

OUR ROLLICKING NAVAL STORY—Inside!

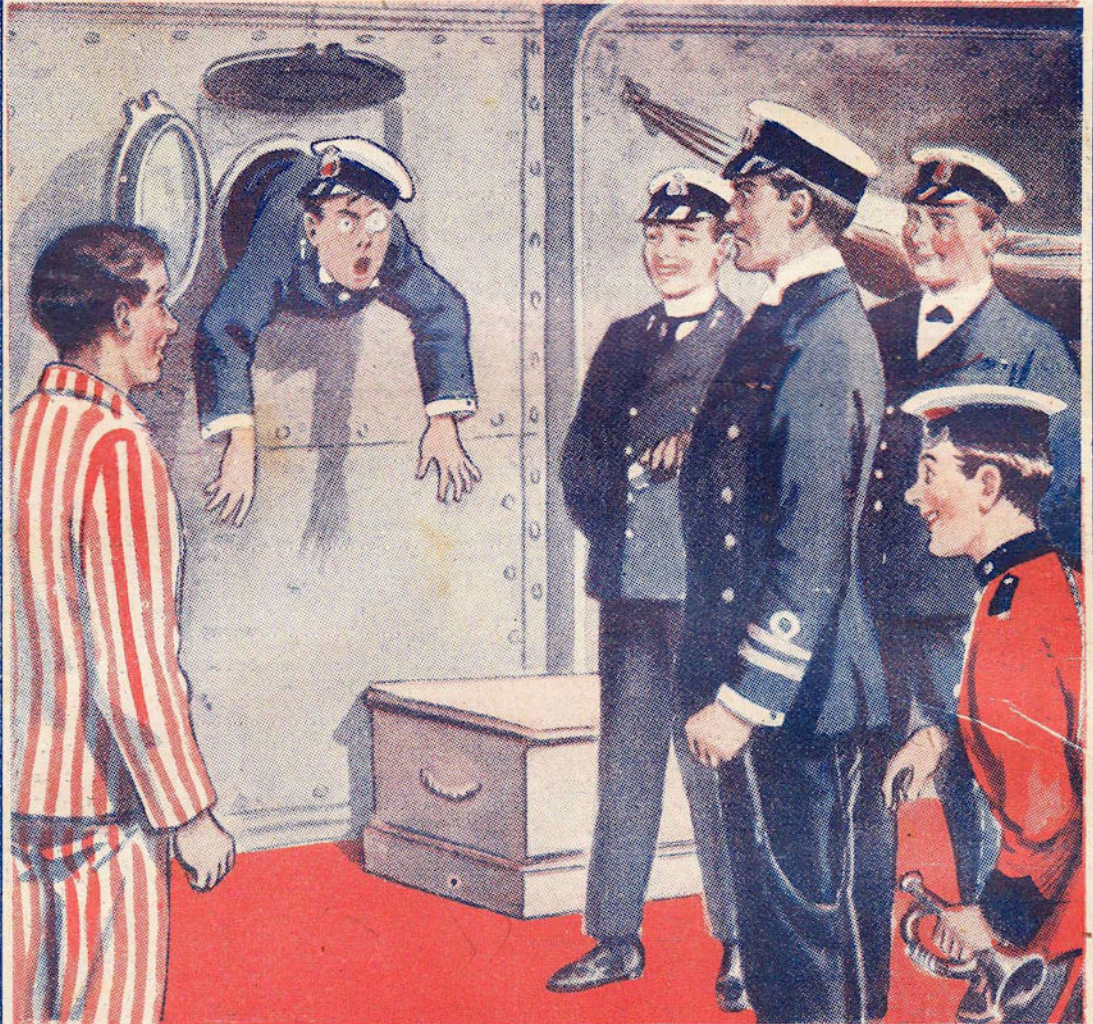
The BOYS' HERALD

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THE HON. REGGIE PEDDAR IN A TIGHT FIX!

"Here, help me to get him down, you fellows," said Arthur Vere. But Reginald Peddar was not so easily removed from his uncomfortable perch. The dude grunted and groaned, but his struggles merely had the effect of jamming him the more tightly in the port. Footsteps were heard approaching. Arthur Vere gazed at his two fellow helpers in consternation. "Oh, my aunt!" he groaned. "It's the officer of the watch on his rounds!" He jumped across to push the door shut only to find himself face to face with the first-lieutenant, Fanshawe, who, accompanied by a petty officer, the master-at-arms, and a bugler, had arrived on the scene. "What's this thumping row in here?" he demanded. "It's nearly time for 'Lights Out.' Great pip! What the mischief are you doing up there, Peddar?" he exclaimed. "Come inboard at once!" "Gr-r-rugh-oo!" groaned Peddar. "I wish I could, deah boy!"

See "THE LAD FROM THE LOWER DECK!"—Inside.

These Magnificent, Long Complete School Tales Can't Be Beaten!



The Coward's Blow!

Another splendid school story here next week.

Foes!

HARRY WHARTON looked up as Frank Nugent came into No. 1 Study in the Remove. Wharton was at his prep., and he was nearly finished when Nugent came in.

Nugent's face was clouded. There was a dark ring round his left eye, and a swelling on his nose. He dropped into a seat at the study table without a word.

"You're late for prep., old man," said Wharton amicably.

"I know."

"I'll lend you a hand—"

"You needn't trouble!"

"Hem!"

Wharton resumed his work in silence. Frank Nugent fumbled listlessly with his books. He was in no mood for work; he was still feeling the effects of his fight with Jack Drake, in Friarade Wood that afternoon. He pushed back his chair at last, and rose.

"Hang prep.!" he growled irritably. "Better have a whack at it, old chap," said Harry. "There's Quelch in the morning, you know—"

"Hang Quelch!"

"Hem!"

"I'm going to chance it," growled Nugent, and he threw himself angrily into the arm-chair. "I'm fed-up!"

"You ought to do something about your eye, old chap—"

"I've done all I can. It doesn't matter, anyhow; Mr. Quelch's seen it, and given me a hundred lines for it," said Nugent bitterly.

"I dare say Drake will get the same."

"Oh, no! He hasn't a black eye—I couldn't give him one. I was a fool to think I could handle him, of course," said Nugent. "I can see that you think so, too."

Evidently Nugent was in a rather unreasonable mood.

Wharton made no answer; perhaps thinking that this was one of the occasions when silence was golden. But his silence seemed to irritate his chum, who went on in the same bitter tone.

"I suppose I couldn't let him bully my minor, under my nose. Of course, you think it was all Dicky's fault, without even knowing what happened. You would!"

"Dicky isn't exactly an angel, kid," said Wharton gently, "and I must say that Drake doesn't seem to me the chap to bully a fag for nothing. But what happened? You haven't told me."

"I found him pitching into my young brother in the wood, and Rodney looking on."

"But why?"

"I didn't stop to ask him, naturally."

Nobody's going to bully my minor if I can stop him!"

Wharton coughed slightly.

He could not help thinking that Dicky Nugent must have provoked Drake very much to cause that sunny-tempered youth to "pitch into him."

But he knew that it was useless to argue with Frank on the point. On the subject of his minor, Nugent was not amenable to reason.

It was easy enough for Frank Nugent to read his thoughts, however, and Frank's brow grew blacker.

"You're down on Dicky," he said. "So are the others—Bob Cherry thinks the same as you do, and Bill, and even Inky!"

"I don't think we're down on him," said Wharton mildly. "Dicky's a good little chap in his way, but he's been spoiled at home—"

"Oh, I've heard all that before," interrupted Nugent rudely.

Wharton compressed his lips.

His own temper was not of the most patient kind, and his chum was trying it sorely now.

"Well, I think you might have asked Drake what the trouble was, before starting in to handle him," he said. "We've had some trouble with Drake, in one way and another, but I've never heard him accused of bullying before."

"Which means that you don't believe me?"

"You've said yourself that you don't know what happened," exclaimed Wharton. "Do try to be a little reasonable, Frank. If Drake was bullying the kid, as you think, and you got licked standing up for him, there's one thing to be done—"

"What's that?"

"You can leave Drake to me, or to Bob!" said Harry quietly. "One of us can set the matter right. If it's as you say, he wants a licking, and one of us will give it to him!"

Nugent's clouded face cleared a little.

There was a tap at the door before he could reply, however, and as the door opened, Jack Drake was seen on the threshold.

Nugent gave him a dark look. "You fellows finished prep.?" asked Drake, a little awkwardly.

"I have," said Harry. "Nugent's cutting it. You can come in."

Drake came in.

"I—I wanted to speak to Nugent," he said, hesitating. "We had a bit of a row this afternoon—"

"You were bullying my minor," said Frank Nugent. "I stopped you."

Jack Drake flushed.

"You were mistaken about that,

Nugent," he answered. "I wanted to explain—"

"I saw you thumping him!"

"You didn't see him throw a stick at me, and land me on the back of the head," said Drake tartly. "I've got a bump there now."

"He didn't do that for nothing, if he did it at all," said Nugent coldly. "You must have interfered with him in some way."

"That's true—"

"I knew that!" sneered Nugent. "You needn't go any further."

"I can tell you why I interfered—"

"You needn't! You licked me," said Nugent, his eyes glowing. "But that isn't the finish. I'm going to take you on again to-morrow!"

"You're not!" answered Drake curtly. "I'm above your weight, and you know it. I'm not going to punch you. I thought I should find you a bit cooler by this time, and—"

"You mean you came here to crow!" said Nugent contemptuously.

"Frank!" murmured Wharton.

Nugent jumped to his feet.

"You're going to meet me in the gym to-morrow, Drake," he said, "and now you can get out of this study!"

"You hot-headed ass!" exclaimed Drake. "If you won't allow a fellow to explain—"

"I won't allow you to spin me any yarns about my minor! I'll allow you to get out of this study, sharp, if you don't want to be chucked into the passage!"

Drake smiled slightly.

"I don't think you could chuck me into the passage, kid," he said; "but I don't want any more trouble, I'll go."

"I'll see you on the gym to-morrow after lessons."

"You won't!"

"If you don't turn up I'll find you fast enough and give you the coward's blow before all the Remove!" said Nugent savagely.

"Rats!"

With that, Jack Drake strode out of the study—only just in time, for in another moment or two there would have been a fight going on. Frank Nugent seemed about to follow him into the passage; but Wharton closed the door quickly.

"That's enough, Frank," he said.

"I'll lick the cad to-morrow, somehow," muttered Nugent.

"But—"

"Oh, give us a rest!"

Harry Wharton did not argue the matter farther. He could only hope that wiser counsels would prevail on the morrow.

Down on Dicky!

FRANK NUGENT received a good many glances the next day—glances that were directed chiefly towards his eye.

That eye was not quite black, fortunately; but it was certainly very dark-circled, and it was painful.

Mr. Quelch frowned upon him; discoloured eyes did not win favour from the Remove master.

Nugent seemed quite changed from his old self.

He had always been considered the sunniest-tempered fellow in the Remove; indeed, many fellows thought that his good-temper amounted almost to "softness."

But there was nothing sunny about him now.

He was feeling deeply the humiliation, as he considered it, of his defeat; and feeling still more keenly what he regarded as a want of sympathy from his chums.

The Co. sympathised, so far as that went. But on the subject of Dicky, they could not see eye to eye with Frank.

Nugent's championship of his minor was something like a standing joke among the juniors; and the patience of his chums had often been severely exercised on that subject.

Nugent's view that Jack Drake was a bully in the style of Bolsover major, and that Dicky was a suffering innocent, naturally did not impress Harry Wharton and Co. very much. In fact, they knew perfectly well that Nugent's view was prejudiced and mistaken. So naturally they could not share his angry animosity against Drake. Had the latter youth shown any sign of "crowing" over his victory, there were four fellows who were ready to jump on him at once. But so far from crowing, Drake carefully avoided Nugent, and it was quite clear that he was sorry for the quarrel, and distressed by it. In the circumstances, it would have been hopelessly unreasonable to pick a quarrel with Drake.

But Nugent was not very reasonable just now, and he was angry and irritated at his chums' attitude in the matter.

According to his view, they were "down on Dicky," and anybody who was down on Dicky was sure to obtain Nugent's keen resentment as a reward.

After morning lessons, Nugent avoided joining his chums as usual, and went out into the quad by himself.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, this way, Franky!" called out Bob Cherry.

Nugent seemed deaf.

"The esteemed and ludicrous Frank has got his inestimable back up," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh ruefully. "He does not deign to shed the light of his beatific countenance upon his pals."

Johnny Bull gave a grunt.

"Silly ass!" he commented.

Wharton looked worried.

"We can't have trouble in the happy family circle," he said. "I can't help thinking that Frank's a bit wrong-headed this time—"

"Hear, hear!" grunted Johnny.

"But he is our esteemed and ridiculous chum," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Bother that chap Drake—"

"Suppose I go and wallop him?" suggested Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"If it would do any satisfaction to Frank, I don't see why Drake shouldn't be walloped. He's rather cheeky, anyhow."

"It's all Nugent minor's fault," growled Johnny Bull.

"That's plain enough for anybody but Frank to see,

and there's none so blind as those who won't see!"

"Let's go and see Dicky," said Wharton. "We may get out of him what really happened yesterday."

"Good egg!"

The four proceeded in search of Nugent minor. The Second Form were out; and they found Dicky in the quadrangle with his chums Gatty and Myers. Gatty appeared to be busy slanging Dicky, as the Removites came up.

"Sneaking off on a half-holiday all by yourself!" Gatty was saying warmly.

"If I had a remittance from an uncle, I should ask my pals to come out with me and help me spend it!"

"Same here!" said Myers. "What were you up to yesterday afternoon, Dicky, that you didn't want us to know?"

"Oh, don't worry!" said Dicky. "Never saw such a set of chaps for asking questions."

"Well, look here, you young sweep—"

"You jaw too much, Gatty, old chap!"

"Have you got any of that remittance left?" demanded Gatty hotly.

"No; I haven't!"

"Then you're not going to stand a feed in the Form-room?"

"Can't!"

"What have you done with it, then? It was two quids."

"Well, it's gone!"

"Oh, I know what he's done with it," said Myers satirically. "Sammy Bunter saw him with old Banks, that shady sharper at Friardale—"

"Oh, shut up, Myers!" exclaimed Dicky, flushing.

"Yah!" said Gatty, throwing all the disgust and contempt he was capable of into that monosyllable.

"Look here—"

"Come on, Myers! Leave the young rotter alone!" said Gatty.

And the two fags marched off in great indignation, leaving Nugent minor

scowling. In that pleasant mood, Harry Wharton and Co. dropped on him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry greeted him cheerily.

"Well, what the thump do you want?" asked Dicky politely.

"Just a little heart-to-heart talk, my merry pippin," said Bob. "Just a little of your priceless conversation."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"You don't want to be kicked round the quad, I suppose?" asked Johnny Bull. "If not, you'd better be a bit more careful how you talk, Nugent minor."

"B-r-r-r-r!" grunted Dicky. "There was a row in the wood yesterday," said Wharton. "Frank pitched into Drake—"

"More fool he!" said Dicky.

"What did you do to Drake to make him whack you?"

"Heaved a stick at him!"

"But why?"

"Because he was a cheeky, interfering cad!" said Dicky Nugent sourly.

"Same as you fellows are, in fact!"

With that sweet remark, Nugent minor turned and stalked away. Johnny Bull made a stride after him, but Wharton caught him by the arm.

"Hold on, Johnny—"

"Are we going to let a Second Form fag talk to us like that?" demanded Johnny, breathing hard.

"We don't want a row with Nugent."

"If Nugent thinks—" began Johnny Bull hotly.

"Shush! There's enough trouble as it is," said Bob Cherry soothingly.

"We don't want any scrapping in the family circle."

Johnny Bull grunted and was silent.

"Well, we haven't learned much," said Bob. "Only—only—only it's pretty clear that Dicky was asking for trouble yesterday and found it, and Frank bustered in like a silly goat. We've got to see that this goes no further."

"If we can!" said Harry doubtfully.

Nugent did not speak to his chums when they came in to dinner. Perhaps it was just as well, for conversation



Nugent made a stride towards Drake, his face flaming and his fists clenched. At that moment Mr. Quelch stepped out of the Form-room. "Nugent!" he thundered. "I punished you yesterday for fighting. Now I find you attempting it again."

would only have revealed the fact that, beyond the shadow of a doubt, they were "down on Dicky."

No Fight!

"DRAKE!"

"Hallo!"

"Will you come into the gym, now?"

"No, I won't!"

Lessons were over at Greyfriars, and there was a crowd of fellows in the junior corridor.

Frank Nugent stopped in front of Drake, and as he spoke, a score of juniors heard his raised voice, and looked round.

Harry Wharton and Co. gathered on the scene at once.

They had settled that, if possible, they were to see that the hapless affair went no further; but success seemed very problematical. Nugent was taking the bit in his teeth, as it were.

Drake and Rodney were passed on, but Nugent was standing in the way, and as Drake moved, he moved; so Drake had to stop again.

"Frank, old man—" began Bob Cherry.

"Leave me alone!"

"But—"

"I want you to meet me in the gym," Drake, said Nugent, in a loud, clear voice. "If you don't, you're a funk!"

Drake smiled rather scornfully. "You can call me any names you like," he said. "We had a fight yesterday, and I don't think you found me funkling. But once is enough, and I'm not going to hammer you again."

"Are you afraid, you cad?"

"You're welcome to think so if you choose," said Drake. "Now let me pass."

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter. "Nugent wants another eye to match that one!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him another, Drake," urged Skinner. "That one looks quite lonely on its own!"

"And there's room for improvement in his nose!" said Bolsover major. "It would swell a little more to the left."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent flushed crimson.

His chums looked very uncomfortable. Frank's challenge to Jack Drake was, in the eyes of all the Removites, absurd; it was clear to all that he was no match for the fellow he challenged.

"Don't play the goat, Nugent," said Vernon-Smith. "What's the good of asking for a bigger bite than you can chew?"

"Mind your own business!"

The Bouncer shrugged his shoulders. "You're playing the giddy ox," he said. "Drake could make rings round you, if he liked. Ease off, and don't be an ass!"

"I'm not asking for your advice, Smithy," snapped Nugent. "No need for you to butt in that I can see. I'm dealing with Drake."

"Lucky for you Drake won't deal with you," remarked Skinner, and there was another laugh.

"Drake, you cad—"

"Go it!" said Drake resignedly.

"You can call me all the names you can find in the dictionary, if you like."

"Do have a little sense, Nugent," exclaimed Rodney. "What are you trying to force a quarrel on Drake for?"

"He wants another blue eye!" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotter, Drake!" exclaimed Nugent, trembling with passion. "If you refuse to come into the gym, you'll fight me here and now, you rotten holly!"

Drake bit his lip.

"I'll leave it to the fellows to say

whether I am a bully," he said quietly. "Nobody but you has ever said so, Nugent."

"For goodness' sake, Frank—" began Wharton.

"Shut up!"

"Frank!"

"Dear me!" said Skinner. "His High Magnificence Wharton, has been told to shut up! Stand clear, you fellows! The skies are going to fall!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites. "He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Now, Drake—"

"Let me pass!" exclaimed Drake impatiently. "I'm not going to fight you, Nugent, you know you've got no chance, or you would know it if you had any horse-sense. Now let me pass."

"You rotten bully—"

"Oh, rats!"

Nugent made a stride towards Drake, his face flaming and his fists clenched. The derision of the Remove crowd cut him more deeply even than Drake's disdainful refusal to fight.

At that moment, Mr. Quelch stepped out of the Form-room.

The Remove master started at the sight he beheld in the corridor.

"Nugent!" he thundered.

"Cave!" breathed Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch strode wrathfully upon the spot. Nugent dropped his hands sullenly.

"I punished you yesterday for fighting, Nugent," exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly. "Now I find you attempting to provoke another fight. You had better take care, Nugent!"

The junior was sullenly silent.

"You will go into the Form-room," continued Mr. Quelch, "remain there till six o'clock, and write out French verbs, Nugent!"

In silence, Frank went back into the Remove room. Mr. Quelch, with a frowning brow, rustled on down the passage, and the crowd of juniors broke up. Drake's brow was troubled as he went out into the quadrangle with Rodney.

"Jever see such a silly ass?" he queried. "Blessed if I know what to do with him. I can't fight him again—the howling ass would only crumple up. He ought to have more sense."

Rodney nodded.

"All because of that confounded fag," grunted Drake. "I've a good mind to look for Nugent minor and boot him across the quad."

"That isn't the way to avoid trouble with his major," remarked Rodney, with a laugh.

"If the ass would only let me explain," continued Drake. "If he knew that I chipped in to get his minor away from that blackguard, Banks; but he won't listen to a word. Anyhow, I'm not going to fight him again. He's a good sort, though he's an unreasonable ass. A chap can't help liking him, really."

Rodney laughed.

"But the sight of me seems like a red rag to a bull, to the silly owl," continued Drake. "I'm going to steer clear of him till he gets over it—if he ever does. I won't hammer him again—it made me feel rotten, walloping him yesterday; though he made me do it. Look here, Rodney, you can talk like a Dutch uncle. He's in the Form-room now, suppose you go and have a chin with him, and see if you can get him to see reason. Tell him why I chipped in with his minor yesterday."

"I'll try," said Rodney, not very hopefully.

He left his chum and went into the School House. He found Frank Nugent alone in the Remove room, with a French grammar and a sheaf of impot paper before him, a pen in his hand, and a black look on his face.

Nugent had not started on his French verbs yet. He was scowling blackly into space; and his scowl grew blacker at the sight of Rodney.

"What the thump do you want?" he demanded. "Have you come to tell me that Drake will meet me in the gym?"

"No. I—"

"Then get out!"

"I want to tell you why Drake chipped in with your minor yesterday."

"I don't want to hear!"

"It was for the kid's own sake," said Rodney quietly. "Drake thought—"

"I don't want to hear what Drake thought," interrupted Nugent savagely. "I want the cad to put up his hands and give me a chance of licking him. If he doesn't I shall give him the coward's blow in public. Perhaps that will make him willing to show a little pluck!"

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Rodney, his temper flaring up. "Drake could dust up the floor with you without half trying. He won't fight you because you're no match for him, and you know it!"

Nugent sprang up from his desk.

"Is that what you've come to say?" he exclaimed furiously. "Well, then—" He rushed across the Form-room towards Rodney.

Dick Rodney stepped out into the corridor. He had not come there to fight with Nugent; and the exasperated junior was evidently in a mood to fight anybody just then, friend or foe. He closed the Form-room door and walked away.

"All serene?" asked Drake, when his chum rejoined him in the quadrangle.

"No fear! I've nearly had a scrap with the hot-headed ass myself!" growled Rodney.

Drake whistled.

"Well, I shall have to keep out of his way, that's all," he remarked.

"Hallo! There goes his merry minor," Dicky Nugent was swinging out of the gateway, apparently in a hurry. Gatty and Myers called after him, but the fag did not heed. He had no use just then for the company of his old friends. Gatty and Myers exchanged glances of disgust.

"Serve him right if a prefect spotted him!" said Gatty, loud enough for the two Removites to hear. "I know what he's after."

"Let's go and stop him," suggested Myers.

"Oh, rats! Let him go and eat coke!" grunted Gatty. "Come down to the cricket."

Drake and Rodney exchanged a glance, as the two disgusted fags walked away.

"Precious young rascal!" muttered Rodney. "He's off to see that rogue Banks again, and his friends know it."

"I wonder whether we ought to stop him?" said Drake.

"My dear chap, you've got trouble enough on your hands through that confounded fag, already. Let's go for a stroll."

Drake assented, and Dicky Nugent was left to his own devices. As they came back from a stroll through the village, however, the chums of the Remove sighted Master Dicky again. He was squeezing through a hedge that bordered a field adjoining the Bird in Hand Inn, and he dropped into the lane almost in front of them.

The fag gave them a startled look.

"So that's where you've been, you young rascal!" exclaimed Drake, with a jerk of his thumb towards the red-tiled building.

"Mind your own business!" retorted Dicky Nugent coolly.

He scudded off, and Drake, glancing

through the gap in the hedge, caught sight of the fat and florid Mr. Banks, leaning on a fence, smoking a big cigar. His face was thoughtful as he walked on to Greyfriars with his chum. It was pretty clear that Nugent minor was getting himself into a serious scrape.

"The young ass!" muttered Drake. "The young rotter, you mean," growled Rodney.

The chums did not reach Greyfriars till calling-over. After call-over, Frank Nugent left Hall without a glance at Drake, and the latter began to hope that the disagreeable affair had blown over.

The Blow!

NOW, Franky, old fellow—" Bob Cherry spoke haltingly. Prep. was over, and the Famous Five had gathered in No. 1 Study just before bedtime.

Nugent was reading—or affecting to read. Certainly, he did not turn the pages of the book he held open on his knees.

The Co. were exchanging uncomfortable glances, or looking at Nugent, for some time before Bob broke the ice.

"Better out with it," said Harry Wharton, at last. "Frank, do you mean to pick a row with Drake in the dormitory to-night?"

Nugent looked up. "I've told you so!" he answered. "I hoped you didn't mean it."

"Well, I did mean it, and I do mean it! Anything else?"

"He doesn't want to fight you!"

"I'll make him!"

The Co. looked at one another hopelessly. This unreasonable fellow seemed quite unlike the Frank Nugent they had known. Johnny Bull's brow was growing darker and sterner.

"I'll tell you what I think, Nugent," he said, in his deliberate way. "I think you're beginning to understand that the row was really your minor's fault, and you don't want to admit it to yourself. That's why you're so dashed keen on being down on Drake."

Nugent's face flushed red. Perhaps Johnny Bull's words went home. But Frank did not answer. He rose, threw down his book, and walked out of the study.

"Now the fat's in the fire!" said Bob Cherry dismally. "Johnny, old man, you talk too much."

"Oh, rot!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Plain talk is wanted sometimes. I believe I hit the nail on the head."

"No need to hit it so hard, though."

old scout," said Bob Cherry. "Well, we'd better get off to dorm., or we shall have Wingate on our trail. I suppose there's going to be trouble."

Wingate of the Sixth shepherded them off, and left them in the Remove dormitory, with the remark that he would be back in ten minutes. When the door closed behind the Greyfriars captain, there was a slight buzz in the dormitory, and most of the eyes turned on Nugent and Drake. It was an open secret that Frank Nugent intended to bring matters to a head in the dormitory where there was no possibility of the encounter being eluded.

Drake sat on his bed and kicked his boots off, carefully avoiding looking at Nugent.

"Now for the circus, you fellows!" murmured Skinner, and there was a chuckle from some of the juniors.

"Frank," whispered Wharton, in a tone of appeal, as his chum made a movement towards Drake.

Nugent did not heed. He walked across to Drake's bed, and the junior looked up quietly.

"Well?" he said. "After lights out you're going to turn out of bed and put up your hands, Drake," said Frank.

Drake shook his head. "I'm not!" he answered curtly. Nugent clenched his hands.

"I've told you what I shall do if you refuse," he said.

Bolsover major's voice boomed out. "Why don't you lick him and have done with it, Drake? He won't be happy till he gets it!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter. Drake did not answer Bolsover. He was feeling sorry for Nugent, irritating as that junior was at the present moment. He knew that it was the worry of his minor as much as anything else that had got on Nugent's nerves, and that he was acting in a way very unlike himself.

Whatever might happen, Drake was determined not to be forced into a fight with the fellow he had defeated once, and whom he knew he could easily defeat again. All the Remove knew that, as a matter of fact, and most of them wondered at Jack Drake's forbearance. But the

mere suspicion that Drake was forbearing towards him was maddening to Nugent in his present frame of mind.

Drake went on coolly taking his boots off, Nugent watching him with burning eyes.

"You refuse to fight me again, then?" he asked, at last.

"Yes!" "For the last time?" "The last time," assented Drake. "Then take that!"

Frank Nugent made a sudden step forward, and with the back of his hand struck Jack Drake across the face.

The slap sounded like a pistol-shot in the still dormitory.

Drake gave a sharp, startled cry. Nugent had threatened what he would do, but somehow, Drake had not expected him to go so far.

He sprang to his feet, his eyes blazing. Nugent stepped back a pace, his hands up, his eyes looking over them at Drake, with a glitter.

"Now come on!" he said. "You've had the coward's blow, and if you don't come on—"

"Now watch the fireworks!" murmured Skinner.

For one moment it looked as if Drake would rush on Nugent, hitting out. But self-command came in time. He dropped his hands, and unclenched them, and with a rather pale face, turned aside.

There was a buzz in the dormitory. Nugent stared at him blankly. Then, as he understood, a bitter sneer crossed his lips.

With a curling lip, he turned away. Jack Drake had taken the coward's blow, and taken it quietly. Nugent went to his bed, looking neither to the right nor to the left. Immediately after Drake turned in. The Remove dormitory was quiet when Wingate came back to put out the lights.

Lights out, the juniors dropped to sleep one by one. But it was long ere Jack Drake's eyes closed. On his cheek, burning in the darkness, he still seemed to feel the smart of the coward's blow.

THE END.

There will be another grand story of the chums of Greyfriars School next week. Be sure you do not miss it.

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