOM MERRY & CO. GET NO LITTLE FUN OUT OF THE GREAT FLOOD AT ST. JIM'S!

"Oh, don't!" said Tom Merry. "Let it go at that. We're all satisfied."

"More than satisfied!" yawned Manners.

"I'll give you another one, then," said Lowther. "I know lots. I make them up myself. I can turn out conundrums like anything!"

"You'll be turned out yourself if you don't cheese it!"

"Why is a cobbler——"

"Ring off!"

"Why is a cobbler——"

"Oh, bump him!" exclaimed Blake, exasperated. "It's the only way to stop him when he starts punning. Bump him!"

"Why is a cobbler—— Ow! Oh!"

Three or four pairs of hands seized the conundrum merchant, and he descended upon the floor of the passage with a loud concussion.

Lowther roared.

"Oh, you silly asses! Ow!"

Bump!

"Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, grinning. "I wegard that as funnay! Anythin' to welieve the monotonny. Bump the boundah again!"

"Ow!" roared Lowther. "Leggo! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther made a wild clutch at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and dragged him over. The swell of St. Jim's rolled on the floor, and there was a loud crack as his famous monocle came into violent contact with the linoleum.

"Bai Jove! You feahful ass, you've bwoken my monocle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Lowther.

"Serve you right! I——"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus hurled himself upon the humorist of the Shell. Arthur Augustus was generally a very placable fellow, but the loss of his eyeglass was too exasperating. The Fourth Former and the Shell fellow rolled along the passage in a loving embrace, collecting up the dust. The other fellows were cheered by this break in the monotony.

"Go it, Gussy!"

"Punch him, Lowther!"

"Give him beans!"

In the sudden excitement nobody noticed the door of the Third Form Room open, and nobody observed Mr. Selby, the master of the Third, step out into the passage.

Mr. Selby did not notice the struggling juniors till it was too late. They rolled against his legs, and Mr. Selby disappeared suddenly into the classroom again.

There was a sound of Mr. Selby sitting down, and a yell.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Cave!"

And the juniors fled.

But Lowther and D'Arcy did not have time to flee. They sat up in the doorway of the Form-room, breathless and dusty, and blinked at Mr. Selby.

Mr. Selby sat just within the Form-room, and blinked back at them in speechless fury. Mr. Selby was not a good-tempered gentleman, and in rainy weather he was troubled with rheumatic pains, which made his temper a little sharper than usual.

"You—you—you——" he stuttered.

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Lowther.

"Quite an accident, sir."

"Yaas, wathah! Awfully sowwy, sir."

Mr. Selby made a jump to his desk and caught up a cane, and made

another jump back at the juniors, who were scrambling up.

Mr. Selby was not a very active man as a rule, but he displayed a remarkable activity now. He reached the two juniors before they had a chance to escape, and the cane rose and fell with wonderful celerity.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"Oh! Ow!"

"Yawoooh!"

Lowther and D'Arcy fled. Mr. Selby chased them to the end of the passage, still lashing with his cane, and they darted upstairs and escaped.

Mr. Selby did not pursue them upstairs, fortunately. The two fugitives came along the upper passage at top speed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"Well run, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove——"

"Ow!" groaned Lowther. "Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah funny in that fwightfully bad-tempered boulder chasin' me with a cane."

But the other fellows seemed to think that there was. They roared.

## CHAPTER 2.

### A Challenge Accepted!

**T**OM MERRY looked out of the study window.

The rain was coming down steadily, and the trees in the quadrangle were weeping. The gutters were overflowing, every depression in the ground was a pond, and over the school walls hung a soft blue mist from the rain.

*St. Jim's has never known such amazing times as when the old school is washed out by floodwaters. But much to the regret of the juniors, it's lessons as usual!*

Tom Merry growled. He was a patient fellow, but patience has its limits, and he was fed-up with the rain.

He looked round. Manners was reading a book on photography. Monty Lowther was sprawling in the armchair, with his feet on the fender, the picture of bored depression.

"Look here," said Tom Merry decidedly, "this won't do!"

"Beastly, ain't it?" growled Lowther. "We shall get into a state of dry rot if we go on like this!" continued the captain of the Shell.

"Wet rot, at any rate," agreed Lowther. "I'm sick of staying indoors."

"Like to go out in that?" demanded Lowther, jerking one foot towards the rainy window.

"Better than rotting about indoors. Look here, why can't we have a footer match in the rain? Let's go over and dig out Figgins & Co., and make 'em play."

"We shall have to swim to goal."

"That's better than getting dry rot indoors. It won't be much of a match, but it will be in the open air, anyway. We can put on our oldest things."

"And play in our macintoshes?" asked Lowther.

"Rats! No. Look here, are you game?"

Monty Lowther yawned.

"Oh, yes! Any old thing!"

"Let's tell the fellows, then, and go over and wake Figgins up."

"All serene! You playing, Manners?"

"Oh, I'm on!" said Manners, rising from the table. "Anything to break the monotony."

The Terrible Three looked a little more cheerful as they left their study. The weather was more suited to swimming than to football, as Lowther remarked; but any kind of a match was better than boring themselves to death indoors watching the rain.

The chums of the Shell walked down the passage and looked in at Study No. 6. In that famous apartment, Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy were yawning their heads off.

Jack Blake looked up dismally at the Terrible Three.

"Going to play footer?" asked Tom Merry. "I'm thinking of rousing out the New House fellows and making them play in the rain. Better than slacking."

Blake jumped up with alacrity.

"Good egg! Get ready, you chaps!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"You go over and get out Figgins & Co., and I'll wake the fellows up on this side," said Blake. "It will be fun, in a way."

"A wathah wet way, Blake, deah boy."

"Oh, never mind the wet! If this goes on there will be a foot of water on the field, and we shan't have a chance."

"What about our clothes, deah boy?"

"You can put on your oldest togs or a bathing costume, if you like," said Tom Merry. "Get ready. I'll soon have the New House fellows over."

And the Terrible Three went downstairs. They donned their macintoshes and took umbrellas, and sallied forth into the rainy quadrangle.

The wind was blowing considerably, and it drove great splashes of rain into their faces.

"My hat!" ejaculated Lowther. "This is too thick! We shall never get across the quad!"

"Oh, buck up!"

Linking their arms, the Terrible Three plunged through wind and rain in the direction of the New House.

From the window of a junior study three New House juniors watched them coming in considerable surprise.

"My aunt!" exclaimed Figgins. "Look at the duffers! They're choosing a queer afternoon for a walk!"

"They're coming here," said Kerr.

"I say, Figgys, if they can get out in the rain, so can we," said Fatty Wynn. "Let's cut over to the tuckshop."

"Br-r-r-r!" said Figgins.

"Dame Taggles has some of those steak-and-kidney pies left."

"They'll stay left, far as I'm concerned," said Figgins. "I wonder what those School House bouncers want? May as well rag 'em while they're here; it will be something to do."

The Terrible Three disappeared from sight in the porch of the New House.

A few minutes later their wet boots were heard squelching in the Fourth Form passage.

There was a thump on the door of Figgins' study, and it was opened, and three drenched juniors blinked in. Rain

was running down their macintoshes and their umbrellas, forming little pools round them, and they left a trail of wet behind them as they came.

"Hallo!" said Figgins. "You're flooding the place out! What's on?" "Come to bring you a challenge," said Tom Merry, dashing the rain from his face. "Are you game to play footer?" "Footer!" yelled Figgins. "In this weather?"

"Yes. Why not?" "Well, there are about a thousand reasons why not," said Figgins.

"My dear chap, if you New House fellows funk it, we'll make up two teams on the School House side!" said Tom Merry loftily.

"Fank it? Rats! We'll play, if you like," said Figgins promptly.

"Good! When will you be ready?" "Five minutes."

"Good! We'll be ready for you on the ground. Come on, you chaps!"

And the Terrible Three squelched out. Figgins & Co. looked at one another.

"What rot!" said Fatty Wynn. "Much better dodge the rain and get into the tuckshop and have a bit of a feed."

"Rats!" said Figgins. "This study never refuses a challenge. Come and help me talk to the chaps."

"They'll want some talking to make 'em play in this weather!" grinned Kerr.

"Well, we'll talk all that's necessary. Come on!"

Figgins & Co. looked into the next study. Pratt of the Fourth was there, sitting over the fire, reading.

Figgins gently raised his boot and kicked the book away.

"Look out!" yelled Pratt. "What are you up to?"

"You're wanted!" "Wanted! What for, you ass?" demanded Pratt.

"Footer!" "Oh, don't be funny!"

"I'm not being funny, my son. The School House have challenged us to a match in the rain, and we're going to play 'em."

"I'm not!" hooted Pratt. "I'm jolly well not going to get drenched!"

"Yes, you are!" said Figgins cheerily. "Take his other arm, Kerr, and we'll bump him till he thinks it over."

"Hear, hear!" "Bump!"

"Ow!" roared Pratt. "It's all right; I'll play!"

"Good! Come on!"

Figgins & Co. proceeded to Redfern's study. Redfern, Lawrence, and Owen were at home. They were making toffee, as a strong smell of burning announced, as Figgins opened the study door.

Redfern blinked round through the smoke.

"Get into your footer things, you kids!" said Figgins.

"Footer?" shouted Redfern.

"Yes; we're playing the School House."

Redfern rushed at Figgins, and clasped him round the neck and hugged him.

"Hallo!" roared Figgins. "Leggo! Have you gone potty?"

"Come to my arms!" sobbed Redfern. "Let me fold you to my bosom and weep! You come like corn in Egypt or the flowers in May! It's the most idiotic idea I've ever heard of, and I'll come with pleasure. Buck up, Lawrence and Owen, let's get out and play the giddy ox with Figgins!"

Figgins jerked himself away.

"Well, change into your footer things," he said. "Better put on your

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oldest rags. We're due at the ground in two minutes."

"We'll be ready!"

"What about the toffee?" demanded Lawrence.

"Oh, blow the toffee! Chuck it in the fire!"

Figgins & Co. were not ready in the stipulated five minutes; but soon after that they made their way to the football ground. By persuasion, peaceful or otherwise, Figgins had got a eleven together; and before they had taken three steps outside the shelter of the House, the eleven were soaked to the skin.

But that, as Figgins remarked cheerfully, was nothing; they would not be able to get any wetter, and that was a comfort. And when they arrived on the footer ground, they found Tom Merry & Co. waiting for them.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### The Flood!

THE football field was swimming in water. Water squelched over the ankles of the juniors as they moved on the field.

The rain was coming down as heavily as ever.

Tom Merry had a footer under his arm, and it squelched dismally as he tossed it down.

The drenched and draggled juniors looked at one another with cheerful grins. As Blake had said, it would be fun, in a way, playing in a drenching downpour of rain.

"Here we are!" said Figgins. "Who's going to swim off—I mean kick-off?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Bai Jove! My boots are full of watah, you know," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked.

"Then you're the same at both ends now," remarked Lowther.

"You uttah ass, Lowthah—"

Tom Merry and Figgins tossed for choice of goal. Tom Merry won the toss, and elected to kick off.

The ball squelched away, and the School House footballers squelched after it. The New House met them, squelching.

The wet ball shot in all sorts of surprising directions. There were more juniors on the ground than on their feet as they stumbled and rolled in the wet. But the exercise warmed them, and they entered into the spirit of the thing.

From the distant House the windows were soon crammed with faces watching them.

Kangaroo of the Shell was acting as referee; he had donned football garb in order to have less about him to get wet. With the rain splashing in their faces, and running down their backs and into their boots, the juniors ran and plunged after the elusive ball, slipping over on the soaking grass every few minutes.

"Bai Jove! This is watah fun, you know!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "I'm afraid we're gettin' awfully muddy, though."

They were! They were smothered with mud from head to foot before they had been playing ten minutes, to such an extent that it was next to impossible to recognise faces, and quite impossible to discern colours.

This, however, added to the variety of the game. Figgins scored the first goal from a pass given him by Tom Merry, under the impression that it was Lowther.

There was a roar from the New House juniors as the leather plonked into the School House net.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"M-my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "I—I thought that muddy image was you, Monty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you ass!" ejaculated Lowther. "Well, there's nothing of either of you but mud and long legs," said Tom Merry.

Lorne of the Fourth tossed the leather from the goal. The teams lined up again, the New House fellows in great spirits. Tom Merry kicked off, and the School House made a most determined rush.

The New House met them with equal vigour, and more than a dozen juniors slipped over and rolled at once.

Monty Lowther got away with the ball in the most valiant style. Monty Lowther seemed petrified as his own winger robbed him, and ran away with the leather.

"You ass!" he roared.

"Bai Jove! Ain't you Figgins?" gasped D'Arcy. "Weally, Lowthah, you shouldn't have such silly long legs, and then—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Lowther. "Look out!"

But D'Arcy wasn't looking out. Kerr deprived him of the ball, and sent it away to the School House goal.

Lorne caught it, and then Figgins charged him into the net, ball and all. Lorne and Figgins and the ball disappeared in a sea of rain and mud, and gasped and sorted themselves out, quite unrecognisable; but it was a goal!

"Two up!" chortled Redfern. "Hurrah for us!"

"Bravo, New House!"

"Play up, you chaps!" shouted Tom Merry.

The School House team played up, rain and mud dripping from them. From a puddle of water and mud, and a melee of juniors before the New House goal, Tom Merry emerged, and sent the ball in before Fatty Wynn could move to save the shot. Then the School House yelled.

"Goal!"

Kangaroo blew the whistle; the first half was over. The drenched juniors gathered in the shelter of the pavilion, gasping and roaring with laughter as they looked at one another.

Tom Merry rubbed mud out of his eyes.

"Well, this is a game!" he gasped.

"My hat, how it's raining!"

"We shall have the prefects out soon to stop us," grinned Figgins. "My hat! We shall have a ripping crop of colds over this!"

"Never mind; it's all in a day's work."

"Hear, hear!"

Tom Merry glanced out over the dripping, swimming ground.

"This ground will be fairly under water soon," he remarked. "If this rain goes on the dam on the Rhyl will go, and then—"

"Phew! That would mean a flood."

"Yes; and the quad under water. Hallo, time's up!"

The teams went out into the field again. Figgins kicked off, and the two teams were soon hard at it again, in spite of wind and rain and mud.

Suddenly in the midst of a scrimmage near the School House goal, Tom Merry uttered a shout of warning.

"Look!"

"My hat!"

"Run for it!" yelled Figgins.

A great wave of water was sweeping down upon the footer ground. The juniors stared at it for a second as if



"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Look!" "Run for it!" yelled Figgins. A great wave of water was sweeping down upon the football ground! The juniors stared at it for a moment as if paralysed. Then they turned and ran for their lives.

paralysed. They knew what it meant. The dam on the upper river had given way, wholly or in parts. For two days the Rhyl had been over its banks, and the towing-path and the St. Jim's boat-house had been flooded.

But the damage was more serious now. If the dam had given, there might be five or six feet of water in the quadrangle in a few minutes, and the juniors ran for their lives.

Football was forgotten. The footer itself floated away on the waters, and the juniors made a wild break for the School House. They all ran in the same direction—the School House was the nearer of the two Houses.

Yells of warning came from the School House windows, but they were not heeded. The juniors were running their hardest.

But fast as they ran the water was faster. It came rushing on from the flooded river, it overtook the juniors. It was round their legs, round their waists, and as they were almost at the School House door it swept them off their feet.

They struggled and rolled in the water, clambering up the steps of the School House, and fellows crowded in the doorway to help them in.

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, was there on the top step, and he grasped dripping junior after junior, and dragged him in.

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of the school, was helping him. Tom Merry clung to the stone balustrade of the School House door, and dashed the water out of his eyes, and looked round him.

"Hurry up, Merry!" shouted Kildare. "Are they all in?"

"Yes; I think so. You're the last."

"Hold on!" shouted Blake. "There's another chap. Lorne hasn't got in."

"Lorne! Where's Lorne?"

"Great Scott! He'll be drowned!"

"Lorne—Lorne! Where are you?"

There was a faint cry from among the leafless elms, amid which the water was dashing and surging.

Tom Merry did not hesitate for an instant. He plunged back into the dashing flood, and a yell from the crowd in the doorway followed him.

"Go it, Tommy!"

"Take care, Merry!" shouted Mr. Railton.

"Buck up, Tommy!"

"Bravo!"

"Help!" cried Lorne from the elms, whither an eddy of the fierce flood had borne him helplessly. "Help!"

Tom Merry swam on resolutely. The waters were whirling in the old quadrangle of St. Jim's, dashing heavily against the solid stone walls, and surging among the ancient trees. Not for a hundred years had such a flood been known at the old school. The whirl and swirl of the water dashed Tom Merry against one of the elms, and he clung to it and looked anxiously about him.

"Lorne!"

"Here!" came a faint voice.

Lorne was clinging to one of the trees, his face white and drawn above the waters.

Tom Merry made a plunge towards him, and caught hold of the junior.

"Help me!" gasped Lorne. "I—I can't swim!"

"Right-ho! Hold on to me! I'll get you in!" said Tom Merry cheerily.

Lorne took a tight grip upon Tom Merry's shoulder, and the hero of the Shell swam steadily towards the School House doorway. There were five feet of water under him, and it was getting deeper every minute. Even in the midst of the peril and exertion the strangeness of it struck him—that he

was swimming in the quadrangle, with the gravel path five feet below him under the swirling waters.

"This way, Tommy!"

"Buck up, old man!"

Kangaroo, Figgins, and Blake, and two or three more juniors plunged down the steps, and caught Tom Merry and his burden, and dragged them in.

Tom Merry staggered into the School House, gasping, the water pouring from him.

"M-my hat!" he gasped. "This is a go!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The door was shut and fastened. Outside the waters of the flooded river swirled round the old elms in the quadrangle.

CHAPTER 4.

Water Everywhere!

ST. JIM'S was not bored now. The rainy weather of the past week had bored the juniors to death, but there was excitement enough now, and to spare.

The oldest inhabitant of St. Jim's could not remember a flood in the quadrangle. Even old Taggles, the school porter, who was popularly supposed by fags in the Second Form to be a hundred years old, could not remember it. It had happened before, but that was many a long year ago, before the new dam on the Rhyl had been built—and the "new" dam was more than seventy years old. Nobody had ever expected it to happen again.

But, as Kerr sapiently remarked, it is the unexpected that always happens.

St. Jim's was excited from end to end. Even Dr. Holmes was disturbed from his usual serenity.

The water was five feet deep in the THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,440.

quadrangle, and deeper on the playing fields, which were on a somewhat lower level; and Taggles' lodge was flooded, and the porter and Dame Taggles were driven into the School House.

The little tuckshop of St. Jim's was flooded, too, and the fountain in the quad had disappeared under water. The gym was washed out, and the crypt and the ruined chapel were overflowing. There was water, water everywhere, to use the description of the Ancient Mariner; but, unlike the case of that old gentleman, there was plenty to drink, if anybody had wanted it.

The question at St. Jim's was whether there would soon be anything to eat. As Monty Lowther pointed out to a group of juniors, the tradesmen's vans could not drive through five feet of water.

"And it will be deeper soon," Tom Merry remarked, looking out of the window upon the swirling flood. "The dam can't have given way, or it would be deeper now. When it goes for good, we shall have water in the Form-rooms."

"Bai Jove!"

"Luckily we're built on high ground, or it would be in the passages now," Blake remarked. "The water's just lapping over the top step now."

"It's in the cellars," remarked Digby. "I heard cook say so."

"You know what Shakespeare says on this subject," remarked Kangaroo of the Shell in a thoughtful way. "He says: 'There is a soul of goodness in things evil.' That's how it is here—while this flood lasts, it looks to me as if there can't be any lessons."

"Whole holiday all through the flood!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "My hat, that would be ripping! It can wash away as long as it likes!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"How are you New House kids going to get back to your House?" asked Blake.

Figgins shook his head.

"Not going back!" he said cheerfully. "We should have to crawl round the end of the quad from one roof to another, and it's not good enough. I hear that Kildare is going to try to get a boat round. Then it will be easy enough."

"My hat! I never thought we should ever come to boating in the quadrangle!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, it's wathah remarkable, deah boys. Gweat Scott! Where are you goin', Hewwies?"

Herries made his appearance in a long coat, under which his bare legs were visible. He was in swimming costume.

"Going out for a ducker?" asked Blake.

"I'm going for Towser."

"Towsah, Hewwies!"

"Yes," said Herries anxiously. "Towser's out in the shed, and it's flooded already, and if the water rises he'll be dished!"

"Bai Jove! But it's dangewous to go out in the watah, 'Hewwies; and it's a good swim to reach Towsah, too!"

"I know it is," said Herries. "But it can't be helped. I'm not going to have Towser drowned!"

"Dogs ain't allowed in the School House," said Levison of the Fourth. Herries snorted.

"Get outside, then!" he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! He had you there, Levison, you wottah!"

"Where are you going, Herries?" asked Mr. Railton sharply, coming out of his study.

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"Going to swim round for Towser, sir!"

The School House master shook his head.

"Impossible, Herries; it is too risky. The animals are quite safe so far, as the shed is on high ground, and there will be a boat here soon. I have telephoned for one, and it may be here any minute now. The animals shall be removed to a safe place as soon as it arrives, and you may go in the boat."

"Very well, sir," said Herries reluctantly.

Mr. Railton, who was looking very troubled and sombre, returned into his study.

The juniors did not see anything to look troubled about. There was a great deal of fun in a flood, from their point of view.

"G-r-r-r-r-r!"

Herries started as he was going back to his study to change his clothes again. He looked round quickly as he heard a dog growl; but it was not Towser.

D'Arcy minor of the Third Form was coming up the passage, drenched with water, and with a shaggy, drenched cur under his arm.

The little beast was striving to escape, and Wally was holding it very tight. Wally knew there would be trouble if Pongo escaped inside the House.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Herries. "Did you fetch him?"

"He got loose, and I saw him swimming," explained Wally, "so I floated out on a chair and collared him. He's scared. No wonder! Poor old Pongo! Good old Pongo!"

And he caressed his shaggy favourite. "Like to kiss him, Gussy?" he asked cheerfully.

D'Arcy major backed away a pace in great disgust.

"Weally, Wally, you young wascal, you—"

"Blessed if I know where to put him!" said Wally. "It's disgusting that we don't have studies of our own in the Third. If I keep him in the Form-room, old Selby is sure to make a fuss. He doesn't like dogs."

"Go hon!"

"If one of you fellows would like to have him in your study—"

"Bai Jove!"

"I expect we shall have Herries' bulldog planted in Study No. 6," grinned Blake. "One in the family will be quite enough. You can keep that mongrel!"

"Yaas, wathah! And I object most decidedly to Towsah. That wotten bulldog has no respect whatever for a fellow's twousahs."

"Like him in your study, Tom Merry? You could use the lower half of the study cupboard as a kennel."

"Why, I keep my photographic things there!" roared Manners.

"They could be shifted out."

"Could they? Well, you cheeky young bounder—"

"Put him in Selby's bed-room," suggested Monty Lowther. "Wrap him up in Selby's bed. He'll be nice and warm and cosy there, and it will be a pleasant surprise for Selby when he goes to nap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ass!" said Wally. "Selby would kill him!"

"That's where the great advantage of the plan comes in," Lowther explained blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally grunted, and walked away, with his shaggy pet in his arms.

He was wet through, and he had to go to the Third Form dormitory to change his clothes. He dried Pongo in

a number of towels, reckless as to their ownership.

Pongo consented to lie quietly in Curly Gibson's bed while Wally was changing. But when he had changed, Wally was a little doubtful what to do with him. He could not let the dog wander about the House, and he did not like the idea of tying him up somewhere, to say nothing of the probability that someone would untie him again.

The hero of the Third wrinkled his brows in deep thought, trying to decide what to do with Pongo. He decided that it wouldn't do to allow the dog out of sight, and yet to take him into the Form-room, where Mr. Selby was to meet the Third Form for evening preparation, was a risky proceeding.

But, risky or not, D'Arcy minor decided that it had to be done. He jammed the squirming mongrel under his jacket, and hurried down to the Third Form Room.

It was close upon time for evening preparation, and most of the Third were in their places.

Some New House boys were absent, owing to the flood in the quadrangle, which was keeping them away. There was a general exclamation as Wally came in, with the little black muzzle of Pongo peeping out from under his arm.

"What have you got there, Wally?"

"Is it a monkey?"

"Rats!" growled Wally. "It's my dog Pongo!"

"Phew! You'd better clear him out! Old Selby may be in any minute now!" exclaimed Jameson.

"He's going to stay!"

"Selby will cut up rusty."

"Selby won't see him!" growled Wally.

There was a cupboard in the corner of the Form-room where blackboards and easels and things were kept.

Wally deposited Pongo in the cupboard, stroked and soothed him, and shut the door on him. Then he took his place in the Form, and waited with great composure for Mr. Selby to come in.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Boating in the Quad!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. were debating an important matter in the Form-room passage.

The great question was whether there were going to be any lessons on the following morning. If the flood rose, the Form-rooms would be flooded, and there would be no lessons. And if there were going to be no lessons, there was no need to do any preparation overnight. As Jack Blake pointed out eloquently, it would be a sheer and simple waste of labour.

It was a knotty problem. As Tom Merry remarked, Form-masters were queer fish, and you never knew where to have them, or where they were going to have you.

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, might be relied upon to play the game, and to dismiss his class if the Form-room was washed out. But with Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, it might be different.

Monty Lowther remarked that it would be just like Linton to take a class in a box-room, or on the roof, rather than let them off a morning's work.

The juniors shook their heads solemnly over the unreasonableness of Mr. Linton. And yet, as Kangaroo said, it would be simply awful if they did their preparation, and there weren't any lessons, after all.

Bernard Glyn suggested putting it plainly to Linton, and asking him; but Tom Merry remarked that that would look as if they wanted to miss their lessons. They did, as a matter of fact, but they recognised that it would not do to explain their views on the subject to a Form-master.

The discussion was interrupted by the news that a boat had arrived. In the gathering darkness a light gleamed from the direction of the gates, and the splash of oars was heard in the quadrangle.

Curious it was to the juniors to watch a boat pulling among the old elms, coming across the quadrangle from the direction of the gates.

The juniors looked from the window to the village boatman as he brought the boat up to the steps of the School House, and it jarred there on the stone balustrade.

Old Billie grinned up to the juniors. "Nice goings on, gentlemen!" he said.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, looking out of the window. "How is the flood at Wylcombe, Billie?"

"'Ouses under water," said the boatman. "The Green Man is flooded out, and the Red Cow 'as the water up to the second floor."

Kildare opened the door, and the boatman touched his cap to the captain of St. Jim's.

"'Ere we are, sir!" he said. "Good!" said Kildare. "I want to get round to the shed behind the New House first to get the animals out. They're in danger!"

He stepped into the boat. Mr. Selby came down to the open door and looked out upon the flood, with a sniff.

Mr. Selby was a very precise gentleman; he had exact manners and customs which he did not like to be disturbed or changed, and anything that happened out of the common was annoying to Mr. Selby. He seemed to look upon the flood as a most preposterous occurrence—a kind of practical joke on the part of Nature at which he—Mr. Selby—had a right to be offended.

"Is that the only boat here, Kildare?" he asked.

"Yes, sir!" "Then let the boatman bring across the Third Form boys from the New House, otherwise they will not be able to attend evening preparation in the Form-room."

"I was just going round to get the pets out of the shed, sir," said Kildare. "They are in danger." Mr. Selby frowned.

"The business of the school cannot be put off for the sake of those useless animals, Kildare!" he said snappishly. "They must take their chance! Kindly fetch over the Third Form boys from the New House first!"

Kildare's lips set obstinately. "Mr. Railton has given me directions to get the pets out first, sir," he said.

The Third Form master frowned. "Really, Kildare—" "I will ask Mr. Railton, if you like, sir!"

The School House master came down to the doorway as Kildare was speaking.

Mr. Selby looked at him, containing his angry impatience with a great effort.

"I wish Kildare to bring over the boys from the New House," Mr. Selby said. "I do not wish any of the Third Form to miss their preparation owing to the flood."

Mr. Railton nodded. "Quite so," he said. "The boat will be at liberty in a quarter of an hour. Be as quick as you can in rescuing the animals, Kildare. The water is rising, too!"

"Yes, sir!" said Kildare. "Mr. Railton, surely those useless and troublesome animals can be left, while the work of the school is proceeded with," said the exasperated Mr. Selby.

Mr. Railton looked at him. "I should certainly not think of sacrificing the life of any animal, especially an animal that a lad was fond of, for the sake of evening preparation," he said coldly.

"Oh, very well!" said Mr. Selby, his eyes glinting. "Very well, indeed!" And he walked away angrily.

"Go at once, Kildare," said Mr. Railton, apparently not having observed the bitter annoyance of the Third Form master. "Lose no time!"

"I'm going, sir!" Herries jumped into the boat, and Tom Merry and Blake jumped in after him. All the juniors wanted to have a hand in the novel navigation of the quadrangle; but Kildare waved back the crowd on the steps.

"That's enough," he said, laughing. "We don't want an army!"

"Pewwaps I had bettah come, Kildare! It will be wathah difficult steewin' the boat wound the houses, you know—"

Kildare laughed and pushed off. The boatman rowed away past the old elms and round the New House.

Herries had a torch to light the way, while Kildare steered.

They reached the slated shed, in which the juniors kept their animals, and Herries, careless of the water, jumped into it.

There was a joyous growl from Towser as Herries found him and brought him into the boat.

The cages and boxes were transferred quickly to the boat. There had already been some mortality among the smaller animals, but the greater number were saved.

The boat pulled back to the School House through the deep dusk.

The rain was still coming down; the water was above the top step, and flooding into the Hall within.

Tom Merry chuckled. "The Form-rooms will be flooded, and no mistake!" he exclaimed. "We shall be washed out of them to-morrow!"

The juniors were crowding round the flooded doorway to receive their pets. Herries carefully landed Towser, and led him away in search of something to rub him down with.

There was a sharp exclamation in the passage, and Towser growled.

Mr. Selby, on his way to the Third Form Room, had nearly walked into Herries and his bulldog. Mr. Selby was not fond of dogs, and dogs were not fond of Mr. Selby. Herries had a firm conviction that a man who was not liked

(Continued on the next page.)

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by a dog was no good, and he did not take the trouble to conceal it.

He took a tight grip upon Towser's collar, however. As he said afterwards to Blake, he didn't want Towser to bite old Selby; there was no telling how it might have turned out for Towser.

"Herries," rapped out the Form-master, "how dare you bring that animal into the House! How dare you, I say!"

"There's no other place for him, sir," said Herries, as respectfully as he could, considering that Towser did not approve of Mr. Selby. "I've got permission, sir!"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Selby. "That dog is a dangerous brute. He tried to bite me once. He cannot remain in the House!"

"You see, sir, the shed's flooded, and—"

"Take him away at once!"

"But, sir—"

Towser growled and made a jerk at his collar.

Mr. Selby backed away.

"Have you got hold of that collar safely, Herries?" he asked gaspingly.

"Yes, sir. He might slip through it, though."

Mr. Selby did not wait to continue his conversation. He hurried away towards the Third Form Room; and Herries, grinning, piloted the bulldog to Study No. 6, and installed him there.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Pongo Causes Trouble!

**M**R. SELBY wore a deep frown as he entered the Third Form Room to take the Third in evening preparation for a happy hour.

Mr. Selby's unamiable temper was worse than ever now. All that had happened since the river rose exasperated him. Floods were abnormal things, and Mr. Selby detested anything out of the normal.

The rainy weather gave Mr. Selby sharp twinges of rheumatism, and that annoyed him still more.

The School House was upset generally, and in confusion, and there were dogs in it, and altogether Mr. Selby was feeling in a mood to pour out the vials of his wrath upon everybody he came in contact with.

The Third Form saw it plainly enough when he came into the Form-room, and they were very much on their best behaviour. It was only too probable that even their good behaviour would not save them from the Form-master's wrath.

Preparation began under these dismal circumstances, to the accompaniment of the surging of water under the windows and the lashing of the heavy rain upon the panes.

Mr. Selby's glittering eye was on the look-out for trouble, but the Third were equal to the occasion, and they were so careful that for a time even Mr. Selby could not possibly find a fault with them. But after preparation had lasted ten minutes or so, Mr. Selby pricked up his ears, as it were. There was a low sound of scratching in the Form-room, and Mr. Selby's eyes glittered over his Form.

"Who is making that noise?" he demanded.

No one replied.

The scratching sound came, as a matter of fact, from the hidden Pongo in the Form-room cupboard, and Wally began to tremble inwardly for his favourite.

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Mr. Selby did not suspect the presence of a dog in the Form-room; he would not have suspected even Wally of such an example of cool "cheek" as that, and he imagined that one of the fags was deliberately japing him. He looked round in search of a victim, but the scratching sound ceased, and he was baffled.

Five minutes passed, and Wally hoped Pongo had gone to sleep. Mr. Selby was sitting at his desk, with his eyes on the Third Formers.

Suddenly, in the silence of the Form-room, there came the strange sounds again.

Scratch, scratch, scratch!

Mr. Selby started.

"Who is that?" he shouted.

Scratch, scratch, scratch!

"This is deliberate impertinence!" said Mr. Selby, in a voice trembling with rage, as he rose from his desk. "I am determined to find out what boy is playing this foolish prank! D'Arcy minor, were you scratching on your desk?"

"No, sir," said Wally.

The scratching ceased, or Mr. Selby would probably have detected that it came from the cupboard in the corner. He moved among the Form, questioning the boys.

"Were you scratching, Frayne?"

"No, sir," said Joe.

"Was it you, Gibson?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

One after another, the boys were questioned, and each denied being guilty of producing the sound that had irritated the nerves of the Form-master.

Mr. Selby breathed hard.

"One of you has lied to me!" he said, between his teeth.

Scratch, scratch, scratch!

Mr. Selby jumped.

"Who is that?" he shouted.

Silence.

"The whole Form will take an imposition of fifty lines!" shouted Mr. Selby. "If that noise is repeated, I will cane every boy in the Form!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jameson.

Scratch, scratch, scratch!

Whine!

The master of the Third stood petrified. The whiming, following the scratching, showed him that there was an animal in the room.

"One of you has a dog here!" he exclaimed.

Silence.

Whine!

Scratch, scratch, scratch!

Mr. Selby spun round towards the corner cupboard. He had detected whence the sounds proceeded at last. He snatched a cane from his desk and darted towards the cupboard, and threw the door wide open.

Pongo, with a joyous bark, bounded out.

"A—a dog—here!" gasped Mr. Selby.

If it had been Towser, Mr. Selby would probably have given him a wide berth. But he was not afraid of the little mongrel, and he sprang towards Pongo, lashing at him with his cane.

Pongo's bark of joy was changed to a howl of anguish.

Wally leaped to his feet.

"Let him alone, sir!" he yelled.

Lash! Lash! Lash!

Wally sprang out of his place to save Pongo, and Mr. Selby turned upon him in a fury.

"Is that your dog, D'Arcy minor?"

"Yes, sir!"

"You brought him into the Form-room?"

"I—I had to put him somewhere, sir!" stammered Wally.

"Did you bring him into the Form-room?" shouted Mr. Selby.

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Hold out your hand!"

Wally obeyed, setting his teeth. He knew that he was going to get it hot, and he did. Mr. Selby gave him three upon each hand, and each of them was what the Third Form fag called a "twister."

Wally was simply doubled up. He stood before Mr. Selby with his hands under his armpits, squeezing them and looking as if he were trying to fold himself up like a pocket-knife.

"Go back to your place, D'Arcy minor!"

Wally returned to his place.

Mr. Selby strode to the door and opened it. Then he made for Pongo with the cane again to drive him out of the Form-room. But Pongo, apparently, did not understand that his presence was not desired. He curled up under Wally's desk at his master's feet.

Mr. Selby stooped by the desk and lunged at him with his cane, and poor Pongo whined pitifully as the cruel blow came across his back.

Wally's blood boiled up. If it had been the Head himself, Wally could not have stood it quietly.

"Let him alone, sir!" he gasped.

"I'll take him out of the Form-room, sir! Don't hit him!"

"Keep your place, D'Arcy minor!" rapped out Mr. Selby.

"But, sir, let me—"

"Silence!"

Lash, lash, lash!

The unfortunate Pongo did not retreat; he only crept closer to his master's feet, and whined for protection.

Wally could stand it no more. He stooped and picked Pongo up, covering him with his arms.

"Let him alone!" he panted.

"D'Arcy minor, put that dog down at once!"

"You're not going to hit him!" said Wally determinedly.

"Obey me!"

"I'll take him out of the Form-room, sir!" said Wally, rising from his seat and leaving his desk.

"Put that dog down at once!"

Wally did not obey. He started for the door. Mr. Selby started after him, and the cane lashed down upon Wally's shoulders instead of upon Pongo.

Wally gave a terrific roar.

"Ow! Ah! Oh!"

"D'Arcy minor—"

"Ow! Yah!"

Wally made a rush for the door, and Mr. Selby pursued him. The fag dropped Pongo in the passage, and Pongo ran on. He disappeared at top speed round the corner of the passage, and Wally turned round to face his Form-master.

Mr. Selby was pale with rage. He caught him by the collar, and lashed him across the shoulders with the cane again. He was so enraged that he hardly seemed to know what he was doing.

"Shame!" yelled Jameson.

Mr. Selby left off then. Perhaps the fag's yell warned him that he was going too far. He released D'Arcy minor.

"Go back to your place, D'Arcy minor!" he said savagely. "If there is any more insubordination, I shall report you to the Head, and you shall be flogged!"

Wally went back to his place without a word.



He sat with a fixed white face and gleaming eyes for the rest of the time the Third were under the charge of Mr. Selby.

When the preparation was over, and the Form-master quitted the room, the fags were left to themselves, and they gathered round Wally sympathetically.

"Does it hurt?" asked Jameson, as Wally rubbed his shoulders.

"No!" groaned Wally, with painful sarcasm. "It's nice—simply ripping! Ow!"

"Rotten!" said Curly Gibson. "It's a pity it wasn't Towser instead of Pongo! You should bring up Pongo to bite, with a special taste for Form-masters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
But Wally did not laugh. Wally was very tough, but the caning he had received had penetrated through his toughness, and Wally was resolving plans of retaliation in his mind.

**CHAPTER 7.  
Washed Out!**

**S**T. JIM'S went to bed that night in a state of great excitement.

It was the first time the fellows had ever been to bed with a flood raging in the quadrangle and water dashing in waves against the old stone walls.

The New House fellows were ferried over to their House for the night. There were two or three boats in the quadrangle now, the boatman having fetched them from the flooded boat-house down the river.

The stars came out when the rain slackened, and glimmered upon a wide flood, flowing over the quadrangle and the playing fields, over the high road and the fields adjoining.

The school grounds and the road and the fields and the river were indistinguishable. All the landmarks were lost in the flood, save the trees and the buildings. Trees had been torn up by the raging waters, and were floating about, and a big trunk bumped against the steps of the School House, and floated away over the ruined chapel. And the water was rising. The cellars were flooded, and the kitchen swimming in water, and the passages were several inches deep now.

It was very probable that on the morrow there would be no lessons at St. Jim's—a prospect that fully comforted the fellows for the inconveniences of the flood.

Many of the fellows awakened in the night to listen to the dashing of the waters on the old walls. The lull in the rain was only temporary. It came down harder than ever towards midnight.

The rising-bell did not ring as usual in the morning. Taggles was a prisoner in the School House. Many of the fellows rose late, and turned up very irregularly to breakfast. Breakfast was a scratch meal. Cooking was impossible, and the fellows had what they could get.

Indeed, unless supplies were procured by boat from Rylcombe or Wayland, even bread-and-butter were likely to run out.

Instead of chapel as usual, prayers were held in the lecture-room, and then it was announced that work would be given to the boys to do in their studies, instead of their assembling in the Form-rooms as usual.

The announcement was very agreeable to the fags of the Third and Second. They had no studies, and they, therefore, expected to escape lessons altogether. But the Third, at least, were

doomed to disappointment. Mr. Selby was not to be escaped so easily.

"The Third Form will assemble in the school library," Mr. Selby announced.

And the Third grunted discontentedly. The school library was not upstairs, but was on a higher level than the main building. St. Jim's had been built at various times, and the work of the fourteenth or fifteenth century was to be seen close beside the erections of the nineteenth and twentieth. The library was up four steps from one of the long passages, and was a very ancient apartment, with panelled walls and deep, mullioned windows. It was several feet above high water mark of the flood, so far, and was supposed to be safe.

The fags of the Third made their way there grimly.

Mr. Selby's announcement had dashed to the ground their hopes of an easy day.

"Just like Selby," muttered Jameson. "Why couldn't he give us a task like the other fellows, and leave it to us to get it done?"

"Ear, 'ear!" said Joe Frayne. "Kindly do not chatter," said Mr. Selby's voice from behind. "Take fifty lines—Frayne and Jameson!"

Frayne and Jameson gasped. The Third Form marched into the library.

Wally cast a glance out of the window, in the faint hope of seeing the water rising. It had only to rise a few more feet to flood the library as well as the Form-rooms.

Some of the fags carried in chairs from the lecture-room, and the Third Form settled down to work.

Mr. Selby left his class a little later, and ten minutes afterwards the Fourth Form came streaming in, carrying chairs in their hands. The Fourth Formers were looking simply wild. Mr. Selby had kindly suggested to Mr. Lathom that there was room for two Forms to work in the library, and Mr. Lathom had quitted the cheery fireside in his study with a sigh at the call of duty and Mr. Selby.

The Fourth Form did not in the slightest degree appreciate Mr. Selby's concern for them. They could have missed the morning's work with perfect equanimity. Blake, D'Arcy, Herries and Digby, and Figgins, Kerr and Wynn, and Redfern & Co., and all the Fourth came filing in, and they planted their chairs at the other end of the long, lofty room.

Blake cast a hopeful glance into the quadrangle as Wally had done, and he grinned.

"My hat!" he murmured. "The water's rising fast!"

"Hear, hear!" said Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"  
"Take your places, my boys," said little Mr. Lathom, blinking at his Form over his glasses. "I am afraid I shall be working under some inconveniences this morning; but I shall not be exacting. We must all do our best."

"Yes, sir," said the Fourth Formers loyally.

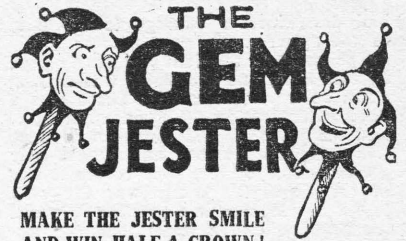
Then Mr. Selby's harsh voice was heard at the other end of the library.

"You will kindly pay attention to your lessons. I shall not allow the present confusion of the school to be made the pretext for any idleness or carelessness."

The difference between the two masters was very marked. The Fourth Formers felt a little more satisfied as they looked at the Third.

Wally had a seat near a window, and he glanced out of the window continuously. The water was rising fast, and it was evident that the torrential rains

(Continued on the next page.)



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**SOME EXCUSE!**

Teacher: "Brown, what have you done to Jones?"

Brown: "It wasn't my fault, sir. He gave my fist an awful wallop with his nose!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Steen, 11, Peter Street, Brick Lane, London, E.2.

\* \* \*

**MONTY'S CONUNDRUM.**

Monty Lowther: "Gussy, why is the letter 'P' like a false friend?"

D'Arcy: "Give it up, dear boy."  
Monty Lowther: "Because it is first in pity and last in help."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Wheeler, 21, Le May Road, Toronto, Canada.

\* \* \*

**A MIX-UP.**

The agitated maid rushed to the telephone and called the house where her master was having dinner.

"Oh, Mr. White!" she exclaimed. "Come home at once, please! I've mixed up the electric terminals somehow. The refrigerator's playing 'Sing As We Go' and the wireless set's covered with icicles!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Hill, 59, Rowland Avenue, Kenton Lane, Kenton, Middlesex.

\* \* \*

**UNDER COMPULSION.**

Visitor (watching Tommy pick up all his toys): "That's a good boy! I suppose mummy has promised you something if you tidy up the room?"

Tommy: "You mean, if I don't!"  
Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Darwin, 1,057, Chester Road, Stretford, nr. Manchester.

\* \* \*

**PROMISING.**

Black: "My son is a very promising young man."

Green: "I don't doubt it. It's about two years since he borrowed five pounds of me, and he has been promising to pay it back ever since!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to K. Bates, 7, Liley Street, Rochdale

\* \* \*

**NO WONDER!**

Lady: "That piece of fish you sold me yesterday wasn't half as good as the piece you sent me a week ago."

Fishmonger: "That's funny, it was off the same piece!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Ryan, No. 4 Flat, 30a, Mount Street, Coogee, New South Wales, Australia.

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had done further damage to the dam on the upper river.

The wreck of the dam was nearly gone by this time, and the water was coming down in a terrific flood. There was a good seven feet in the quadrangle now, and the passages and Form-rooms were swimming with water, and it was only a question of a short time before it was in the library. Wally was the only fellow in the room in a position to watch the progress of the water, and he wondered whether he ought to warn Mr. Selby.

Mr. Selby's sharp, disagreeable voice broke in upon his meditations.

"D'Arcy minor!"

"Yes, sir!" said Wally, starting.

"If you look out of the window again, instead of attending to your lessons, I shall cane you!"

"But, sir—"

"Silence!"

"I was going to say, sir—"

"Take fifty lines!"

Wally held his peace.

But, in spite of Mr. Selby, he could not help stealing a glance out of the window a little later. The water was swishing almost as high as the stone window-sills, and an uprooted tree floated by, its branches scratching the lower pane. And the water was still rising.

"It will be here in five minutes," Wally said to Jameson, in a whisper.

Jameson grinned.

"What larks!" he murmured.

"But it would spoil all the books," said Wally.

"Oh, blow the books!"

"Oughtn't I to tell old Selby?"

"Oh, blow Selby!"

Mr. Selby's voice rapped out again. "You are talking, Jameson! Take fifty lines!"

Jameson grunted.

D'Arcy minor rose in his place. He felt it his duty to speak, in spite of Mr. Selby's forbidding aspect. The books in the library were of almost unlimited value. Besides many valuable bindings, there were old manuscripts in the cabinets that could never be replaced—ancient black-letter records of the earliest days of St. Jim's.

Mr. Selby fixed a look upon the scamp of the Third.

"If you please, sir—" began Wally.

"Sit down D'Arcy minor!"

"I think I ought to tell you, sir—"

"If you say another word, D'Arcy minor, I shall cane you!"

"But, sir—" persisted Wally.

Mr. Selby strode towards him.

"Hold out your hand, D'Arcy minor!"

"Oh, sir!"

Wally was caned. He sat down with a grim look, and was silent. If Mr. Selby was determined not to let him utter his warning, there was nothing to be done.

The lesson went on.

Outside the window a log was bobbing up and down on the flood, tapping gently against the window-sill. The rising of the water floated it upon the sill, and it scraped against the glass.

Several of the fags noticed it then, and there was a general exclamation.

Mr. Selby's unpleasant voice rasped out:

"Silence in the class!"

"I say, sir—" began Frayne.

"Silence!"

Crash!

A rush of the water brought the log with a crash against the lower panes,

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and they were smashed to atoms. There was a rush of water through the broken glass. Then Mr. Selby understood, and he uttered an exclamation of alarm.

Everybody in the library was upon his feet now.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, running towards the broken window in great agitation. "The room will be flooded. Surely you boys must have noticed—"

"I did notice, sir," remarked Wally. "But Mr. Selby would not let me tell him."

Blake rushed up at once.

"Shall we get the books out, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "All of you set to work at once; be very careful, take out the books, and carry them to the next floor above. Be very careful indeed. I will go and get the keys of the locked cases. Some of you carry out the cabinets as they are."

"Yes, sir."

And the Fourth Form and the Third set to work with a will.

Mr. Lathom dashed away, his gown fluttering wildly behind him, to seek the Head; and he returned in a few minutes with Dr. Holmes.

Bookcases were unlocked on all sides, and juniors laden with great volumes formed a procession out of the library door.

Fellows came from all sides to help—the Shell, the Fifth, and the Sixth were soon busy. And as they carried out books and cabinets, and chairs and rugs, the water swamped in at the window where the glass was broken and trickled in at the other windows.

There was soon a foot of water on the floor, and the juniors trampled and splashed and plunged through it in high spirits.

They were making themselves useful, and, as Jack Blake remarked, it was better than lessons.

## CHAPTER 8.

### A Soaking for Mr. Selby!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. "wired" into the work of clearing out the library with a will.

Dr. Holmes and Mr. Railton gave directions, and masters and boys worked at saving the valuable property from the flood.

Mr. Selby stood frowning. All this disorder upset and worried him, and he was angry with the boys and angry with the flood. He looked as if he would have liked to cane everybody present, from the Head downwards.

"Would you mind getting out of the way, sir?" asked Tom Merry politely, as he and Manners and Lowther came by with a large cabinet in their hands. The cabinet was a very valuable inlaid one, and they were being very careful with it.

The water was up to their knees now, but the Terrible Three did not mind.

Mr. Selby, however, minded very much. He did not want to get his feet wet, and he was puzzled to know how to escape from the room without walking in the water.

He had been thinking of asking Kildare and Darrell of the Sixth to carry him on their shoulders. But he hesitated. The prefects would probably not have abandoned their task of preserving valuables for the sake of saving Mr. Selby from getting his feet wet.

Mr. Selby glared at the Terrible Three. He was in the way, certainly,

but he could not get out of the way without stepping into the water.

"You're in the way, sir, if you don't mind," said Manners.

"Don't be impertinent, Manners!" rasped Mr. Selby.

"But we can't get by, sir," said Monty Lowther.

"You must get round," said Mr. Selby.

The Terrible Three grunted. They were very much inclined to run the cabinet right into the Form-master and bowl him over like a ninepin. They exchanged a quick glance, and were just starting forward, when the Head came splashing through the water.

"Ah, be very careful with that cabinet, my dear boys!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry.

And the Terrible Three had to spare Mr. Selby, and they carried it round the Form-master very carefully, under the Head's eye.

The Head glanced rather grimly at Mr. Selby. The Head had wetted his own feet recklessly, and he did not see why Mr. Selby should not do the same; but he made no remark.

Wally & Co. had been whispering together, and now they came splashing towards their Form-master. Wally had not forgotten the thrashing of Pongo the evening before. He could forgive the licking he had had himself, but he remembered Pongo's licking with undying resentment. And it seemed to the scamp of the Third that his turn had come now.

"Shall we help you out, sir?" he asked.

"D'Arcy minor, if you are impertinent—"

"Not at all, sir! Jameson and I and Curly could stoop down and lift up that chair, sir and carry you out," said Wally.

Mr. Selby hesitated. It would not be an easy task; but it was certainly the only way of escaping from the flooded room without a soaking.

"Get some bigger boy to help you, then," he said.

"Yes, sir Blake, come and lend a hand, will you?"

"What is it?" called out Blake.

"Mr. Selby wants to be taken out without getting wet."

Jack Blake snorted.

"I'm saving valuables," he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Selby's eyes glittered. Blake's reply hinted that he did not consider Mr. Selby very valuable, which was indeed his precise opinion.

"Come and lend a hand, Gussy!" called out Wally.

"Sowwy, deah boy! I'm diwectin' opewations here," replied Arthur Augustus.

Arthur Augustus was indeed directing operations. Nobody was listening to his directions, or heeding them in any way, but that was not his fault. He was doing his best.

"Kildare," called out Mr. Selby at last, "will you come and help them get me out?"

Kildare growled.

"I'm busy, sir. Surely you do not mind getting your feet wet when we have so much to do? It would be necessary to carry you all along the passage."

"Kildare, pray do not be insolent!"

Kildare strode away.

"You'd better let us carry you out, sir," said Jameson. "The water's getting higher, sir. There will be six feet of it here soon."

"Seven or eight feet," said Wally.  
 "More likely nine or ten," said Curly Gibson. "Think how awful it would be if you should be drowned, sir! The Third Form would never get over it, sir."

"Darrell, will you lend some assistance here?"  
 "I have no time for it, sir!" said Darrell abruptly.

Mr. Selby gritted his teeth.  
 "Very well, D'Arcy minor; but pray be careful," he said.

"Right-ho, sir!"  
 "Awfully careful now!" said Jameson. "Take one leg of the chair each. You take one, Wally, and Curly one, and I'll take one. Hobby, you come and take the other. Mind you don't upset Mr. Selby. He will get wet."

Hobbs grinned, and joined the fags in their task. They stooped down into the water, and each of them took a grip on a leg of the chair.

It swayed, and Mr. Selby panted.  
 "Pray be careful! Pray be careful!" he exclaimed. "I—I feel as if I were going over!"

"You're all right, sir!" said Wally cheerily. "When we get the chair high enough, sir, you can sit on it, and then we can carry you out in good style."

"Steady on!" shouted Jameson. "One leg at a time!"

"You're pushing me!" gasped Hobbs.  
 "Ow! It's heavy!" said Curly Gibson. "I didn't know you weighed so much, sir. But it's all right. We'll manage it somehow."

"Now, then, all together! Heave away!"

"Up she goes!"  
 Up she went, certainly; and, whether by accident or design, the chair turned

almost completely sideways, and Mr. Selby went with a headlong splash into the water.

"Yaroo!"  
 "Oh dear!"  
 "Oh, what a fall there was, my countrymen!" murmured Tom Merry.  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Selby had fallen at full length into the water. His feet were wet now, and so was the rest of him. He was wet from head to foot, and as he scrambled up the water ran down his infuriated face in streams, and it ran down his neck and filled his eyes and ears and nose. He coughed and snorted furiously.

"Groogh-hoogh!"  
 "So sorry, sir!" murmured Wally.  
 "You did that on purpose, you young villain! Groogh! Hoogh!"

"Oh, sir!"  
 Smack!  
 Mr. Selby's open hand caught D'Arcy minor on the side of the head, and the scamp of the Third staggered away with a yell. Then Mr. Selby went tramping and splashing out of the library and down the flooded passage, snorting.

"Ow!" said Wally, rubbing his ear.  
 "Ungrateful beast! After all the trouble we've taken with him, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Jameson.  
 "You young rascals!" said Kildare, laughing. "Don't waste time! Carry out some of those books."

"We have to look after our Form-master, you know, Kildare."  
 "Yes, I know; and you deserved what you got!" said Kildare.

Wally rubbed his ear ruefully, but, upon the whole, he was satisfied. He had got back a little of his own, as he expressed it, upon Mr. Selby.

The fags joined again in the labour of transporting the valuables out of the library and up the stairs to the next floor.

They were kept busy till nearly dinner-time, and by that time there were five feet of water in the library. In the Form-rooms the flood was almost up to the ceiling. The dining-room was flooded out, and dinner—a cold dinner—was eaten in a very scratch fashion in the upper passages.

"Well, this is a giddy go!" Monty Lowther exclaimed, as he sat on the window seat at the end of the Shell passage and ate bread and cheese. "Raifton says the dam is quite gone on the river, and the water is not likely to go down for days—not till the rain stops; and I don't believe it will ever stop. It's fun, anyway!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "But my twousahs are ruined!"

"And what about the grub?" said Fatty Wynn dolorously.

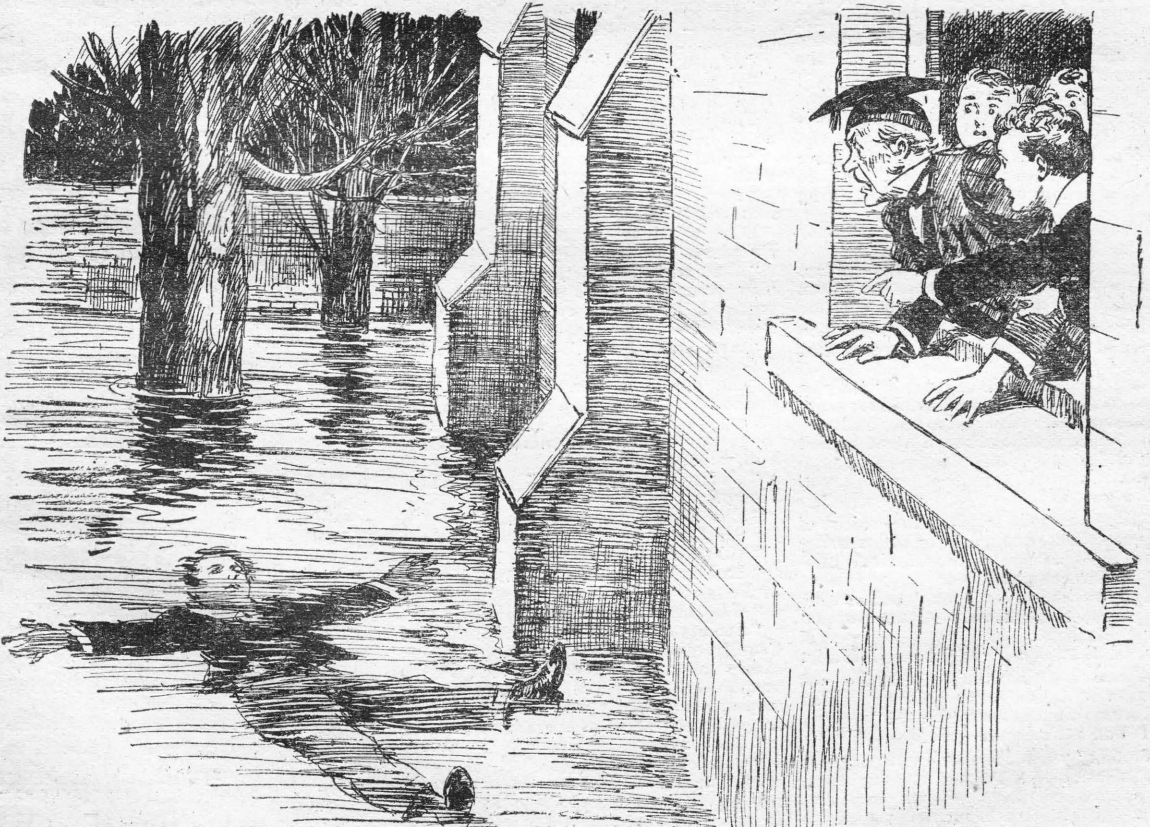
"What's the matter with bread and cheese?" demanded Figgins.

"There's nothing the matter with it," said Fatty Wynn ruefully. "It's all right. But I don't know how we're to keep alive on it. I shall be frightfully hungry!"

"They say we're to stick in the School House for the present," remarked Kerr. "The New House is going to feed with the School House. It seems that it's easier to feed us all together—such as it is."

"Feed us!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "Do they call this feeding us? I think I shall be ill!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "I say, we might try to get in some



"It's D'Arcy minor!" exclaimed Curly Gibson. "I know those clothes. Poor old Wally! He's drowned himself!"  
 "Save him, sir!" cried Jameson. "I—I cannot swim!" panted Mr. Selby. "Oh, good heavens! The unfortunate boy!"

supplies ourselves," said Fatty Wynn. "What price collaring one of the boats and getting down to Rylcombe for some grub?"

"They're going to bring it up in boat-loads," said Tom Merry.

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"Yes; potted beef and bread and cheese," he said. "We can't get anything cooked; the kitchens are under water. Can't even get any tea made unless we make it in the studies. What price getting down to Mr. Bunn's, in Rylcombe, and having a whacking big feed?"

"Poor old Fatty!" said Monty Lowther sympathetically. "Jolly lucky we've got Fatty here, when you come to think of it!"

"Why?" asked Fatty. "If there was anything to cook, it would be all right."

"I mean, in case the flood gets worse and we're cut off from supplies," said Lowther. "Then we shall have to cast lots, as they do in open boats at sea. And as you are the fattest—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"What lovely chops he would make!" said Monty Lowther, looking at the fat Fourth Former with quite a famished expression. "Cooked in lard or butter, with some tonatoes!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Fatty Wynn, looking quite uneasy.

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah, Wally, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as his minor came along the passage with a chunk of bread and cheese in his hand and a black look upon his face.

"I'm getting fed-up!" growled Wally.

"What's happened?" asked Tom Merry. "Wasn't Selby grateful for the way you carried him out of the library?"

"The rotter!" growled Wally. "He's caned me for it—after all the trouble I took. He says he got wet."

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, he must have got wet, you know. You can't fall into a couple of feet of water without getting wet."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm fed-up!" grunted Wally.

"I wish I were!" said Fatty Wynn, with a sigh. "I've almost forgotten what it's like to have enough to eat."

"My hat!" said Redfern. "You managed a pretty good supper last night, I remember."

"Not much," said Wynn. "Only a steak-and-kidney pie, and a cold sausage, and some beef and potatoes, and the ham and eggs and cake. I went to bed hungry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Yow-ow-owl!

Wally jumped up at the voice of Pongo. The mongrel came tearing down the passage, with Herries' bulldog in fierce pursuit.

Wally rushed to the rescue, and caught Pongo up in his arms. Towser yapped round his legs.

"Call that beast off!" roared Wally.

"Towser! Towser!" called out Herries. "Come here, old boy! Has he bitten him, D'Arcy minor?"

"I don't think so—no!"

"Good!" said Herries, with a great deal of relief. "Towser is very careless sometimes when he bites, and I've often been afraid that he would be poisoned—"

"You—you silly ass!" said Wally, with a glare of unspeakable scorn as he marched off with Pongo in his arms.

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## CHAPTER 9.

### The S.P.C.P.!

TOM MERRY sat in his study.

The junior studies were out of reach of the flood, which was not likely to rise any higher.

The masters' studies were not so fortunate, and all the masters had been washed out.

Tom Merry's tea-table was spread with the best spread the Terrible Three could raise in the unfortunate circumstances. There was plenty of bread and a good allowance of butter, and there was tea. Beyond those things there was very little.

"Never mind," said Monty Lowther. "The fellows are all bringing with them what they can raise. Besides, this isn't a tea-fight—it's a meeting!"

The door opened, and the chums of Study No. 6 came in.

Jack Blake solemnly deposited a loaf upon the table; Herries laid down a plate bearing a chunk of cheese; Digby some eggs, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy a bun.

Tom Merry surveyed the supplies with a grin.

"We're getting on," he remarked. "Hallo, Kangy, what have you got?"

Kangaroo came into the study and laid a tin of potted shrimps on the table.

Reilly of the Fourth followed him in, with a tin of condensed milk.

"Sure, it's all I've got," he remarked. "We must share and share alike in these hard times."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Any more coming?" asked Kangaroo.

"Yes; D'Arcy minor."

"Having fags to tea?" asked Blake.

"It's a meeting," Tom Merry explained.

"A meeting—what about?"

"A meeting of the S.P.C.P.!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors stared at him. They had never heard of the S.P.C.P. before.

"What on earth's that?" demanded Blake. "Is it a jape?"

"No; very serious, and frightfully important. Here's Wally!"

D'Arcy minor came into the study. He carried Pongo in his arms.

"You can chuck that away," said Kangaroo. "If that's your contribution, young D'Arcy, you can cook it yourself!"

"And eat it, too!" said Digby.

Wally snorted.

"Oh, don't be funny!" he said. He stroked his shaggy pet, who was whimpering in his arms. "Have you told the fellows what the meetings about, Tom Merry?"

"Yes; the S.P.C.P.," said Tom Merry.

"The which?" asked Wally.

"S.P.C.P.!"

"What the dickens is that?"

"Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Pongo!"

"Wh-what!" exclaimed Blake.

"Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Pongo!" repeated Tom Merry blandly. "It seems that Pongo hasn't been treated with sufficient respect, and Wally has called upon us for our assistance to see him righted."

"Bai Jove!"

"Gentlemen, the meeting is now open," said Tom Merry. "You can talk while you eat, and if there isn't much to eat, you can take it out in talking."

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, you are aware that St. Jim's is flooded—"

"Well, I've heard something about it," said Blake, with a nod, as he

jammed the end of a poker into the shrimp tin to open it. "Go ahead!"

"Owing to the flood, the school is rather upset, and Mr. Selby has taken advantage of the general upset to show off his rotten temper. He has found fault with Digby—"

"Cheeked me in the passage!" growled Digby.

"He has been quite personal to Lowther and Manners and me," said Tom Merry. "Nice, inoffensive fellows like us! He has called Kangaroo names."

"And, faith, he called me names, too!" said Reilly. "He referred to me as a bog-trotter, and, sure, I've never trotted on a bog in me life!"

"He was wathah wude to me," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully.

"He told me I was as twoublesome a vascal as my youngah bwothah. That was not only wude, but it was untwue."

"He has made himself obnoxious all round," said Tom Merry. "Now, it isn't as if he were a Housemaster, or master of a Senior Form, or the Shell—he's only master of a set of blessed fags—"

"What?" said Wally.

"Ahem! I mean, he's only master of the Third, and he ought to be pleased at being tolerated by fellows like us. Instead of which—"

"He's a beast!" said Wally. "I've had frightful lickings. I can show you marks on my back. I'd show 'em to the Head, only it would be sneaking. I shall ache for days."

"It is certainly frightfully impertinent of him to stwike a D'Arcy," said Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther. "Nothing ever strikes a D'Arcy—not even the knowledge that he is talking out of his hat—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Gentlemen, I have not yet stated the head of his offending. He has taken the liberty of thrashing Pongo. Now, a man can lick a fag, and the fag is all the better for it as a rule—"

"Why, you ass!" said Wally.

"But when it comes to licking a dog, I think it is time for the line to be drawn. Pongo is an offensive beast, of course—"

"Look here—" roared Wally.

"And if Selby gave him a kick or two we would pass it over. But he has licked Pongo with his cane, and Wally says that he found him in his study to-day and chased him round the table with his cane, licking at him."

"Pongo was only gnawing a cushion," said Wally. "He likes gnawing things, and he's rather fond of cushions—poor old Pongo!"

"He's marked with Selby's cane," said Tom Merry. "Look at him!"

Wally held up the kicking mongrel for inspection. There were undoubtedly the marks of Mr. Selby's cane upon Pongo, and the juniors frowned as they discerned them. The dog was evidently still in pain, and the juniors felt that, like the prophet of old, they did well to be angry.

There was no excuse for cruelty to a dog, whatever the state of Mr. Selby's temper and digestion might be.

"Rotter!" was the general verdict.

"Therefore, gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "the present society has been formed—the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Pongo."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Selby has got to be gently but firmly restrained.

"Hear, hear!"

"He must be made to learn that he cannot be rude to the Fourth, and call

the Shell names, and that cruelty to animals is severely barred."

"Bravo!"  
 "Therefore, gentlemen—"  
 "We've had that before," said Blake.  
 "Therefore, gentlemen," repeated Tom Merry firmly, "this meeting of the S.P.C.P. has been called to deliberate on the matter."

"Hear, hear!"  
 "To cut the cackle and come to the hoeses," said Monty Lowther, "we're on the warpath, and Selby is going to have beans. And the only question is how."

"Good!" said Blake. "Let's put our heads together and think it over, and I'll give you my opinion when I've finished the shrimps."

"Wally has suggested boiling him in oil, and chucking him out of the window into the flood," pursued Tom Merry. "We can't possibly do both, and it really doesn't seem possible to do either. But I have a wheeze—"

"Go it!"  
 "Suppose the flood were to rise as high as the bed-rooms to-night, and Selby were to get flooded out of bed, and—"

"But it won't," said Blake, staring. "The water can't rise any higher. It's reached its highest level."

"We can make it."  
 "Make it rise higher?"  
 "Exactly!"

"Bai Jove! I'd like to know how you're going to do that, deah boy!"

"Not all of it," said Tom Merry. "Some of it."

"How?"  
 "By carrying it upstairs in cans."  
 "You ass!"

"Well, it's perfectly simple. And if somebody swamped a couple of big cans of water over Selby's bed to-night, and yelled, 'Run for your life!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "I think he would run, and it would be funny."

"Not for the chap who did it, if Selby caught him," grinned Kangaroo.

"No; that's why Wally must keep out of it. He will be the first chap suspected. Selby doesn't know what a dear little innocent dove he is, as we do."

"Bai Jove!"  
 "So Wally must be able to prove a first-class alibi. Gentlemen, we are going to do this—the first proceeding of the S.P.C.P."

And the members of the S.P.C.P. chimed in cordially with:  
 "Hear, hear!"

CHAPTER 10.

A Fright for the Form-master!

**T**HE lowest floor of St. Jim's was deserted that evening, and when the fellows went to bed it was to the accompaniment of the sound of water washing on the staircases and along the passages.

Outside in the quadrangle the rain was drenching down as hard as ever. Rain dashed against the panes of the windows and splashed upon the surging flood that surrounded the old school. In the darkness the New House fellows were ferried across to their House for the night.

Tom Merry & Co. went up to bed with their little scheme fully formed in their minds.

Mr. Selby, as if to earn fully the resentment of the juniors, made himself more obnoxious than ever that evening.

Wally was late for evening preparation in the Third Form Room owing to the keen interest of the proceedings of the S.P.C.P. in Tom Merry's study, and

JUST MY FUN



Monty Lowther Calling

Hallo, everybody! It's a put-up job. What is? Paper-hanging. A reader says he doesn't like puns. Ivory much dislike them, too. Ow! The report that Mr. Ratcliff is a cave man is untrue. He's a cane man. "Gnats don't seem to like my skin," remarks Skimpole. But they "lump" it! Money talks, they say. But it never gives itself away! "It is important in a boxing match to have a good referee," says Kildare. He's the man who really counts! Then there was the Irish burglar who, having climbed to the top of his ladder and found the window shut, banged on the glass and yelled: "Begorra! Don't you know it's unhealthy to sleep with your windows shut?"

It was Jameson who wrote that the highest peak in the Alps is Blanc Mange. Oh, I hear the best thing for flu is a mountain-top. But so few chemists stock them. A Wayland boxer is also a successful angler. He probably uses the right hook. Young Gibson says a thermometer is an

he was caned for being late. And, not content with that, Mr. Selby complained to Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, of the conduct of the Terrible Three in detaining the fag from his preparation. Mr. Linton reprimanded the chums of the Shell for it, and they listened to Mr. Linton in silence, but with smouldering eyes.

It was a little more added to their score against the Third Form master, and their desire to avenge Wally's wrongs was made all the keener by the fact that they had wrongs of their own to avenge.

"Unpleasant beast!" said Monty Lowther, as he sat on his bed in the Shell dormitory and kicked off his boots. "It's curious that Selby should go round especially looking for trouble just when we're ready to give him all he wants."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I've got the two cans under my bed," he remarked. "The unpleasant beast will be sorry for himself presently."

Kildare came into the dormitory to see lights out for the juniors. The Terrible Three discreetly ceased to speak of their little plan, and the captain of St. Jim's saw lights out and retired without any suspicion that anything was "on."

Neither had Mr. Selby any suspicion when he retired to his room about half-past ten, and went to bed. He had given lines to about half the Third Form, so he was feeling almost cheerful when he went up to turn in.

Silence fell upon the old school, broken only by the surging sound of the flood round the School House and the lashing of the rain upon the windows.

Everybody went to bed, or, at all events, ought to have been in bed. Mr. Selby was fast asleep, dreaming that he was caning the whole of his Form in

instrument for measuring tempers. He'll learn "by degrees." "Sometimes a very little will upset a fellow's digestion," says Fatty Wynn. A mere trifle, in fact! A footballer who was a champion marksman is now a sports dealer. Commercial travellers ring him up—they fear "personal contact." Wayland local authorities are getting to the root of their road problems. Well, they've been digging long enough! Wayland headline: "Pig Blown Overboard During Gale." A regular "sow-wester"! A business man says this country needs men with courage to spend money. Well, if he'll put up the money, we'll supply the courage!

France's champion chiropodist is on the way. See the corn-curing hero comes! You know the borrower's motto? "Touch" and go. A doctor says there are too many quacks. Unorthodoxes! A market report states that all classes of fat stock retained their figures. No signs of slimming here!

Next: "What are you doing in the reservoir?" demanded the keeper of the small boy. "It's all right, guv'nor—I'm not drinking any of it!" gasped the culprit. "I get over a hundred stations on my wireless," boasted Gore. "Yes, I've heard it," agreed Figgins. "You seem to get them all at once!" Footer yarn: "My advice to you," said the trainer, "is to go through the motions of kicking without touching the ball." "My dear chap," said the beginner, "that's precisely the trouble I'm trying to overcome!"

On the mark, boys!

turn, and a pleasant smile diffused itself over his face.

He awoke suddenly.

Splash, splash, splash!

"Grooogh!" gasped Mr. Selby.

He sat up in bed blindly.

Water was swamping over him from somewhere. The bed was dripping. There was a crash as a chair was overturned, and the door banged open.

A voice yelled from the darkness:

"The flood—the flood! Run for your life!"

The Form-master gave a gasp of terror.

He leaped out of bed, and stumbled over a chair, and rolled on the floor and yelled. He groped his way blindly to the door and escaped into the passage.

All was dark there, but the dashing of the rain filled the passage with sound. Mr. Selby rushed along the passage at top speed in the dark, making for the upper staircase. In the belief that the water had risen, and that the bed-rooms were being flooded, the Form-master thought only of himself and his own safety.

The Third Form dormitory was on the same level, and it was certainly his duty to see first to the safety of his pupils, but he had forgotten the existence of the Third Form in his terror.

He reached the upper staircase, and clambered up blindly in the dark, and did not pause till he was on the landing at the top.

There he sank down, shivering, in his pyjamas, and gasping for breath.

"Good heavens!" he muttered. "What a narrow escape! Oh dear!"

He recovered his breath, and some of his composure, as he felt himself out of danger. He was surprised by the silence of the House. Had the rest of the school been overwhelmed in their quarters and drowned? He shuddered at the thought. Who was it that had

warned him of his danger? It was amazing that no one was stirring—that the silence of the House was broken only by the wind and rain without.

Mr. Selby staggered to his feet and shouted.

"Wake up! Help! The flood—the flood! Run for your lives!"

His voice rang shrilly through the silent House.

"The flood! Run!"

In the passage below there was the sound of a faint chuckle.

"Time we got back to bed!" murmured the voice of Monty Lowther.

"Yes, rather! My hat! He'll wake up the House!" muttered Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Three dim forms glided into the Shell dormitory, three more into the Fourth. The passage was silent and deserted, but not for long.

Mr. Selby's yells were waking the House, and there was a sound of opening doors and calling voices. Lights gleamed from bed-rooms and dormitories.

"What's the matter?"

"Who's that?"

"What's happened?"

"The flood!" roared Mr. Selby.

"Get up the stairs; the water's rising."

"Great Scott!"

"Run!"

A crowd of fellows, half-awakened and wholly alarmed, dashed for the upper stairs.

Kildare came along the dormitory passage with an electric torch in his hand.

Kildare was not alarmed. The light showed him that there was no water on the floor of the passage, and that was evidence enough that the flood had not risen in the night.

He threw the beam of the torch upon the upper staircase, and stared at Mr. Selby above.

"What's the matter, sir?" he demanded.

"The flood! It is rising!"

"It is not rising!" rapped out the captain of St. Jim's.

"What!"

"There is no water here!"

"No water there!" stuttered Mr. Selby. "You—you must be mistaken! The water is swamping my bed-room, which is on the same level."

"You've been dreaming, sir. The water is at the same level, and it is not above the first floor," said Kildare curtly.

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed Mr. Selby.

He descended the stairs in a gingerly fashion, but he could not help seeing that Kildare's statement was correct. The other fugitives from the upper stairs followed him down.

"It must have been a dream, sir," said Lefevre of the Fifth. "That's what I say! You were dreaming about the flood!"

"But someone called to me to run!" gasped Mr. Selby.

"Nightmare, sir," said Darrell.

"It was not a nightmare!" shouted the Third Form master. "I tell you that my room is swimming in water. It has risen higher than my bed!"

"Impossible, sir!" said Kildare.

"Kildare! How dare you—"

"It would flow out here, sir, if it were in your room," said the captain of St. Jim's as patiently as he could.

Mr. Selby could not help recognising that obvious fact himself, and he was amazed. But he knew that he was wet; that was a fact, too!

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"Come and look in my room!" he exclaimed angrily.

"Very well, sir; but it can't be flooded."

The prefects followed the Third Form master into his room. Half the House was awake now, and crowding into the passages with loud exclamations of alarm. The prefects called out that all was right; but the tumult was not easily quelled.

"There, sir, you see your room is not flooded," said Kildare, as he shone the torch into Mr. Selby's bedroom.

The Third Form master stared at the room in amazement. There were splashes of wet on the carpet, and that was all. He rushed to the bed. The bed was dripping.

Mr. Selby pointed triumphantly to the wet bedclothes.

"Look!" he exclaimed.

"What do you say to that?"

"By Jove! Somebody's been drenching your bed, sir," said Kildare. "I—I suppose you don't walk in your sleep, do you, sir?"

"Looks as if the water-jug has been upset here."

"It's a jape," said Lefevre, with a grin. "Somebody has been frightening you, sir."

Mr. Selby glared.

"I was not frightened," he said savagely. "I—I was a little startled. Yes, you are right; it is a wicked, practical joke, and I am sure I know the author of it."

Mr. Selby, glowering, bundled on a dressing-gown and slippers, and rushed away to the Third Form dormitory.

There was a general chuckle as the fellows went back to bed. Kildare followed the Third Form master to the dormitory. He guessed that Mr. Selby was going to see Wally; and Mr. Selby was in such a towering rage that there was no telling what he might do.

## CHAPTER 11.

### A False Accusation!

THE Third were all awake, and someone had turned on the light in the dormitory.

Half a dozen of the fags were at the door, looking out, as Mr. Selby rushed up, with the sturdy captain of St. Jim's striding in his wake.

Mr. Selby glared at the fags; but D'Arcy minor was not among them, and he pushed his way roughly through them and entered the dormitory.

Wally was in bed, looking quite peaceful. His peace was suddenly interrupted. Mr. Selby gripped him by the shoulder, and dragged him out of bed. Wally came down upon the floor with a bump and a yell.

"Yaroooh! Warrer you up to? Yowp!"

"You young rascal—"

"Oh, sir!"

"It is useless for you to pretend that you have been asleep!" thundered Mr. Selby. "I know perfectly well that it was you."

"Wh-what was me, sir?"

"You have been in my room!" roared Mr. Selby. "You have drenched



"Duck!" yelled Monteith. Everybody ducked except the juniors. The Third Form master jumped up into the water.

my bed with water in order to make me believe that the floor was flooded."

"I, sir!"

"Yes, you, D'Arcy minor. Don't tell me any falsehoods; you know it perfectly well."

"I didn't, sir."

"I shall punish you—"

"I haven't been out of the dormitory, sir."

"It is false!"

"The fellows will all tell you the same, sir," said Wally, getting up and retreating round the bed. "I haven't even been out of bed."

"I do not believe you."

"Well, I can't help that, sir. It's true."

"It's true, sir," said Curly Gibson, in surprise. "Wally hasn't been up, sir."

"No, sir!" said Hobbs.

"He ain't been out of bed, sir," said Frayne.

Mr. Selby gritted his teeth. Two or three more fags gave evidence to the same effect. But Mr. Selby was not to be convinced.

"I know perfectly well that it was you, D'Arcy minor!" he said between his teeth. "I shall cane you severely before you go back to bed!"

"Excuse me, sir," said Kildare. "The kids all say that D'Arcy minor hasn't been out of the dorm, sir. It's absurd to suppose they're all telling untruths."



Selby as the low branch scraped over the heads of the next moment the branch knocked him backwards

It must have been somebody else and not D'Arcy minor."

Mr. Selby glared at the captain of St. Jim's.

"When I want advice from a prefect I shall ask for it!" he snapped. "I am quite certain that D'Arcy minor is the culprit. It was an act of revenge for a chastisement he received."

"But surely, sir," said Kildare, looking the Third Form master in the eyes, "you don't doubt the word of all these juniors?"

"I do not want any interference from you, Kildare!" exclaimed Mr. Selby.

Kildare flushed.

"Very well, sir. If you persist in punishing D'Arcy minor for something he hasn't done, I shall call Mr. Railton!" he said firmly.

"I am here!" said the Housemaster's voice at the door. "What is the matter? What has happened, Mr. Selby?"

Mr. Selby calmed himself a little at the appearance of the senior master. He pointed to D'Arcy minor with a trembling finger.

"That boy has drenched my bed with water, and alarmed me by calling out that the flood had risen!" he exclaimed. "I left my bed in the belief that the whole floor was flooded and ascended to the top of the house. I shall catch cold. The wicked young rascal—"

"I am sure Mr. Selby must have been

dreaming, sir," said Wally demurely. "He must have dreamed all that, sir."

"D'Arcy minor!" said Mr. Railton sternly.

"I am sure of it, sir. If Mr. Selby thought that the whole floor was flooded, he must have thought that this dormitory was flooded, too; and he then would have come in to get us out, sir, instead of running away to save himself."

Some of the fags chuckled. Mr. Selby seemed transfixed. Wally spoke in a perfectly quiet and respectful way, as if he were firmly convinced that Mr. Selby would indeed have done his duty in that unselfish manner; and most certainly he ought to have done. Mr. Railton suppressed a smile.

"Did you not come here for the boys, Mr. Selby, when you imagined that the whole place was flooded?" he asked.

"N-no, I did not!" gasped Mr. Selby. "I—I was confused, and—and in haste—"

"It must have been a dream, sir," said Wally. "You wouldn't have run away and left us to be drowned, sir."

"Silence!" yelled Mr. Selby. "You must not be impertinent, D'Arcy minor," said Mr. Railton.

"But I'm not being impertinent, sir," said Wally, looking perplexed. "It would be impertinent to suppose that Mr. Selby would run away and leave us to be drowned. I can't possibly think such a thing of my Form-master, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Joe Frayne suddenly.

"Silence, Frayne! D'Arcy minor, it appears that in the—

the confusion of the moment, Mr. Selby did indeed forget his duties in this dormitory. That, however, does not excuse you for having played such a trick—"

"But I didn't play it, sir," said Wally. "I haven't been out of bed. All the fellows here know that I haven't."

And the Third Form chimed in with their testimony.

"It is all false," said Mr. Selby. "They are not speaking the truth."

"Ahem! That is hardly likely, Mr. Selby. I think that you have really jumped too hastily to this conclusion," said Mr. Railton. "D'Arcy minor appears to me to be cleared. It must have been someone else, from some other dormitory."

Mr. Selby clenched his hands.

"I do not believe it," he said. "But I shall lay this matter before the Head in the morning, Mr. Railton, and leave it in his hands."

"Very well, Mr. Selby."

And the Third Form master stalked out of the dormitory.

"Return to your beds, my boys," said Mr. Railton quietly.

The fags went back to bed, and Mr. Railton and the captain of St. Jim's retired. In the darkness a series of cachinnations sounded from the beds.

"Oh, my only Aunt Jane!" gasped Wally. "What larks! Fancy old Selby scooting up to the top of the House in the dark—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And leaving us all here to be drowned dead!" chuckled Joe Frayne.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a show-up for Selby!" grinned Hobbs. "Nice kind of Form-master to rely upon in a dangerous time—I don't think!"

"He will be grinned to death over this, to-morrow," chuckled Wally.

And the Third Form chuckled themselves to sleep.

But Mr. Selby did not get to sleep so soon.

When he returned to his room he found his bed drenched, and it was impossible to sleep in it again. Mr. Selby dressed himself, and passed the rest of the night in an armchair with a rug over him. He did not sleep well; and he was very glad when the morning light glimmered through the wet panes.

He rose unusually early that morning, and went downstairs raging inwardly. He was still firmly convinced that D'Arcy minor had been guilty of the unparalleled outrage of the night, but he knew that it would be difficult to bring it home to the scamp of the Third.

The whole Form were evidently in the plot to protect Wally.

As soon as the Head was down, Mr. Selby raged into his study, and placed the matter before him. And he very nearly forgot the respect due to the reverend Head of St. Jim's when he found that Dr. Holmes took Mr. Railton's view, that it was impossible to convict the whole Third Form of bearing false witness.

"Then—then the young rascal is not to be punished, sir!" stuttered Mr. Selby.

"I cannot believe that it was D'Arcy minor, my dear sir," said the Head soothingly. "But if the real author of the outrage can be discovered—"

"I am convinced that it was D'Arcy minor—"

"If the real author of the outrage can be discovered, he shall be flogged," said the Head. "That is all I can say. The matter shall be strictly inquired into."

And that was all the satisfaction that Mr. Selby could obtain from the Head. He left Dr. Holmes' study trembling with anger.

## CHAPTER 12.

### A Sudden Alarm!

**T**HE rain was still coming down heavily.

From the windows of the School House the St. Jim's fellows looked out upon the sea of swirling waters, from which the old elms emerged with dripping branches.

From the New House the boats brought the New House fellows over for morning lessons.

Dr. Holmes and his staff were grappling with the difficulties of the situation most manfully; although their efforts were not exactly appreciated by the juniors. Lessons did not cease. The Form-rooms being flooded, and even the library washed out, the dormitories were called into use, and at that safe distance from the surging waters the juniors set to work as usual.

Tom Merry met Wally as they came out after third lesson. The scamp of the Third was squeezing his hands as he came along the passage, and the expression on his face was far from amiable.

The captain of the Shell looked sympathetic.

"Catching it again?" he asked.

D'Arcy minor groaned.

"Selby's an awful beast!" he said.

"He's convinced that I damped him last night, and he's been taking it out of me. I've had six this morning. I'm getting fed up!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's too wotten! If this goes on, I shall regard it as my duty to wemonstwat with Mr. Selby."

"Fat lot of good that would do!" grunted Wally.

"Weally, Wally, that is a vewy vulgah expression——"

"Oh, rats!" groaned Wally. "Look here, you chaps, I'm not going to stand it! I'm going to wring old Selby's heart with remorse by committing suicide!"

"What!"

"Don't you think he would go simply green if my dead body were found floating under the windows?" asked Wally.

"I dare say he would," said Tom Merry. "But where would you come in, you ass?"

"I forbid you to think of anythin' of the sort, Wally, you awful young duffah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in a shocked tone.

"Besides, it's impossible!" said Monty Lowther. "You know the old proverb: Those who are born to be hanged cannot be drowned——"

"Well, you'll see!" said Wally. "I'm jolly well going to be found drowned, and you'll see what old Selby will say then! And you fellows are going to help me. I shall have to prove another alibi when the body is seen."

"What do you mean, you young ass?" said Tom Merry, laughing. "What wheeze have you got in your head?"

Wally lowered his voice cautiously. "I'm thinking of stuffing a suit of clothes and dropping it into the water," he explained. "We can let it out on string, and keep it bobbing up and down outside the window. Then, when I'm missing——"

"Bai Jove!"

"It will give Selby a shock, and make him realise that he's on the wrong tack," Wally explained. "When I turn up again, alive and well, he will hug me like a long-lost son, I should think."

"Yes; I can see old Selby doing that!" said Tom Merry.

"I don't think!" murmured Lowther.

"It's rather too thick, Wally," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head.

Wally sniffed. "Well, if old Selby begins on me again this afternoon, I'm going to do it!" he said. "I'll make him sit up somehow! The Head wouldn't let him rag us as he does if he knew!"

"Wally, deah boy, I cannot consent to——"

"That's all right, Gussy! I can manage it without your consent!" said Wally cheerfully.

And he walked away to save further arguments.

During dinner Wally and Curly Gibson and Joe Frayne were seen to be exchanging a good many whispers, and after dinner they disappeared into a box-room.

The Terrible Three gave them a look-in there, and found them very busy. Wally's oldest suit of clothes lay upon the floor, and the juniors were stuffing it out with straw and rags and all sorts of rubbish into a semblance of the human form.

Wally was busily engaged in manufacturing a head to be fastened upon the figure. He had painted a football white, and was daubing features upon it, and the effect was ludicrous. A wig taken from the properties of the Junior

Dramatic Society was glued upon the end of the footer. The other end was fastened to the collar, and sewn upon the stuffing of the body.

"My hat!" said Monty Lowther. "It's awfully like you, Wally, only a little better-looking! And that won't be noticed in the water!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will take old Selby in when he sees it," said Wally, sewing away industriously. "He will be sorry when his brightest and most promising pupil has been drove to despair, as Frayne would say——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wally, old man, I should recommend you to draw the line!" said Tom Merry seriously. "It will give Selby a turn; but when it comes out——"

"There will be a row!" said Manners. "And a fearful licking for you, Wally!" said Monty Lowther.

"I'm getting the lickings now," said Wally. "Old Selby can't be a worse beast than he is, anyway, that's one comfort. You chaps can keep out of it, you know; I don't want you to get into a row."

"Oh, rot!" said Tom Merry. "We're not thinking of that. As members of the S.P.C.P., we're bound to take a hand. We're giving you good advice now——"

"Thank you for nothing!" yawned Wally. "I think we'll have a pair of your boots fastened on to it, Curly. I haven't any to spare."

"I think you won't!" said Curly, very decidedly.

"Must have some boots," said Wally. "If you fellows want to make yourselves useful, you can go and dig up a pair of old boots somewhere."

Tom Merry laughed, and fetched a pair of ancient, discarded boots. Having proved unable to dissuade Wally from his scheme, the Terrible Three lent him assistance in perfecting the weird figure, and it was satisfactorily finished before the bell rang for afternoon lessons.

The juniors went into the dormitory to their lessons. Mr. Selby was already in the Third Form dormitory when the Third came in. Wally was one minute late, and Mr. Selby, remembering his fright of the night before, did not let the opportunity pass.

"You are late, D'Arcy minor!" he rapped out.

"Only a minute, sir," said Wally.

"You will take fifty lines!"

The Third Form took their places in the rows of chairs which had been arranged in the dormitory in the place of forms.

Mr. Selby was more snappish than ever that afternoon. He devoted his special attention to Wally. Dr. Holmes was too just to allow D'Arcy minor to be punished for the jape he had not committed; but Mr. Selby had no doubts on the subject, and he was determined that Wally should be punished one way or another, and in the lessons he had many opportunities.

Wally was not distinguished for hard work or scholarly attainments, and his little failings were ruthlessly visited now. Before the afternoon was half over Wally was in a desperate frame of mind, and when he was called out to be caned for the third time he did not stir.

"D'Arcy minor, come out here!" said Mr. Selby.

Wally did not move.

"Do you hear me, D'Arcy minor?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Then come out here at once!"

"I think I've been caned enough, sir!" said Wally resolutely.

Mr. Selby gasped. So did the Third. The Form-master strode towards D'Arcy minor, caught him by the collar, and jerked him out before the class.

"Hold out your hand, D'Arcy minor!" he thundered.

Wally put his hands behind him.

"You'd better not touch me, sir!" he said. "You'll be sorry for it! You'll drive me to jump into the water and drown myself, sir!"

"How dare you say such things, D'Arcy minor?" snapped Mr. Selby, shocked as well as angry. "I shall cane you severely for uttering such a wicked threat!"

"Well, you know what to expect now, sir!" said Wally. "When I'm found missing, you'll know what has become of me!"

"Silence! Hold out your hand!"

Wally obeyed, and was caned. He went back to his seat with a dogged expression and a gleam in his eyes.

Mr. Selby glanced at him once or twice; and perhaps he realised he had done enough, for he did not trouble Wally again that afternoon.

When the Third were dismissed, Wally went out with the rest, with a grim expression on his face.

Tea in Hall was no longer possible; Hall was under water. The fellows who had studies had tea there; but the Third Form had tea in the dormitory.

Mr. Selby had charge of them there, and when the Third assembled for tea, D'Arcy minor did not appear.

The Form-master noticed his absence at once.

"Where is D'Arcy minor, Gibson?" he asked.

As if in answer to Mr. Selby's question, there came a sudden sound from the direction of the windows.

Splash!

Mr. Selby started up.

A loud cry rang in the air, and Mr. Selby, turning very white, rushed to the window and looked out. A dozen feet below the dormitory window the water washed against the walls of the School House. In the water Mr. Selby saw a form in Etons floating under the window.

He gave a stuttering cry.

"D'Arcy minor! Good heavens!"

## CHAPTER 13.

### Found Drowned!

MR. SELBY gazed down from the window upon the waters with a horror-stricken face.

The Third Formers made a wild rush to the windows and looked out upon the waters.

Curly Gibson gave a yell.

"It's D'Arcy minor! I know those clothes!"

"Wally! Poor old Wally!"

"He's drowned himself!"

Jameson caught hold of Mr. Selby's sleeve in his excitement.

"Save him, sir!" he shrieked.

"What—what—what——"

"Save him, sir! Jump in after him!"

"What—what—what——"

"Are you going to let him drown, sir?" shrieked Jameson.

"Jump in, sir! Save him!"

"I—I—I cannot swim!" panted Mr. Selby. "It—it would be no use my jumping in. Oh, good heavens! The unfortunate boy—— Help! Help!"

"Jump in, sir!"

"Save him, sir!"

"Help!"

All the Third were yelling at the top of their voices. Mr. Selby's face was like a sheet. He gazed at the floating

(Continued on page 18.)





Let the Editor be your pal. Write to him to-day, addressing your letters :  
The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,  
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

**H**ALLO, chums! Let me remind you once again of the unbeatable value, in quality and quantity, of those two ever-popular annuals, "The Holiday Annual," price 5s., and "The Popular Book of Boys' Stories," price 2s. 6d. Two wonderful new editions of both have just been published, and there's no doubt they are better than ever!

For the boy who likes school tales the "H.A." will suit him down to the ground. The 1936 issue contains nearly all school stories, featuring the jolly chums of St. Jim's, Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Frank's schools. Also, there are hosts of other ripping features which will appeal to every reader.

In contrast to the "H.A.," the "Popular Book" contains powerful yarns of all phases of adventure. If you like stories of motor-racing, mystery, flying, the Wild West, and the Great War, etc., then this bargain book will give you hours of exciting entertainment.

If you want one or both of these splendid annuals, inquire of your newsagent if he runs a book club. Most of them have schemes whereby you can obtain the books you want by paying a small weekly sum.

### "GRIMES GETS GOING!"

Do you remember Grimes, the grocer's boy of Rylcombe? He's Lumley-Lumley's special pal, and he stood by the millionaire's son when he was down on his luck a little while back. Well, in next week's great yarn Grimes is featured in a new role. Many a time has the grocer's boy come to St. Jim's—to the tradesmen's entrance, with a basket of goods on his arm. But in a few short hours his whole outlook is changed. No longer will he go to the back entrance; instead, he will proudly take his place with Tom Merry & Co. In short, he becomes a Fourth Former of St. Jim's. It's a wonderful change for Grimes; but, as

he soon discovers, there are a few in the school who resent his advent, and will do their best to make things mighty unpleasant for him. But you can trust Grimes to look after himself! This wonderful yarn of the adventures of a one-time grocer's boy at St. Jim's is a yarn that cannot fail to have the greatest appeal for every reader.

### "THE BLACK HAND AT ST. FRANK'S!"

The latter remark also applies to the next gripping chapters of our super-serial. Handforth and his chums may consider themselves lucky to have escaped from the clutches of the masked mystery men at Gallows Mere, but their danger is more deadly now, and nothing, it seems, can save them from the poison-gas bomb which has been thrown into their dormitory by one of Dr. Zangari's "killers." You simply must read what happens in next Wednesday's nerve-tingling instalment. Don't forget to pop round to your newsagent's and order the next GEM in advance.

### INVISIBLE RAYS!

More and more are invisible rays being brought into everyday use. There are some big business houses which have adopted them as a protection against burglars. What happens is that as soon as the burglar breaks the ray, which might be directed across any passage, an alarm is rung in the night-watchman's room, and an indicator tells him exactly where the intruder is. As there are usually invisible rays all over the place, the burglar has little chance of going undiscovered. And, unfortunately for him, too, he is unaware

### PEN PALS COUPON

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that he has unconsciously given warning of his presence!

But invisible rays have now been put to a new use. They are being tried out to operate a pedestrian crossing on a busy arterial road. When a person comes to the crossing he will unknowingly break one of the rays, and, automatically, first the amber, and then the stop lights will flash on, bringing approaching traffic to a halt, and making it safe for the pedestrian to cross. After a certain time has elapsed, the traffic lights change back to green again, and the invisible rays are once again projected through space around the signal.

### FOOTBALL FEVER!

It was the day of an important football match in Prague, and every footer fan was eager to get to the ground as soon as possible. One of those most enthusiastic about the game was a restaurant proprietor, who intended shutting up his place at a certain time so that he could go to see it. One by one his customers hurriedly finished their meals and went off, until only one man remained. But unfortunately for the restaurant proprietor the last customer was a slow eater. His excitement growing every minute, the former waited for the diner to finish. Minutes seemed like hours as the time for the kick-off drew near. At last the restaurant owner could contain his impatience no longer, and hinted that he wanted to depart for the match. The customer remarked that he knew nothing about the great game, whereupon the footer fan grabbed up a rice pudding and threw it in the diner's face! He never saw that match, after all. He saw the inside of a police station instead!

### THE HOTEL ON WHEELS!

In a little over a week's time the wonderful new L.N.E.R. express train, Silver Jubilee, will pull out of Newcastle on its first run to London. This "hush-hush" express is the last word in luxury, speed, and comfort. It has been called the "hotel on wheels," and it certainly is. On board there is a sumptuous dining-room, a comfortable writing-room, and a saloon for ladies' hair-dressing. In addition, there is a talkie news-reel theatre, and, of course, the radio. In fact, every comfort for long-distance travelling is provided for. The engine, with its bullet-shaped nose, is a marvellous thing of grace and speed, and wind-resistance has been cut down to a minimum by stream-lining. It is expected that on sections of its run the Silver Jubilee will attain a speed of over ninety miles an hour, and that the 268 miles between London and Newcastle will be covered in four hours!

### THE EDITOR.



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

Clem Catford, Leasingham, via Watervale, South Australia; pictures of cricketers, film stars, aeroplanes.

Donald Ross, 66, Queen's Road, Londonderry, Smethwick, Staffs; age 12-14.

J. Phillips, 49, Birkbeck Road, Enfield, Middlesex; age 11-15; wireless telegraphy.

Miss Violet May, 73, Redman Buildings, Bourne Estate, Holborn, E.C.1; girl correspondents; age 16 up.

Miss Elsie Kirsch, 99, Henslowe Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22; girl correspondents; age 16 up.

V. Baxendale, 1, Vincent Street, Openshaw, Manchester; America; music, dance bands.

Philip P. Ryan, 30a, Mount Street, Coogee, N.S.W., Australia; age 14-16; England and U.S.A.

George Waters, 88, Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham, Glos; radio.

W. A. Agnew, 14, Victoria Park, Londonderry, N. Ireland; cricket, soccer, GEM, "Magnet"; age 12-15.

C. L. Woods, Coney Burrow, London Road, Brandon, Suffolk; old St. Frank's yarns.

Miss Eileen McCabe, 8121, Avenue des Belges, Montreal, Canada; girl correspondents; age 18-21.

Miss Mary Donolo, 8121, Avenue des Belges, Montreal, Canada; girl correspondents; age 18-21.

Stuart Hogue, 855, Outremont Avenue, Outremont, Quebec, Canada; stamps.

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form, and could discern no sign of life. It floated with the motion of the water, and knocked gently against the stone wall below the window.

The face was almost hidden, but when it surged up from the water it was seen to be of a deadly whiteness. There was no doubt in Mr. Selby's mind—the chilling conviction forced itself upon him—that the unfortunate fag was already drowned.

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Selby hoarsely. "A—boat! Quick!"

He staggered away from the window. Two or three of the fags rushed into the passage, shrieking for help.

Tom Merry & Co. were the first to arrive upon the scene.

"What's the matter?" shouted Tom Merry, dashing into the dormitory.

"Wally—"

"He's drowned—"

"He said he would if Mr. Selby caned him again!" sobbed Curly Gibson.

"Silence, Gibson!" shrieked Mr. Selby. "I forbid you to say so. I—I—"

"You know he did, sir!"

"Get a boat! Call somebody! Help!" stuttered the Third Form master.

"No good sending him a boat, sir," said Tom Merry. "It wouldn't do him any good now."

"Better recover the body, though," said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"The body!" gasped Mr. Selby. "Oh dear!"

"Poor chap!" said Manners. "I wonder what made him do this?"

"He said he would!" cried Curly.

"Mr. Selby knows—"

"Silence, Gibson!"

"He mayn't be quite dead, sir," said Kangaroo. "Hadh't you better go in for him, sir?"

"I—I cannot swim, Noble!"

"Is this a time to think of that, sir?" asked Monty Lowther. "The whole school would admire you, sir, if you lost your life in attempting to save one of your Form, sir."

Mr. Selby shuddered. He had no desire whatever to win the admiration of the school upon those terms.

"Run and fetch a boat!" he panted.

"You boys—quick! Run—run!"

"Very well, sir!" said Tom Merry. "Come on, you chaps!"

The Terrible Three dashed out of the dormitory and down the stairs. One of the boats that had brought supplies from Rylcombe was moored above the submerged steps of the School House, and the Terrible Three jumped into it and pushed off.

They rode swiftly out upon the waters, and came round under the windows of the Third Form dormitory. From the window of a half-flooded room under the dormitory a grinning face was looking out, but they did not seem to notice it. They pulled alongside the floating body, which was bobbing up and down with the motion of the water.

Mr. Selby gazed anxiously from the window above.

"Get him into the boat—quick!" he gasped.

"Yes, sir. Keep her steady against the wall while I hook him in," said Tom Merry, standing up, boathook in hand.

"Right—ho!" said Lowther.

"I'll have him in a minute. It's only like catching salmon!" remarked Tom Merry.

"Merry! How can you be so heartless?" gasped Mr. Selby. "Take care!"

Tom Merry made a lunge at the floating figure with the boathook and drove it under water.

"Merry! Be careful!" shrieked Mr. Selby.

"It's all right, sir. He's past being hurt!"

"Get him in! Quick—quick!"

"All right, sir. I'll hook him by the neck if I can. Or I might catch him in the ear."

"Merry! This levity is infamous! How dare you!"

"If you'd rather jump in for him, sir—"

"Impossible! Be quick—quick!"

Tom Merry hooked at the figure as it bobbed up, and brought it alongside.

"Got it!" he shouted.

"Fair catch!" said Manners.

"Hurrah!"

"'Ome they brought the warrior, dead!" chanted Monty Lowther.

"Got him, sir!" called out Tom Merry. "Not a sign of life, sir, I'm sorry to say. But it really can't be expected, in the circumstances."

"No fear—not in these giddy circumstances," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Are you sure he is dead, Merry?"

"Not alive, anyway, sir."

"Oh, it is terrible—it is terrible!"

"Yes, sir. He was always a troublesome young bounder, wasn't he?"

"Merry, how can you? Take up the body!"

"Might make us wet, sir. Better float him after us, and we'll get him indoors. No good mucking up the boat, sir, as he's past help."

"Merry! You wicked, unfeeling boy! I—I—"

"I'm not unfeeling, sir. I've been feeling for him—with the boathook—for five minutes," said Tom Merry indignantly.

"We'll bring him home all right, sir. You can come down to the door and help us get him in, sir. He won't kick."

"Merry! I am astonished at you! I—I—"

"Come down to the door, sir."

"Yes, yes. I will do so."

Mr. Selby disappeared from the dormitory window. From the lower window a grinning face looked out, almost on a level with the water, and a voice whispered:

"Don't take that giddy body in, you chaps. Let it be lost in the flood."

"Right—ho!" said Tom Merry.

"Knock it to pieces with the boathook first. Don't want it to be found when the water goes down."

"Right—ho!"

Wally disappeared from the window of the flooded room. The Terrible Three pulled away into the deep dusk of the trees, Tom Merry trailing the body after the boat with the hook.

Under the elms, concealed from view by the branches, he smote the unoffending dummy with mighty smites, and it came to pieces, and the clothes and the boots, and the painted football floated away separately.

The Terrible Three chuckled gleefully.

"Shan't be able to take the body in now," grinned Lowther.

"No. Never mind. Save the funeral expenses, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the chums of the Shell composed their faces into dreadful seriousness as they rode back to the doorway of the School House.

Mr. Selby was there, in the midst of a huge crowd. The news of Wally's untimely death had spread over the House, and the Hall was crammed with fellows knee-deep in water.

Even Mr. Selby had forgotten his objections to getting his feet wet, in the excitement and anxiety of the moment. He uttered a cry as the boat bumped on the top step.

"Have you got it?" he cried.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"It floated away under the trees, sir," he said.

Mr. Selby groaned.

## CHAPTER 14.

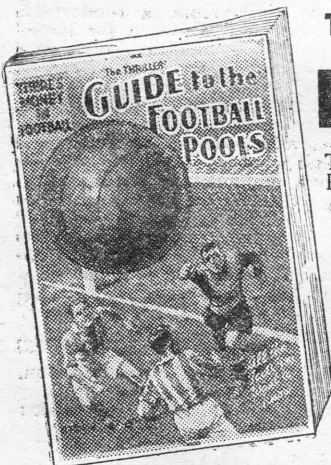
### Brought to Book!

"WHAT is the matter here?" It was Mr. Railton's voice.

The Housemaster of the School House came striding down the passage, his feet splashing in the water.

Mr. Selby turned a haggard face upon him.

"It—it is D'Arcy minor," he groaned.



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# The THRILLER

"What has happened?"  
 "He is drowned!"  
 Mr. Railton stood transfixed.  
 "D'Arcy minor drowned?"  
 "Yes," moaned Mr. Selby.  
 "Impossible! How could he be drowned? Has he fallen into the water?" asked Mr. Railton. "Even so, D'Arcy minor is a good swimmer, as I know, and the water is calm. Is this some joke?"  
 "It is no joke," muttered Mr. Selby. "The—unhappy boy has—has committed suicide!"  
 "Nonsense!"  
 Mr. Selby stiffened up.  
 "These boys went out to get in the body, sir," he said. "They can tell you."  
 The School House master fastened an expressive look upon the Terrible Three.  
 "Is it true, Merry?"  
 "Ahem, sir!"  
 "Has D'Arcy minor been drowned?"  
 "I—I think not, sir," faltered Tom Merry.  
 "I think not, too!" said Mr. Railton angrily. "What is this all about?"  
 "You think not, Merry?" shouted Mr. Selby. "You know perfectly well that D'Arcy minor threw himself into the water and was drowned!"  
 "Why should he do so, Mr. Selby?" said Mr. Railton.  
 "He—he was punished this afternoon, and—and he said something of the sort," faltered Mr. Selby. "Of course, I took no notice of it at the time; but—but when I heard the splash I knew the foolish boy had carried out his dreadful intention. I saw the body floating."  
 "Did you see it, Merry?"  
 "No, sir," said Tom Merry.  
 Mr. Selby glared at him.  
 "Have you lost your senses, Merry?" he asked. "Did you not go out to get in the body? Have you not just told me that it was lost among the trees?"  
 "It—it wasn't a body, sir."  
 "Oh!"  
 "It is some foolish joke, I suppose, as I suspected at first!" said Mr. Railton, frowning. "Where is D'Arcy minor?"  
 "Are you asking for me, sir?" said a weak voice on the stairs.  
 Mr. Selby swung round. Wally was on the stairs, just above the level of the water, looking down upon the wet crowd in the Hall with an expression of innocent inquiry.  
 Mr. Selby stared at him as if he had been a spectre.  
 "D'Arcy minor!" he stammered.  
 "Yes, sir. Here I am, sir."  
 "Did you—did you jump into the water, D'Arcy minor?"  
 "I, sir! No, sir!"  
 "What have you been doing, D'Arcy minor?" asked Mr. Railton sternly.  
 "Nothing, sir. Only throwing away some old clothes, sir," said Wally innocently. "No harm in throwing away old clothes, is there, sir?"  
 "Old clothes!" shrieked Mr. Selby. "It was a body, or—or an imitation of some sort. I distinctly saw a face!"  
 "I don't see how the old clothes could have had a face, sir," said Wally, in astonishment. "Of course, I don't dispute your word, sir. But I've never seen a suit of clothes with a face myself."  
 There was a chuckle in the Hall.  
 "Don't be impertinent, D'Arcy minor!" said Mr. Railton. "It looks to me as if you have played a very reckless trick upon Mr. Selby."  
 "Oh, sir!"  
 Mr. Selby was trembling with rage. He realised now that he had been taken

in, and that all his anxiety and remorse were wasted. He was not feeling any remorse for his treatment of D'Arcy minor now. Quite otherwise.  
 "You—you young rascal!" he yelled.  
 "Oh, sir!"  
 "You deliberately plotted to make me believe that you were drowned!"  
 "I—I, sir!"  
 "Yes, you!" roared Mr. Selby. "You knew that I should take that—that figure for your body, D'Arcy minor, when I saw it from the dormitory window."  
 "But you couldn't have taken it for me, sir," said Wally cheerfully. "If you had believed that I was drowning under the window, sir, you'd have gone in for me. You would have tried to rescue me, sir."  
 "Silence, D'Arcy minor!" said Mr. Railton, taking pity upon the shame and mortification in Mr. Selby's face. "You must not speak to your Form-master like that. You have played a very foolish and inconsiderate trick; and this certainly makes it appear as if you were the person guilty of the outrage in Mr. Selby's room last night."  
 "Oh, sir!"  
 "I have said all the time that it was D'Arcy minor," said Mr. Selby, between his teeth. "I take this as proof. I trust that the Head will take it as proof. I shall take the young rascal to the Head at once."  
 Mr. Selby grasped Wally by the collar and marched him away.  
 Tom Merry & Co. left the boat, and retreated upstairs. They were looking and feeling very much concerned for Wally. In the upper passage all the S.P.C.P. met together, and they all looked worried.  
 "Bai Jove, Wally has done it this time!" said Arthur Augustus ruefully.  
 "He has put a foot in it, deah boys!"  
 "Been and gone and done it, and no mistake!" said Monty Lowther.  
 "Well, we warned him," said Manners.  
 "It was bound to come out. He couldn't keep it up for ever that he was drowned!"  
 "Wathah not!"  
 The chums of the School House waited anxiously for Wally to come out of the Head's room. When he appeared in the Fourth Form passage they surrounded him.  
 Wally was looking very rueful.  
 "What's the verdict?" asked Tom Merry.  
 "Rotten!" said Wally. "They seem to think that I played that trick on Selby."  
 "So you did, you young ass."  
 "Well, yes; but I don't see why they should jump to conclusions in that reckless way," said Wally, in an aggrieved tone. "If a chap likes to throw away his old clothes and paint

features on an old footer to throw in along with them, I don't see why he should be supposed to be japing his Form-master."  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "The worst of it is, that it's taken as proof that I japed Selby last night," said Wally. "The Head seems quite sure about it."  
 "Have you been licked?" asked Tom Merry.  
 "No; that's to come."  
 "Not a flogging?" said Tom Merry, with a deep breath.  
 Wally nodded.  
 "Bai Jove, that's wotten."  
 "Rotten for me, not for Wally," said Tom Merry quietly. "It was I who damped Selby last night, and Wally's not going to be flogged for what I did."  
 "Oh, rot!" said Wally. "I can stand it."  
 "You shan't! I'm going to the Head!"  
 "Hold on!"  
 "Rats!"  
 And Tom Merry walked away. There was only one thing Tom Merry could do, as a fellow of honour, and that was to own up. And he meant to do it, without stopping to think of the consequences.

CHAPTER 15.

Sentenced to be Flogged!

D R. HOLMES was looking worried and troubled.  
 Mr. Selby was with him still, attempting to make it clear that D'Arcy minor ought not only to be flogged, but expelled from the school.  
 A tap on the door interrupted the Third Form master.  
 (Continued on the next page.)

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"Come in," said Dr. Holmes.

Tom Merry entered.

"Well, Merry, what is it?" said the Head, rather crossly.

"I want to tell you something, sir. I hear that D'Arcy minor is to be punished for the jape, the—the trick played on Mr. Selby last night, sir, in his room?"

"That is correct, Merry."

"He didn't do it, sir."

"He has been adjudged guilty, Merry. After what he has done to-day, I cannot reasonably entertain any doubt upon the subject."

"There is no possible doubt upon the subject!" snapped Mr. Selby. "I have not had any doubts from the first."

"I can prove that he was innocent, sir," said Tom Merry quietly.

"Indeed! How?"

"Because I did it, sir!"

The Head drew a quick breath.

Mr. Selby stared at Tom Merry open-mouthed.

"You, Merry?" said Dr. Holmes.

"Yes, sir."

"You entered Mr. Selby's room last night and threw water over him to make believe that the flood had risen, and to frighten—ahem!—to alarm him?"

"Yes, sir."

"What—what astounding impudence!" ejaculated Mr. Selby. "How dare you come here and tell Dr. Holmes so in this barefaced way, Merry?"

"Because Wally is going to be flogged for what I did, sir."

"Merry, what was your reason for acting in that outrageous way?" asked the Head, in a gentler voice than Mr. Selby's.

Tom Merry hesitated.

"It was a jape, sir," he said, at last.

"But what was your motive? Surely you know that such an alarm in the dead of night would give Mr. Selby a most unpleasant shock?"

"Yes, sir."

"If you have no excuse to offer, Merry, your punishment will be very severe."

"Well, if—if Mr. Selby doesn't mind my saying so," said Tom Merry, "he has been very hard on all of us since the flood came. He has ragged us all, not only the kids in his own Form, but nearly everybody. We were getting fed up. Besides that, he was very cruel to D'Arcy minor's dog, and we—we were standing up for Pongo, sir."

"Merry, this is absurd!"

"I have never heard of such astounding impudence!" gasped Mr. Selby, "and I am sure Merry was not alone in this! He has accomplices—D'Arcy minor among them."

"D'Arcy minor did not leave his dormitory last night, sir," said Tom Merry. "I hope you can take my word."

"I can take your word, certainly, Merry," said the Head. "And I must say that it is very frank and manly of you to own up in this way, and take the punishment upon your own shoulders. You understand, of course, that you will now be flogged in the place of D'Arcy minor?"

"Yes, sir; I understand that."

"And his accomplices, too!" said Mr. Selby viciously.

There was a knock at the door, and it opened, and five juniors walked sedately in. They were Manners and Lowther of the Shell, and Blake, Herries, and D'Arcy of the Fourth.

"What do you want?" asked the Head testily.

"Come to own up, sir," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

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"We were all in it, sir," said Monty Lowther. "Tom is not going to have all the credit. We were all on the warpath last night, sir."

"I knew he had accomplices," said Mr. Selby.

"Which of you threw the water over Mr. Selby?" asked the Head.

"I did, sir!" said Tom Merry.

"Where were the others?"

"We waited in the passage, sir," said Herries. "We were all in the game."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ahem! You will take two hundred lines each!" said the Head. "I think that will meet the case as far as you are concerned. It is quite clear to me that Tom Merry was the ringleader, and he appears to have done the damage."

"Weally, sir—"

"It is quite right, sir," said Tom Merry. "The other chaps only came out to back me up."

"Yaas, but—"

"That is enough!" said the Head. "Merry, you will be flogged to-morrow morning before the whole school as a punishment for this most disrespectful and lawless outrage! You may go!"

"Yes, sir."

"May I make a remark, sir?"

"You may not, D'Arcy!"

"But I considah—"

"Leave the study!" said the Head.

"Yaas, sir; but—"

Blake put his arm through Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's and jerked him out of the room. The rest of the juniors followed, and the door was closed.

"Bai Jove! Welease me, Blake, you ass! I was goin' to explain to the Head what an awful wottah Selby is—"

"No good your getting flogged, too, you ass!"

"I should decline to be flogged!"

"That wouldn't make much difference if the Head decided to do it," said Blake, with a grin. "Well, you're fairly in the soup now, Tommy, my boy! The S.P.C.P. is a ghastly frost."

Tom Merry grinned ruefully.

"Can't be helped," he said.

"No; it can't be helped now. But what rotten luck!"

There was a great deal of sympathy for Tom Merry when the news spread through the School House. A public flogging was a very severe punishment, and the disgrace of it was worse than the infliction itself.

The Terrible Three looked glum enough as they gathered in their study after tea. The chums of Study No. 6 paid them a visit of sympathy. They brought a gift of toffee, which the juniors demolished in moody silence.

"It's rotten!" said Blake at last. "If you get the flogging, Tommy, we ought all to share alike and take the same. We were all in it as much as you were."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"That would be no good," he said. "No good you fellows getting it as well as me. It wouldn't make it any easier for me—harder, in fact."

"Yaas, that's so," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Othahwise, deah boy, I should insist upon my share of the licking."

"I suppose it's no good talking to old Selby?" suggested Digby.

"Bai Jove! That's not a bad ideah!" said D'Arcy. "Suppose we went in a deputation to the wottah, and put it to him, you know? If you left all the talking to me, I have no doubt that I could make him see weason."

"Yes; that's very likely—I don't think!" remarked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"He wouldn't let me off," said Tom

Merry. "He's more ratty with me than with Wally, as a matter of fact. Besides, I wouldn't ask him. I can stand it."

"But it's beastly!"

"I know it is, but it can't be helped."

Wally looked into the study. The scamp of the Third was looking unusually serious and decidedly miserable.

"I'm sorry how it's turned out, Tom Merry!" he said. "It's rotten! I'd have taken the licking myself if you'd have kept your head shut!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"It's all right, kid," he said. "I shall have to grin and bear it, that's all. As a matter of fact, it was rather thick, you know, playing a game like that on a Form-master."

Wally snapped his teeth.

"I'll play some more games on him yet!" he said. "Anybody but Selby would ask the Head to let you off, as you owned up of your own free will."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Catch Selby doing that!" he said.

"Not likely!" said Blake. "But look here, Tom Merry, I think we might go to him and ask him to look over it—"

"Yaas, wathah! I should be quite willin' to be chairman and spokesman of a deputation, Tom Mewwy."

"No!" said Tom Merry decidedly. "It wouldn't do any good, for one thing; and if it would, I tell you I won't ask any favours of Selby. There are some men you can ask favours of, and some you can't, and Selby is one of that kind."

"Yaas; that is vewy twue!"

"But you can't be flogged, Tom Merry!" said Wally, in great distress.

"It's all on my account, too; and you warned me not to jape Selby with that stuffed dummy!"

"Don't worry, kid! I tell you it can't be helped now!"

"I wish I could think of some way out!" said Wally. "I'm awfully sorry!"

"That's all right!"

Wally slipped off his seat on the corner of the table. It was time for evening preparation for the Third Form, and Wally knew what would happen if he was late. He left Tom Merry's study with a very gloomy brow. His retaliation on the obnoxious Form-master had got the captain of the Shell into serious trouble, and Wally felt that he was to blame; and the worst of it was that there was nothing he could do to save Tom Merry.

Mr. Selby's rasping voice rapped out to him as he entered the Third Form dormitory for preparation, but Wally hardly noticed it. He was thinking of Tom Merry, and wondering whether even yet, something might be done to avert his punishment.

## CHAPTER 16.

### Man Overboard!

MR. SELBY wore a more contented expression now. The fact that Tom Merry was to be flogged on the following morning was a great solace to him. It was a salve to his wounded dignity.

He was almost amiable during preparation, except to D'Arcy minor.

Wally still experienced the sharpest edge of Mr. Selby's sharp tongue. He was the richer by a hundred lines before prep was over. But Wally did not care for lines now. He was thinking only of the fellow who was to suffer for his sake on the morrow morning.

When prep was over Mr. Selby left them alone, Wally's chums tried to

comfort him, but Wally was not to be comforted.

"It's 'ard on Master Tom!" said Joe Frayne dolefully. "I wish I could be flogged in his place—I do, really!"

"I don't know that I'd go so far as that," said Jameson, with a grin. "But it does seem a rotten shame!"

"Beastly!" growled Wally.

"Well, if you jape Form-masters, you must expect to get it in the neck some time!" remarked Hobbs. "Better give Selby a wide berth after this."

"Rot!" said Wally. "I'm going to make him sorry for it somehow!"

"My dear chap—"

"Look here, Jimmy, I can tell you what you can do—" began Wally.

Jameson made a negative gesture. "I know what I can do!" he said. "I can keep off the grass!"

"You're a New House kid!" resumed Wally, unheeding. "Selby takes you

"You're a blessed funk!" growled Wally.

"And you're a silly ass!"

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

They finished the argument on the floor. Jameson rose at last, with red streaming from his nose. He dabbed it with his handkerchief, and glared at Wally.

Wally's methods of argument had not convinced his chum; indeed, Jameson was more determined than ever that he would not have a hand in upsetting Mr. Selby into the water. He would have been as glad as anybody to give his Form-master a ducking; but, as he said emphatically, it was not good enough.

Wally stared gloomily out of the window. The rain had ceased at last, and the stars were glimmering down upon the wild waters, surging and mur-

the waters surging in at the great doorway.

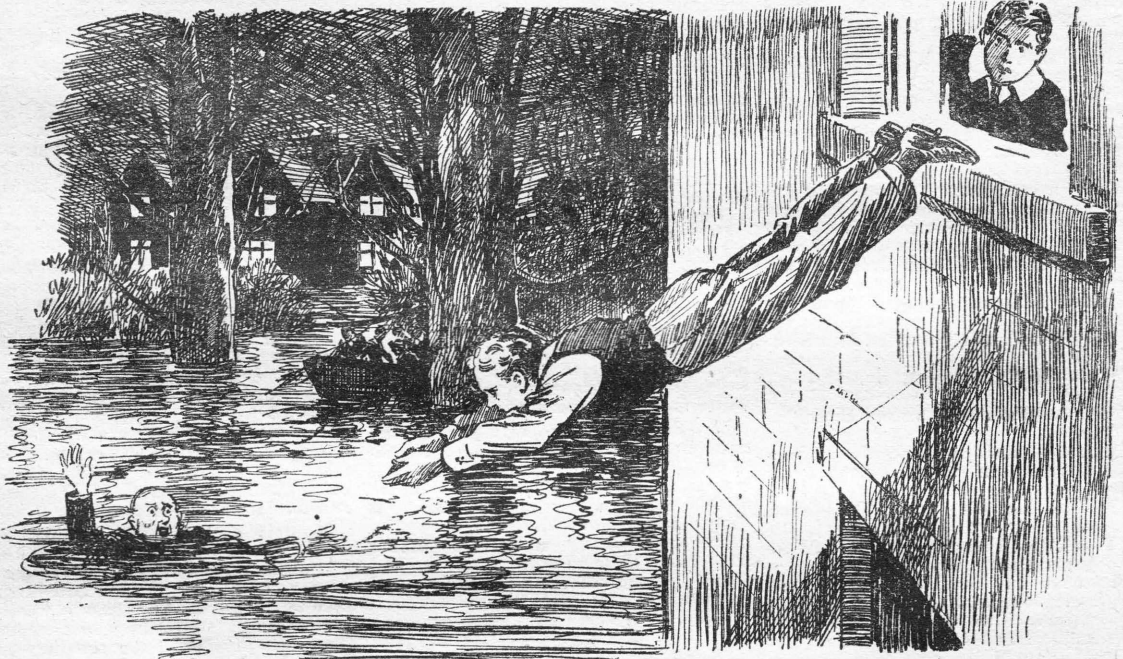
A boat had pulled away with the New House Fourth Formers, and Figgins & Co. shouted "Good-night!" up to the window of Tom Merry's study.

Tom Merry & Co. were at their study window, with the blaze of light behind them. They waved their hands down towards the New House boat as it glided away over the flood towards the dark belt of trees.

"Good-night, Figgy!"

"Good-night!"

The Terrible Three leaned in a row on the window-sill, and looked down at the radius of light outside the School House doorway. There were a good many fellows at the other windows watching the scene. It was a novel and interesting sight—fellows being ferried across the quadrangle of St. Jim's,



As Mr. Selby floated nearer there was a look of despair upon his white face, and he flung up his hand in mute appeal for help. Tom Merry scrambled out on the window-sill, and dived down to the rescue.

over to the New House in the boat after supper. "Suppose the boat was upset, and—"

"Well, you ass," said Jameson, "we might be drowned!"

"Oh, you can swim, you know!"

"Selby might be drowned; he can't swim!" said Hobbs.

Wally looked thoughtful.

"Well, I don't know that I actually want him drowned," he said. "But a jolly good ducking would do him heaps of good!"

"Not for me!" said Jameson emphatically. "Besides, how the dickens am I going to upset the giddy boat? We shall have a couple of prefects in it, rowing it."

"Suppose you biff Selby over the side, and—"

"I jolly well shan't do anything of the sort!" said Jameson, with emphasis.

"I don't want to join Tom Merry on Taggles' shoulder before the whole school to-morrow morning!"

Wally snorted.

"If I were going in the boat, I'd jolly well manage it!" he said.

"Rats!" said Jameson.

muring in the quadrangle. Out of the glimmering waters the great trees rose with spectral branches.

"Not even raining now!" growled Wally. "No chance of his even catching a cold! Was there ever such rotten luck?"

"Never!" said Joe Frayne.

"Well, hardly ever!" grinned Curly Gibson.

The juniors had finished their supper of bread and cheese, when Mr. Selby came into the dormitory. It was his duty to take the New House portion of his Form over to the New House to retire for the night.

"New House boys will follow me," he said. "The others will go to bed here, and I shall see lights out when I return. I shall expect you all in bed."

And Mr. Selby marshalled his flock out of the dormitory.

The New House Third Formers descended the stairs of the School House to take the boat. In the flooded Hall of the School House the electric lights were burning, and strange enough was the scene, with the lights gleaming upon

where the boys were accustomed to stroll in perfect safety.

"There goes the Third Form boat," said Manners.

"And old Selby in it," grunted Lowther.

The boat pulled out of the great stone porch of the School House. It was crammed with fags, and Mr. Selby, sitting in the stern, had none too much room. Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, was pulling, with Thompson of the Shell, and Mr. Selby steered.

"Keep her well away from the trees, sir," said Monteith.

"I suppose there is no danger," snapped Mr. Selby.

"Might run into the branches, sir. Some of them are under the water now," Monteith explained. "The boat might capsize if we biffed on a big branch just under the surface."

Mr. Selby glanced round him nervously on the dark waters. Outside the radius of light from the door and windows of the School House the waters were very dark, and the glare of

distant lights only made the sight confused. The pale glimmer of the stars was lost as the boat glided under the trees.

Jameson was holding a storm lantern, which shed light upon the water as the boat advanced. Monteith and Thompson pulled steadily.

Scrape! And the boat rocked violently.

"Look out!" shouted Monteith. "We're getting on a branch! I can feel it dragging under the boat! Port!"

"Which—which is port?" gasped Mr. Selby, in confusion.

"Look out!" yelled Jameson.

The boat rocked violently as it dragged on the submerged branch, and as it rocked under the tree it glided beneath a low branch which scraped along it.

"Duck!" yelled Monteith.

Everybody ducked excepting Mr. Selby. That gentleman had quite lost his presence of mind. As the low branch scraped along the gliding boat Mr. Selby, instead of flattening himself down in the boat, jumped up in great alarm.

The branch caught him fairly across the chest, and he was knocked backwards as if by a giant's hand.

Splash!

The boat shot onward, and bumped heavily against a submerged branch, and the fags were thrown over one another in confusion. Thompson let his oar slip into the water, and fell into the boat. The lantern slipped from Jameson's hand as he was knocked over by Thompson's fall, and dropped into the water.

Sudden darkness plunged upon the scene.

"Keep your heads!" shouted Monteith. "Steady!"

"Ow! Oh!"

"Gerroff!"

"Yow! Who's that on my chest?"

"Yarcooh!"

"Steady!" shouted Monteith. "Keep still! What was that dropped overboard?"

"I—I've lost the lantern!" gasped Jameson.

"Thank goodness that's all! Wait till I get a light! Keep still!"

The boat was rocking violently, but the juniors, obedient to the voice of the prefect, ceased to struggle, and Monteith fumbled in his pocket for a match, and as he held it aloft the juniors scrambled back into something like order. The prefect glanced quickly through the boat.

"Mr. Selby! Where is Mr. Selby?"

"Isn't he here?"

"No."

"Great Scott! That must have been the splash!" muttered Jameson, with frozen lips. "He—he can't swim! He'll be drowned!"

"Mr. Selby, where are you?"

The match went out in Monteith's fingers. He listened in the darkness for a cry. The boat glided out from under the dark branches, and the starlight glimmered upon white and terrified faces. But to Monteith's shout there came no reply.

"Mr. Selby!"

But only the echo of the prefect's voice answered him.

## CHAPTER 17.

### At the Risk of His Life!

**T**OM MERRY stared anxiously from his study window towards the gloomy shadows of the trees far out in the surging waters.

The lights of the School House extended for some distance upon the flood. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,440.

Beyond that radius all was blackness. The water, with the flood of the river behind it, was flowing towards the School House from under the dark trees, and the light glimmered upon a floating oar that came rocking by on the surge.

"They've lost an oar," said Monty Lowther.

"Bumped into a tree, most likely," said Manners. "I was sure I heard some shouting."

Tom Merry raised his hand.

"Hark! What's that?"

From the distance, in the darkness of the flooded quadrangle, they heard the loud tones of Monteith, shouting for the lost master.

"Mr. Selby—Mr. Selby!"

The Shell fellows exchanged quick glances.

"My hat!" breathed Manners. "Is Selby overboard?"

"He can't swim!" muttered Lowther. Tom Merry leaned out of the window, scanning the glimmering surge with eager, anxious eyes. If Mr. Selby was overboard, the surge of the water should bring him from under the trees into the radius of light from the School House before it swept him past the building, and away into the flooded woods beyond.

A dark object glimmered into view, bobbing on the water from the shadow of the trees, and a hand was flung into the air.

Tom Merry set his teeth.

"Good heavens!" he muttered. "It's Selby!"

"Where—where?"

"Look!"

They could see him now. The Form-master's gown was floating on the water. Again that despairing hand was thrown up into the air, in a mute appeal for help, and they caught a glimpse of a white face. But there was no cry.

Mr. Selby was evidently past crying out. Perhaps he was no longer conscious. While the chums of the Shell gazed in horror at the form as it floated nearer on the rush of waters, it disappeared below. It came up again, nearer at hand, and Tom Merry scrambled through the window, and stood upon the sill, his face white and resolute.

"Tom!" yelled Lowther, grasping him. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going in for Selby."

"You—you can't!"

"Let go!"

"You can't!" cried Lowther frantically, tightening his grip upon his chum. "The water isn't deep enough for a dive from this height. You'll be smashed."

"I think it's deep enough. I'm going to risk it."

"Tom—Tom—"

"Let go, Monty! Let go, or you'll spoil my dive, and I shall be done."

"Tom, you're mad, I tell you—"

Tom Merry jerked himself free from Lowther's detaining grasp. Lowther let him go. He knew Tom Merry meant to dive, and a grasp upon him then might have made the dive fatal.

Tom Merry put his hands together and dived from the study window-sill.

Splash!

Deep down he went, cleaving the waters—down, down, till his finger-tips barely touched something solid; but that was the limit of his impetus, and he shot up to the surface again.

Up and up, till his head was in the air again and he could breathe, and he struck out with powerful arms.

His gaze turned wildly round for the Form-master, but Mr. Selby had disappeared. There was a shout from the study window.

"There he is, Tom! On the left—on the left!"

The Form-master rose into view, and Tom Merry, guided by the shout from above, turned towards him, and with a few strong strokes reached him. His strong grasp upon the sinking man brought his head above the surface again. Two glassy eyes stared wildly at him, a frantic clutch was fastened upon him, and he was almost dragged under the water. Mr. Selby had not lost his consciousness, but he had lost his presence of mind.

"Hold on, sir!" gasped Tom Merry. "Hold on! Give me a chance to swim!"

"Save me—save me!" panted the Form-master in husky, inarticulate tones.

"I'm saving you, sir; but don't drag me down!"

"Save me! Save me!"

It was evident that the man was past reasoning with. Tom Merry took a firm grip upon the back of his neck, and held him there. As long as Mr. Selby did not struggle he could keep him afloat.

"It's all right, sir!" he gasped. "I've got you!"

"Save me! Oh!" moaned Mr. Selby.

The surge of the water dashed them on. They were being whirled towards the corner of the School House, and once past the building, they would be swept away into the darkness.

Tom Merry made a desperate effort, and succeeded in reaching the School House wall, where a rainpipe descended from the roof gutter. He caught the rainpipe in his free hand, holding Mr. Selby with the other.

"Catch hold, sir!" he exclaimed.

But Mr. Selby was too far gone. He hung a helpless weight upon the junior.

Tom Merry held him fast, and shouted for help.

The alarm was over the whole school now. Every window was crammed with faces, and a boat had put off from the School House steps, with Mr. Railton and Kildare and Darrell in it.

Monteith's boat had pulled back through the elms. Monteith would have had little chance of finding the Form-master in the dark, but for Tom Merry's dive to the rescue. But now it was only a question of Tom Merry holding on to the water-pipe until the rescuing boats reached them.

"Save me!" moaned Mr. Selby feebly.

"The boats are coming, sir," said Tom Merry encouragingly. "You're all right, sir. Look, there are the lights!"

Kildare was standing up in the nearest boat, holding an electric torch.

Tom Merry shouted to him, and Kildare's voice came ringing back over the surge of waters.

Mr. Selby's eyes blinked at the approaching light, and he understood. A little calmness came back to him.

"Can you hold on?" he panted.

"Yes, sir!" said Tom Merry cheerily.

"Who are you? Are you Merry?"

"Yes, sir!"

A shiver ran through Mr. Selby. "How did you come into the water?" he asked, in a shaken voice.

"I was at my study window—"

"You jumped in?"

"I dived in, sir."

"For me?"

"Yes, sir. I saw you floating out from under the trees. Jolly lucky I saw you, wasn't it, sir?" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, indeed, for me," said Mr. Selby in a choking voice. "Merry, I—I am sorry I—I have been so harsh to you."

Tom Merry started. For the first time

(Continued on page 23.)

ANOTHER POWERFUL INSTALMENT FROM OUR POPULAR SERIAL.

# The BLACK HAND at ST. FRANK'S!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

## The Killer's Three Victims!

**W**HEN eight boys of St. Frank's give their solemn word to a dying airman that they will deliver a certain package to "No. 1" at Gallows Mere, and keep their mission a secret, they little know at the time the peril they are letting themselves in for! The airman—an unknown foreigner—has been shot by a black man, and later the latter is found murdered, with his left hand severed.

Nipper & Co., the St. Frank's juniors, take the package to Gallows Mere, which happens to be the residence of Dr. Zangari, an astronomer. The juniors soon realize that Zangari is nervous that they know too much, and that something sinister is going on behind the walls of Gallows Mere.

Nelson Lee, the schoolmaster-detective of St. Frank's, is investigating the two murders. An attempt is made on his life, but the would-be assassin gets away. Lee knows that the juniors are concerned in the mystery, and on their return from Gallows Mere, he taxes them about it; but they refuse to talk.

That night Handforth, Church, and McClure go to Gallows Mere to do a little investigating. They are captured by three masked men, bound hand and foot, and taken into a barn in which there is some sort of machinery. While one man goes off on an errand, Handforth, unseen by the other two men, presses his tethered wrists against a revolving leather belt in the hope that he can get his hands free.

Edward Oswald Handforth was not the kind of fellow to count the difficulties, or reckon up the chances. Success in the enterprise of the moment was all that concerned him. He concentrated on keeping his bound wrists pressed back against the revolving leather belt. If only he could get his hands free—

Snap!

He nearly cried aloud with joy, for

success had come long before he expected. One of his wrist-ropes had parted, and the others became loose. A wrench, and his hands were free. At the same instant the lights went out—which meant, for a certainty, that the messenger had returned with Dr. Zangari.

During the brief seconds of darkness Handforth conceived the next move. The mere fact that his hands were free did not, at first sight, seem to improve his position, or that of his chums. For their ankles were tightly bound, and they could make no dash for liberty. But Handforth was in his element now, and he was never more resourceful.

"Keep your chins up, my sons!" he muttered exultantly. "Watch me dish these blighters!"

Church and McClure thought it was his usual unfounded optimism. The lights came on, and they saw that he was apparently as helpless as ever. His face, however, was flushed, and his eyes were gleaming. There were four men in that strange workshop now, and all were identically attired in black. If one of the newcomers was Dr. Zangari, he did not reveal his identity by word or sign. Indeed, he had no chance, for Handforth acted.

With three mighty hops, he reached the furnace, with its open-topped container of seething and steaming liquid. His freed hands swept round, he grasped one of the great ladles, and filled it to the brim.

"Stand back!" he shouted threateningly, as he raised the ladle high. "I'll chuck this boiling poison, or whatever it is, at the first man who makes a move!"

The men in black stood motionless, and it was impossible to tell their expressions; their exclamations, if they gave voice to any, were drowned in the humming of the machinery. Church and McClure, amazed to see Handforth with his hands free, stared with breathless hope.

Guns appeared in the hands of two

of the enemy, but before the weapons could be used Handforth made his next move. It was simple but ingenious. He had seen that the ladle had a flat bottom, and now he placed the brimming container on the surface of the wide leather belt. In a moment it was being carried towards the end of the workshop—upwards to the great fly-wheel.

In a few moments the ladle, reaching the flywheel, must inevitably topple over, and splash its boiling contents over the four men.

Frantic shouts rang out now as the black figures backed hurriedly away out of the danger zone. And during those moments of confusion, Handforth whipped open his knife, slashed through his ankle bonds, and leaped to his chums.

He cut their ropes in a twinkling, and as the last strand parted, and Church and McClure were free, the brimming ladle reached the end of its short journey.

"This way!" gasped Handforth. "Follow me!"

Crash!

There had been no time for the men to take any action; they thought only of their own safety. To dash forward upon the schoolboys would have been rash, for at any moment the ladle, already spilling its contents, might overbalance. But it reached the fly-wheel, and then fell. As it struck the floor the reddish liquid spread in every direction, and a cloud of green vapour, as dense as cottonwool in appearance, spread outwards and upwards.

"Quick, you chaps!" gasped Handforth. "Now's our chance!"

"But—but where—" began Church.

He stopped. Handforth was already swarming up a part of the machinery, clinging to the supports, and now, for the first time, Church saw a trapdoor in the ceiling. There was a loft overhead!

Like squirrels, Church and McClure followed their burly chum. The green

fog was spreading, and if it reached them it would probably choke them.

Fortunately, a slight draught was keeping the billowing green masses at the farther end of the building—and, behind it, the men in black could be heard shouting in fury and alarm. The whole affair had occupied seconds only. It was the element of surprise which had brought success to Handforth's desperate plan.

There was no door or window at the end of the barn. The enemy, then, believed that the schoolboys were still trapped. But, led by the indefatigable Handforth, they were already at the trapdoor. With a great heave, Edward Oswald forced it open and climbed through. He reached down and helped his chums

"Huh! Thought they could hold us, did they?" he panted exultantly. "Some hopes!"

"We're not free yet, Handy!" gasped Church.

"But we shall be in a tick!" retorted Handforth, as he switched on an electric torch. "By George! Look! That's where we get out!"

The light revealed a ramshackle door in the side of the loft. When Handforth pulled at the door bolt it creaked rustily from long disuse, but reluctantly slid back. With a creak of protest from its hinges, the door swung open, breaking a number of dusty cobwebs.

Confused sounds from below, vague and distant, did not affect Handforth, who, having met with such success, was being borne along on the floodtide of optimism.

One glance outside filled him with fresh exultation. Before opening the loft door, he had switched off the light; but he could easily see a projecting beam overhead, still carrying the pulleys and tackle which had once been used for lowering bales of hay, and so forth. He saw something else. The wall of the barn was within a yard of the thick hedge, and he was looking down on the hedge's top.

"O.K., my sons!" he whispered coolly. "Follow your uncle! This is where we do the vanishing act!"

"You're not going to jump?" breathed Church in alarm.

"Why not?"

"You might break your legs!"

"Rats!" said Handforth. "It's the only chance we've got!"

He projected himself outwards in a clean jump, which took him over the hedge-top. Church and McClure, breathless, heard a thud and a grunt, followed by a scrambling sound.

"Come on!" gasped a voice. "It's all clear. Only grass this side."

The pair needed no further urging. Together they launched themselves into space; and, at the same instant, they heard furious shouts from below. They knew that the open trapdoor had been seen, and the enemy was aware that the intended victims had escaped.

The two juniors struck the ground, rolled over, and were on their feet again in a moment. Handforth was standing by, and he had, in fact, helped them to their feet.

"All right?" he whispered.

"Yes," gasped Mac. "Let's run for it."

Even Handforth, reckless as he was, did not argue the point. The angry voices of the mysterious men in black were now audible in the open air—proving that the hunt was grimly on. The three Removites took to their heels and raced across the field as hard as

they could go. At the farther side they burst through the hedge and found themselves in a meadow which was already occupied by a number of sheep. There was no sound of pursuit, but that meant nothing; the mysterious people of Gallows Mere were not likely to give warning to their quarry.

Handforth switched on his torch—and a sleepy sheep, startled, bolted for its life.

"You ass!" panted Church, in alarm. "Put that light out! You're only showing us up to the brutes! They're certain to be following us by this time."

"Perhaps you're right," admitted Handforth. "But we must see where we're going, mustn't we? Don't worry, they won't get us again."

Meanwhile, Dr. Zangari, coldly furious, was gazing up at the open loft door.

"So! In this way they escaped," he exclaimed, in Italian. "Fools! You have them in your hands—you bring them into this building, so that they see all that should not be seen—and you let them escape! For this blundering you deserve death."

"But the boys were bound with ropes, excellency, and then, as though magic aided them, they were free!" pleaded one of the frightened men. "Caramba! We could see nothing, Antonio and I, to warn us that the English boys were scheming—"

"Enough talk!" interrupted No. 1 harshly. "Luigi, you will go after them," he went on, now speaking in English. "Bring them back, for they have seen too much. Are our plans of months—of years—to be brought to ruin by a few interfering schoolboys? They must be wiped out as we would wipe out vermin!"

"You said it, chief," agreed Lightning Luigi Lombardo, one-time Chicago gunman. "I'm practically on my way. I'll get the young devils—even if I have to bring 'em back cold."

"No matter how you bring them back—bring them back!" said Dr. Zangari, his eyes as venomous as a snake's.

Luigi went alone, and, in his all-black get up, emerged into the night like a part of the night itself. He was a runner of amazing speed—and he carried with him a brace of silent automatics.

A cold-blooded killer on the trail of three unarmed schoolboys!

He crossed the field, knowing that the fugitives could have taken no other route. There was a meadow beyond, and it was fairly certain that the boys would traverse this and then gain the lonely country lane. Luigi had no doubt that he would overtake them. And then—

Luigi smiled grimly, even contemptuously. He had entered the meadow, and on the far side a light was slowly moving, flashing occasionally from side to side. Luigi knew in an instant that the light was shed by an electric torch. The fugitive schoolboys were evidently skirting the lower hedge, searching for an opening.

"Can you beat it?" muttered the Italian-American. "The young saps must know we'd be after them, and yet they go around flashing lights!"

He advanced cautiously, removing from a hidden pocket as he did so one of his automatics. He was one of the coldest-blooded killers known to the American police; he was utterly ruthless. He killed without compunction just if, and when, he considered it necessary.

It was definitely necessary now. There were three boys to be dealt

with, and although he was contemptuous of them, he thought it safer to give them no chance of pulling any rough stuff. Luigi, for all his disregard of human life, hated pain, and he had no wish to get within grappling distance of the St. Frank's juniors. Luigi had no stomach for fighting. His "line" was to creep up behind and shoot his victims in the back.

So he crept now—

The torchlight was sending its beam into the hedge, and although Luigi was not yet close he could see the slowly-moving figures. The boys, apparently, were crouching low in their endeavour to find a gap.

Luigi decided to act. He bent down, steadied himself, and his gun showed a vivid flash—

Thud! Thud!

The first thud was the almost completely silenced report of the gun—the second, the horrid impact of the bullet as it struck its victim. A gasping moan sounded, the figure with the torch staggered and rolled over, and the light vanished. The other figures stood utterly rigid and motionless.

Thud-thud! Thud! Thud!

They fell with scarcely a sound. Luigi, who knew the deadliness of his aim, moved forward confidently. Three motionless figures lay near the hedge. There was something strange, something peculiar in their appearance. Luigi came nearer, as silent as a shadow, bending low, staring—

He gazed upon three dead—sheep!

### Into the Net!

**L**UIGI LOMBARDO had made no mistake. His victims were as dead as mutton. Mutton, in fact, is the only word. Shocked, infuriated, amazed, he grasped one of the dead sheep and rolled it over. A beam of light appeared. An electric torch was tied to the unfortunate creature's neck! Luigi cursed as he realised how he had been delayed and fooled by this simple and ingenious trick.

Danger, apparently, had sharpened Handforth's wits; for the burly leader of Study D was not usually so brainy. The idea of fixing the torch to the sheep in order to attract and delay the enemy was a cute dodge.

Luigi, contemptuous before, now became almost rabid in his Berserk fury. He—Luigi Lombardo—had been tricked by a trio of British schoolboys. It was a blow to his pride. Moreover, there were three dead sheep to get rid of; and the farmer who owned them, when he missed them, would make some awkward inquiries. Dr. Zangari, too, would have something to say, and it would not be pleasant. Luigi, congratulating himself on having done a good job, and finding that he had done no job at all, was just about as amiable as a wounded wildcat.

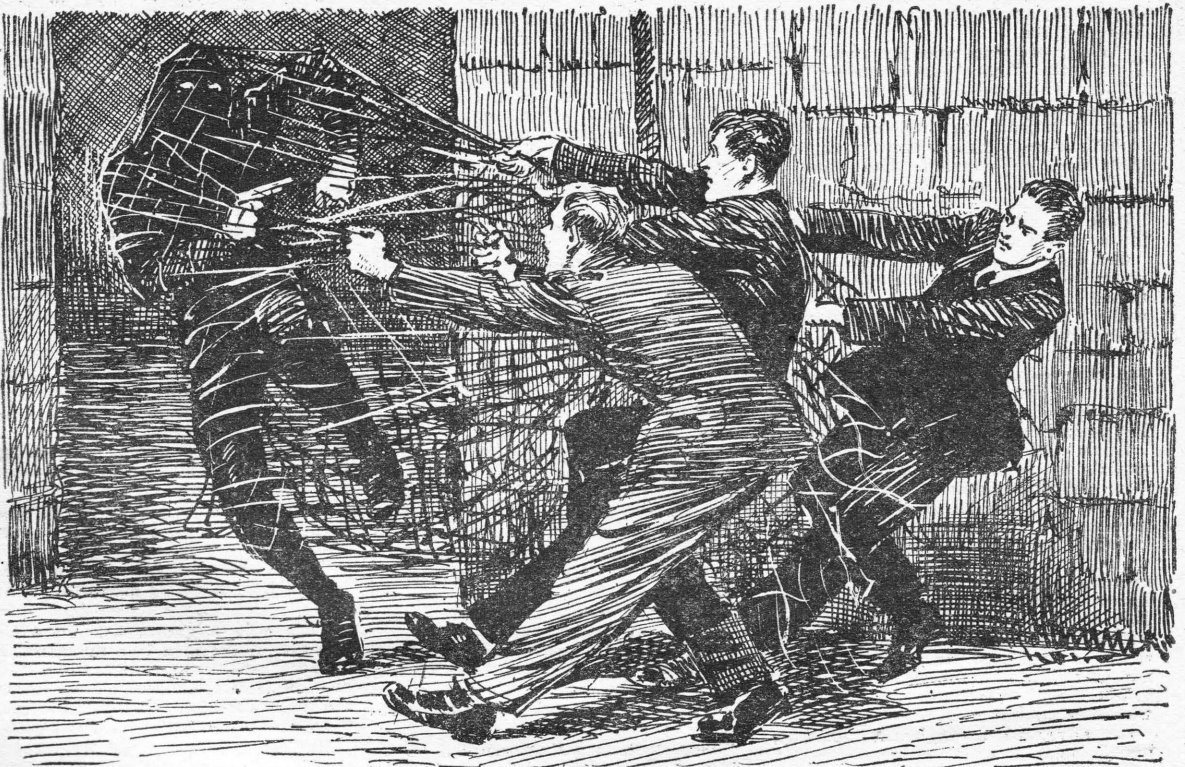
He was alarmed, too. The boys had a good start by now; they might even reach St. Frank's in safety. Failure stared Lightning Luigi in the face, and he was frightened. Dr. Zangari had no use for men who failed. The organisation of which he was No. 1 had its own peculiar and terrible methods of dealing with failures. They were treated in the same manner as traitors. Luigi had a mental vision of a body hanging in a tree, with one hand missing.

"I'll get 'em!" he swore venomously.

"I'll get 'em good!"

He set off for St. Frank's with that





Luigi advanced through the gateway, gun in hand. Swish! A goal-net suddenly descended over him, entangling his arms and legs. "All serene!" exclaimed Handforth. "We've got him, my sons. Pull as tightly as you can!"

peculiar loping run which was essentially his own, covering the ground with almost incredible, tireless speed.

But Handforth and his chums had an excellent start, and were, indeed, approaching the sleeping school. Church and McClure were not yet feeling safe, but Handforth, after his recent triumphs, was in high feather.

"Not a bad wheeze, tying my electric torch to the sheep," he said, as they ran. "It's bound to attract the enemy, and the blighters will be delayed no end. What a shock for them when they make a rush and bag a giddy flock of sheep!"

"All the same, the sooner we get indoors, the better!" panted McClure. "What are we going to do about this? I believe those awful brutes meant to kill us. We can't keep it to ourselves, Handy. It's our plain duty to see Mr. Lee, and tell him everything. Those people at Gallows Mere are dangerous crooks. They're killers."

"Of course, they are," agreed Handforth. "And you're suggesting that we should tell Mr. Lee, and let him grab all the kudos. Not likely! This is our case, my son, and we're going to see it through. We won't even tell Nipper, or the others."

"You're mad!" said Church, with unaccustomed vehemence. "You needn't be so jolly pleased with yourself, either. You made a fine mess of things to-night."

"Mess of things!" repeated Handforth indignantly. "Why, I got us all out of the mess, didn't I?"

"Yes; after getting us all into it," retorted Church. "We warned you not to go near Gallows Mere after dark, and yet you insist upon scouting round, and before you know where you are you're trapped, and we're trapped with you. You'd better give that place a wide berth from now on."

"Wide berth, be blowed!" snorted Handforth. "We'll dish those crooks yet!"

"But don't you see, Handy, that these people are as dangerous as dynamite?" said Church. "We escaped this time, but it's a certainty we wouldn't escape again. Besides, have you thought of something else? We've seen inside that barn. We know that it's a secret workshop of some kind. Do you think Zangari is going to let things slide? He'll be afraid we'll talk. He'll move heaven and earth to grab us again. We're dangerous to him."

"I wonder what's going on in that rummy workshop?" said Handforth, airily ignoring his chum's warnings. "Something pretty fishy, I'll bet! What were all those machines? And that vat of boiling chemical? They can't be a gang of coiners. Coiners don't use chemicals like that. I shan't be satisfied until I've elucidated the mystery."

"Well, if you go back to Gallows Mere, you'll go alone," said McClure grimly. "Church and I won't go with you. Once is enough for us."

"Rather!" agreed Church. "Handy won't go, either. As soon as we get in I'm going to wake Nipper and tell him everything. Nipper will jolly well see you don't act the giddy goat any more, Handy. Why, you ought to be chained up!"

"And this is all the thanks I get after saving your lives," said Handforth, with disgust. "There's gratitude! Not that I'm surprised!" he added bitterly. "You chaps never give me credit for anything."

"Rats! We give you full marks for getting yourself free, and helping us," said McClure.

"Huh! That's better!"

"The way you dished the crooks was clever."

"That's better still."  
"That idea of tying the electric torch to the sheep was smart, too."

"Well, I'm glad you appreciate my braininess," said Handforth.

"But it doesn't alter the fact that it was your recklessness which got us into the mess," added McClure. "For goodness' sake, Handy, try to realise that we're up against a ruthless organisation of killers!"

"By George! That's not a bad phrase," said Handforth. "Can't you see the headlines in the newspapers already? 'Daring Schoolboys Trap Ruthless Organisation of Killers! St. Frank's Junior Beats the Celebrated Nelson Lee at his Own Game!' How does that sound?"

"There might be a different kind of headline in the newspapers," said Church pessimistically. "Something like this: 'Grim Mystery of Three Murdered Schoolboys!' Or: 'Reckless Idiot Named Handforth Gets Bumped Off by Mystery Killers!' I tell you, we'd better leave the whole thing alone. You're just playing with fire."

"Don't exaggerate," said Handforth. "There's a certain amount of danger, I'll admit, but every detective has to face danger. That's why he's a detective. We're going to keep this thing to ourselves. We won't even tell Nipper. If you chaps breathe a word, you'll feel the weight of my fists—understand?"

Church and McClure did not answer. They had just reached a familiar hedge, and they broke through gladly. They were now in the playing fields of St. Frank's, and for the first time since their escape from Gallows Mere they felt safe. They were virtually home. They ran across Little Side, approaching the goalposts at the end of the football field, which stood out vaguely

against the night sky. They were making for the open gateway which led into West Square.

"Well, we can ease up now," said Handforth. "No need to run—"

"Look!" hissed Church, in alarm. Something had caused him to glance back. Indeed, he had been taking these backward glances occasionally ever since they had started. Until now he had seen nothing. But this time he caught a glimpse of a black, loping figure, so vague that he half-believed his eyes had deceived him.

But his eyes and the eyes of his companion were keen, and they were accustomed to the night gloom. Handforth and McClure saw the approaching figure, too.

"By George! I wonder— Here, you chaps—quick!" panted Handforth. "One of the brutes is after us—and there may be more! I've got an idea. I'm full of corking wheezes to-night!"

Little did he realize, as he spoke rapidly to his chums, that he and they were actually within a hairsbreadth of death! They paused for a moment, and then ran on like mad for the gateway.

Luigi, his rage now as cold as ice, withheld his fire. He must make no mistake! And the boys had been swallowed up in the shadows of the wall. But he knew he would have them within a minute now. He would give them no chance to get indoors. Better for them to be "bumped off" here! When they were found dead, there would be no clue.

He advanced through the gateway, gun in hand.

Swish!  
Something invisible, but something which entangled his legs and arms, descended over the startled Luigi. He gave a gasp of rage, and sought to free himself.

"All serene!" came an eager whisper. "We've got him, my sons! Pull as tightly as you can!"

Luigi did not know it, but he was caught within the meshes of a goal-net, which the three Removites, crouching flat against the inner side of the wall, had hung over him as he passed through the gateway. Handforth had remembered that the net had been taken down from its supports that day for repairs. The three juniors, scarcely pausing, had picked up the net on their way to the gate, and had then waited, ready.

"Say, you pesky young rats, let me out of this!" gasped Luigi, clawing madly at the meshes.

"Hallo! He's talking in English, and I thought he was a dago!" said Handforth, in surprise. "Take it easy, you! You're my prisoner!"

"Oh, yeah?" snarled Luigi, from within the net.

He still had his gun in his hand, and at almost point-blank range he fired. The boys, struggling to hold their prisoner, had a miraculously narrow escape. A flame singed Handforth's cheek and McClure's neck. The bullet passed between them.

"You murderous brute!" ejaculated Handforth furiously.

Crash!

Luigi was on the point of firing again, and it was not likely that his second bullet would miss; but his finger never pulled the trigger. For Handforth's famous right, swinging round like a battering-ram, struck the gunman on the point of the chin, and he toppled over and lay entangled in the net. Without a split second's pause, Handforth was on him, kneeling on his chest, holding his limp arms.

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"I've got him!" he gasped. "Get his gun, you chaps! He's dangerous!"

The information was unnecessary. Church and McClure knew it already. Trembling with excitement, they searched for their captive's weapon, and Church, after a few moments, found it lying on the ground near Luigi's right hand.

"Better hold him, Handy!" urged Church. "He's only shamming—"

"Shamming, my boot!" interrupted Handforth. "When I hit 'em, they're out! By George! We've bagged him, you chaps! He's our prisoner!"

"What are we going to do with him?" asked Mac breathlessly.

"We'll decide that later," said Handforth, as he passed his fingers over Luigi's untidy form. "Hallo! There's something here! Yes, another gun! The brute's an absolute walking arsenal! Look at this suit of his—as black as night, and it covers his face and hands and everything!"

"He's one of those men we saw in the barn," said Church. "For goodness' sake, Handy, go easy with those guns! What are you doing?"

"Putting them in my pockets—out of harm's way," replied Handforth coolly. "Might as well keep him in this net, and as soon as he shows signs of coming to, I'll give him another tap!"

"He tried to kill us!" muttered Church, his voice husky. "Blessed if I can understand how that shot of his missed! There might be other men, too—"

"That's not likely," interrupted Handforth. "If there were, they would have been on us before now. Anyhow, we'd better not waste any time. Lend a hand. We'll carry him to the woodshed and lock him up."

"But—but how can we explain—"

"Leave it to me," said Handforth confidently.

The capture of Luigi had made him keener than ever. He was feeling that he was now a real detective. He had bagged his man!

Luigi was still dazed from the effect of that terrific punch, and he was hopelessly entangled in the net, too. Once, as the boys were carrying him to the woodshed, he made a movement. Handforth gave the word, the burden was dropped to the ground, and Edward Oswald's right came into action again. Luigi never knew what hit him, although later, when he was coming to himself, he had an idea that he had been kicked by a mule.

The woodshed was not much of a place for imprisoning a desperate crook. Luigi, however, was not desperate at the moment. He knew nothing of what was going on, or he might have raised a few objections. Without releasing him from the goal-net, the juniors trussed him up with ropes until he resembled an Egyptian mummy. Handforth was taking no chances.

"He'll do all right for the time being," he said at length. "Come on, my sons! We've got to decide on the next move."

Even as he spoke the door of the woodshed suddenly swung back, and a black figure was outlined in the opening.

#### Dr. Zangari's Vow!

"WHAT'S going on here?" asked a stern but familiar voice.

Handforth & Co., scarcely knowing what to expect after the hectic excitement of the past few hours, were so relieved that they gave a yell.

"By George! Mr. Lee!" shouted Handforth.

"Crumbs!" gurgled Church.

"Now we're for it!" said the practical McClure.

It was, indeed, Nelson Lee. The schoolmaster-detective, always a light sleeper—and particularly on the alert these nights—had heard some slight but mysterious sounds, and, quickly dressing himself, had come down to investigate. He had switched on an electric torch as he asked his question, and he was astonished to see the chums of Study D.

"This is a very serious thing, Handforth!" he said sharply. "Unless you boys can give me a good reason for being out of your beds at this hour of the night—"

"You bet we've got a good reason, sir!" interrupted Handforth calmly.

Dismayed at first, he had quickly recovered his usual confidence. He stood aside, revealing the huddled figure on the floor, which until this moment had been hidden from Lee.

"There's our reason, sir!" said Handforth. "And if he's not good enough, I'll eat my hat!"

"Good heavens! Who is this?" asked Nelson Lee, stepping forward. "What is it?"

"It's only a guess, sir, but I'll bet he's one of the men who murdered that nigger!" replied Handforth. "Anyhow, he tried to murder us, but we were too smart for him. Do you mind taking charge of these, sir?"

He took out the two deadly automatic pistols, and Nelson Lee, at sight of them, went suddenly cold. It was reassuring to see the weapons safely in Handforth's possession, but the knowledge that the boys had been menaced by them gave Lee a shock. He took them carefully. One glance assured him that they were guns of the most wicked type, and their weight and balance proved the magazines were fully loaded.

"I don't know what you have been doing, Handforth, but I think you must have been in great danger," said the detective. "Hold the light while I have a look at this man. Why is he so still? Has anything happened to him?"

"Nothing to speak of, sir. I hit him."

"I see. I thought, for a moment, you had used a sledgehammer," said Nelson Lee dryly. "How is it that this man, armed with two pistols, allowed himself to be punched into insensibility by you?"

"Well, he couldn't very well help himself, sir—we had him in that net," explained Handforth. "You see, we—we heard something going on. We thought somebody was prowling about the school, so we got dressed, and shinned down a rope from our window. Well, after scouting about a bit, we saw a shadowy sort of figure on Little Side. It came after us, so we dodged through the gateway and held the net ready. That's all, sir. We don't know who he is, or—anything. Only he's dressed in a rummy sort of black suit, and he must be a crook, or he wouldn't be carrying guns."

It was not a very satisfactory explanation, and Handforth knew it. Nelson Lee, however, did not enter into any cross-examination at the moment. He suspected, of course, that the chums of Study D had been farther afield than they admitted; but the fact that they had made such a capture justified them in being out of their beds.

The detective bent over the prisoner. He succeeded in removing the black headgear, and as he gazed upon the vicious, rat-like face he drew a quick

breath. Luigi opened his eyes; they were dull, flat, inhuman eyes.

"Upon my soul!" muttered Lee, under his breath.

He rose quickly to his feet—after making sure that the ropes which held the prisoner were very secure.

"Well, sir?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"You have made an important capture, young man," said Nelson Lee. "Did you see any other figures lurking about, or was this the only one?"

"You mean, in the playing fields, sir?" asked Handforth. "No, he's the only one we saw. I think he must have been dodging about— Hallo! There's somebody coming now! Look out, you chaps!"

Nelson Lee strode to the shed door, and one hand was on his own gun. But there was no need for alarm. There were three newcomers—Nipper, Tommy Watson, and Sir Montie Tregellis-West. They were all looking flustered and anxious.

"You, guv'nor!" ejaculated Nipper. "We—we thought—"

"Are you looking for Handforth?"

"Why, yes, sir. Has anything happened to him?"

"You didn't expect to find me, eh?" went on Lee, his eyes twinkling. "Well, you needn't worry, Nipper. Handforth, Church, and McClure are here. They have been having quite an adventure, it seems. According to their story, they heard some suspicious sounds, dressed themselves, went out, and succeeded in capturing a man dressed entirely in black. It's a very remarkable thing, but ever since this mystery cropped up in the neighbourhood of St. Frank's, you boys have been the first to make discoveries and take definite action."

Nipper and his chums, who had been startled to find Handforth & Co. missing—Nipper, as a matter of fact, had been awakened by Handforth's own shout when Nelson Lee had entered the woodshed—thought it better to maintain silence. Nipper, at least, suspected that Handforth had been on a trip to Gallows Mere.

"Do not raise your voices," said Lee. "We don't want anybody else aroused at this time of night. Now that you are here, Nipper, you can make yourself useful. Go straight indoors to the telephone and ring up the Bannington Police Station."

"Wouldn't they take more notice of you, guv'nor?" asked Nipper.

"Perhaps; but I mean to keep my eye on this prisoner—" Nelson Lee broke off. "However, we can soon settle that. Boys, pick him up, and carry him indoors. I will lead the way."

The detective had more than a suspicion that other mysterious and unauthorised people were lurking about in the neighbourhood of the school. So he took precautions; he kept his gun in full view as he led the way indoors, and he was ready to fire at the first sign of trouble.

However, everything was all right. The captive, now recovering full consciousness, but as helpless as a trussed fowl, was carried into the Ancient House. He was taken right into Nelson Lee's own study, where his eyes turned with baleful hatred from one schoolboy to another.

"Say, you can't do this to me, you lug!" he said savagely, glaring at Lee. "I've done nothing wrong—"

"You don't call it wrong to fire one of your guns at unarmed schoolboys in a deliberate attempt at murder?" broke in Lee curtly.

"Aw, you got me wrong, mister," said Luigi. "I was only fooling. My name's Robson—Hank Robson. Say, I'm a big shot. I run a private detective agency in Chicago, and I'm over in England looking for a gang of crooks."

"What!" ejaculated Handforth, staring.

"You need not take any notice of him, Handforth," said Lee steadily. "This man is Luigi Lombardo—wanted by the Chicago Police for murder, bank robbery, and a dozen other crimes. He is one of the most dangerous killers ever known."

Luigi showed his teeth in a snarl—like a savage wolf.

"Prove it!" he panted.

"There will be no need for me to prove it, Lombardo," said Lee. "I recognised you at once; Scotland Yard has photographs of you, and your full description, including your finger-prints. Your career in England—whatever it might have been—is over."

He went to the telephone and was soon talking to the sergeant-in-charge at Bannington Police Station. That startled individual promised that he would get things moving without delay. So far in the mystery of the murdered airman and the hanged Ethiopian no progress had been made. Now, owing to the action of three junior schoolboys, the first definite step was taken. Chief Detective-Inspector Lennard, when he heard it, was exultant. Luigi Lombardo! A man of such notorious character could never have entered England by the ordinary channels; he must have been smuggled in, and probably by aeroplane.

Nelson Lee, troubled, sent the juniors to bed.

"We will go into the matter more fully in the morning," he said. "I want you all to return to your dormitories without disturbing any of the others. I am pleased with you, Handforth, for what you have done, but you must not do it again. In no circumstances must you leave the school premises during the hours of darkness. There are dangers—more dangers, perhaps, than you realise."

Handforth was silent. He was bursting to tell Nelson Lee everything, but his lips were sealed. Even he remembered the solemn oath he and the other juniors had given to the dying airman.

"No need to worry, sir," he said awkwardly. "I can take care of myself. You'd be surprised! Anyhow, it was Churchy and Mac and I who captured this rotter, wasn't it? We'll get the credit, I suppose, sir?"

"I'm not sure that it would be wise to give you the credit, Handforth," replied Lee gravely.

"Eh? Why not, sir?"

"Such knowledge, in the hands of this man's associates, might endanger your life," said the detective. "I think you had better deny yourself the glory until all possible danger is at an end. Let it be given out that the police made this arrest. Later, perhaps, you can have your thunder."

Handforth did not like it, but Nelson Lee would not shift from that position; indeed, he made Handforth promise that he would not brag on the morrow among his schoolfellows. The whole thing was to be kept as secret as possible.

So the night's adventure ended for Handforth & Co., and they went up to their dormitory, with Nipper & Co., feeling tired but happy.



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While Luigi Lombardo, handcuffed, was being conveyed to Bannington in the police van, his career over, a spy was making his report at Gallows Mere. He was a man dressed exactly as Lombardo had been dressed; he spoke in Italian, and he was brief and to the point.

"I did not arrive at the school, excellency, until it was too late to be of help," he said. "Our comrade was then a prisoner. I could not show myself, or I should have been captured, too. The man Lee had taken charge. Police came, and our comrade, with handcuffs on his wrists, was carried off."

Dr. Zangari's eyes burned like fire. "So Lombardo failed!" he said tensely. "Bah! I suspected from the first that he was all brag and bluster. In Chicago, yes, he can be a big man. But in this country, no. He allows himself to be beaten by schoolboys! So! We must see to it that he dies before the morning. I do not trust him. He must be silenced!"

He rose from his chair and paced the room.

"It is an evil night," he continued, his

voice becoming a menacing purr. "The boys, they escape us—they return to their school. Their tongues may be held in check at the moment, but soon they will become loose. They saw much while they were here; yet, if we act swiftly, further damage may be avoided." He turned to the man in black. "You waited, yes? You saw the boys return to their sleeping chamber?"

"Si, Excellency."  
"You know the window of this room?"

"Yes, I took note of it."  
"Then you will return—at once, before the break of dawn," said Dr. Zangari. "Lombardo is lost to us, but he shall be avenged. The plan I have is simple, so you will have no excuse if you fail—as Lombardo failed."

He gave his instructions, and soon, in the small dark hours of the morning, the messenger of death set out. It was the quietest, blackest hour of the night. The entire countryside slumbered.

Invisible, silent, Dr. Zangari's emissary reached the school premises. With great caution he climbed the wall,

knee-deep in water to seize their chum and carry him in.

"Bravo, Tommy!" roared Blake. "Good old Tommy!"

Mr. Railton pressed Tom Merry's hand.

"You have acted like a hero!" he exclaimed. "We are all proud of you, my boy!"

"Bravo!"  
"Hurrah!"

Tom Merry coloured.

"Oh, draw it mild, you chaps, and don't make a fellow feel a silly ass!" he exclaimed.

"Bai Jove! Huwvah!"

Mr. Selby, drenched, dripping, but wonderfully good-tempered for one, clasped Tom Merry's hand, and shook it with great emotion.

"You have saved my life, Merry," he said, "and it was at the risk of your own! I shall not forget it. Of course, you may be sure that the flogging will not take place. I shall beg the Head—"

"It will not be necessary, Mr. Selby," broke in Dr. Holmes' voice, as he took Tom Merry's other hand. "If Merry's sins were much greater, I should forgive them all now. We are all proud of you, Merry!"

"Yaas, wathah! Huwvah!"

lay flat on the top, listening for a moment, and then dropped.

Stealthily, noiselessly, he crept into West Square. All was still. He could faintly see the dormitory windows, and one of them, he knew, was the window of the room in which Handforth, Church, and McClure slept. It was partially open.

From a secret pocket the man produced an object which was no larger than a golf ball. It was of metal, round, with a squat nozzle at the top and a lever at the bottom. With a quick movement the man pulled the lever and took aim.

Whiz!  
Unerringly the tiny metal globe shot upwards, entered the open window, and fell silently on the foot of Handforth's bed.

And from the nozzle, with a venomous hiss, surged a deadly poison gas!

*(Handforth & Co.'s lives are in danger now, and it seems that nothing can save them from death! Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the further thrilling chapters in this super serial.)*

And Tom Merry was glad to be helped upstairs by his own chums, to be bundled into a warm bed, after a rough tussling, and to escape the cheers and congratulations of the whole school.

Tom Merry was as well as ever the next day, but Mr. Selby was laid up with a cold, which kept him confined to his room for more than a week.

During that time the flood went down, and St. Jim's resumed something of its normal aspect. It was a pleasant time for the Third Form, and they did not look forward with pleasure to Mr. Selby's recovery.

But when Mr. Selby resumed his place in the Form-room, it proved that his cold, or his narrow escape, or something else, had made a change in him decidedly for the better. His temper was almost amiable. But it was the general opinion that it wouldn't last.

But as the days passed on it looked as if it would last, and the Third Formers found it much pleasanter in the Form-room since the days when St. Jim's was washed out!

*(Next Wednesday: "GRIMES GETS GOING!"—a powerful long yarn featuring Grimes, the village grocer's boy, as a Fourth Form at St. Jim's. Look out for this great story!)*

## WASHED OUT!

(Continued from page 22.)

it flashed into his mind that he had risked his life to save the man who had condemned him to a flogging.

"Oh, that's all right sir!" he said. "I oughtn't to have japed you as I did; and you couldn't help being ratty. Never mind that now."

"But—but—"

"Here you are!" said Kildare, as the boat grated against the wall, and he reached out and dragged the Form-master in. "Who's that—Tom Merry?"

"Yes, rather!" gasped Tom Merry. "Lend me a hand, I'm pretty well done, Kildare, old son."

Kildare dragged him into the boat. Tom Merry sank down exhausted, panting for breath, the water forming a pool round him in the boat. Mr. Selby sat exhausted beside him.

Kildare's boat pulled back to the School House steps. The two drenched figures were lifted into the House. Lowther and Manners rushed forward



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