

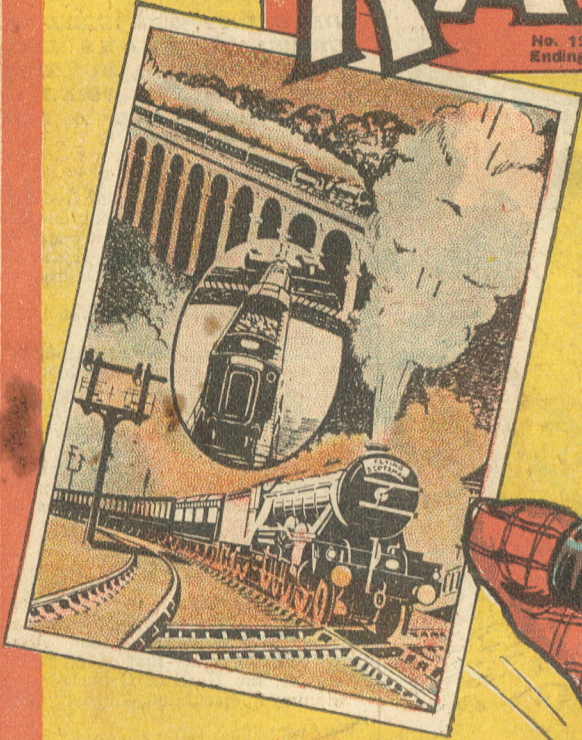
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FUN, FROLIC—AND THRILLS!

The Fourth Form at GRIMSLADE!

By FAMOUS FRANK RICHARDS.



Ginger Takes a Hand.

GINGER RAWLINSON grinned. "Cover!" he whispered.

Without waiting for his comrades, Sandy Bean and Streaky Bacon, to obey that command, Ginger grasped them by their collars, and dragged them down out of sight.

"What the thump—" gasped Streaky.

"You howling ass—" gurgled Sandy.

"Quiet!" hissed Ginger.

Ginger & Co., of Redmayes House at Grimslade, had been crossing a field at a little distance from the school. The footpath ran through a clump of willows, and they were passing through the willows when Ginger spotted an approaching figure ahead. The approaching figure was that of Jim Dainty, of White's House at Grimslade.

"Quiet!" Ginger hissed. "The dear boy hasn't seen us. You've got your pea-shooters! This is where that White's tick gets a surprise."

Deep in cover in the willows the Redmayes trio waited and watched Jim Dainty come along the path. He had to pass them, if he continued to follow the footpath—which they took for granted. At a distance there was a fence, which cut off the grounds of the Black Boy Inn, and in that fence there was a gap. But it certainly did not occur to Ginger & Co. that that was Jim Dainty's destination. The Black Boy was a disreputable place, and severely out of bounds for Grimsladers.

"My giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Ginger suddenly.

A dozen yards from the ambush Jim Dainty turned from the path. He struck off towards the fence of the Black Boy.

Jim Dainty was very watchful as he approached the gap in the fence. But his watchfulness was directed towards the Black Boy. He did not look behind him. So he failed to see three cautious

figures stealing out of the willows in his rear, and the thick grass deadened the sound of Ginger and Co.'s footsteps as they trotted on his trail.

Dainty of the Fourth reached the gap in the fence, stopped there, and peered through it cautiously, taking a survey of the weedy, littered grounds within. The inn was at a distance, but there was a large shed close at hand; it was on that that Dainty's eyes were fixed, and he was blissfully ignorant of the enemy closing in on him from behind.

Having ascertained that there was nobody about, Jim was getting through the gap—when three pairs of hands were laid suddenly on him. He sprawled over in the grass.

"What—" gasped Jim.

"Got him!" chuckled Ginger. "Hold him!"

"You Redmayes ticks!" panted Dainty. "You howling asses! Let go!"

He struggled fiercely. Streaky Bacon gave a yelp as he caught a fist with his eye. Sandy Bean gurgled as an elbow jammed into his waistcoat.

"My giddy goloshes! Hold him!" exclaimed Ginger. "You White's tick, we've jolly well got you! Lucky for you it's us, and not Sammy, that spotted you sneaking into that den!"

"You silly owl!" roared Jim. "Let me go, I tell you!"

He made a terrific effort, and tore himself loose. But the Redmayes trio grasped him again, and they went to the ground in a struggling, scrambling heap.

"Strike me pink!" A young man with shifty eyes and a pimply face stared through the gap in the fence, evidently drawn to the spot by the uproar of the shindy outside. "What's the game? Here, you clear off!"

"Keep your wool on, old bean!" gasped Ginger. "Just going!"

Dainty was done now! Out of breath, and gurgling spasmodically, he was

JIM DAINTY, THE REBEL OF GRIMSLADE, LOOKS LIKE BEING EXPELLED. BUT THIS TIME IT'S FOR DOING A GOOD DEED—NOT A BAD ONE!

helpless in the hands of the Redmayes three. Ginger Rawlinson took one arm. Streaky the other, and Sandy grasped his legs as if they were the shafts of a cart. Lifted thus, Jim Dainty was borne away.

"You silly idiots! Will you let me go?" he gasped.

"No jolly fear! We're taking you back to school out of mischief, old bean," chuckled Ginger. "Don't you know the Black Boy is out of bounds? Were you going there for smokes, you dingy worm?"

"You howling ass!" roared Dainty.

He wriggled frantically as the Redmayes trio took him along the footpath, occasionally tapping him on the earth as they went. From the footpath they emerged into Middlemoor Lane, where the clock tower of Grimslade School was visible in the distance over the trees. Wriggling and panting, Jim was carried on towards the school. A tall figure came in sight—that of Dr. Samuel Sparshott, the Head of Grimslade.

"Sammy!" ejaculated Ginger. "Chuck it!"

The Redmayes trio "chucked" it, and Jim was chucked at the same time. He sprawled on the dusty earth, face down, and Ginger & Co. vanished through a gap in the hedge. Sammy Sparshott stared down at the sprawling figure in amazement, stooped, and grasped the Fourth-Former by the back of his collar to lift him.

"What—" began Sammy.

He got no further. The sprawling junior was unaware that Ginger & Co. had vanished, and that Sammy Sparshott had arrived. As he felt the grip on his collar, he wriggled up and punched wildly.

"There, you rotter—take that, you silly ass!" he panted.

"Great gad!" gasped Sammy Sparshott, as he took it. It caught him on the nose, and he staggered back, releasing Jim's collar. "Dainty! Are you mad?"

"Oh crumbs!" Jim leaped to his feet, staring blankly at the Head. Sammy's hand was to his nose, and his eyes were glittering like cold steel.

"Dainty!" barked Sammy. "You are—"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Jim, in horror. "I didn't see you—I thought it was that tick Ginger grabbing me again. Oh, crickey!"

Dr. Sparshott stared at him. A faint grin came over his face. Quick as Ginger & Co. had been, he had seen them disappearing through the hedge, and he understood. Sammy rubbed his nose.

Jim gazed at him, petrified. He had called his headmaster a rotter and a silly ass, and punched his nose! He gazed at Sammy in horror and dismay.

"Oh, sir!" he gasped. "Believe me, I—I— Oh crumbs!"

Sammy was a sportsman.

"Of course I believe you, Dainty!" he said. "Mistakes will happen. No harm done. Cut!"

Dr. Sparshott walked on; and Jim, greatly relieved, cut.

A Thief in the Night.

"PURGLARS!"

"What?"
"Purglars—peastly purglars!" gasped Fritz Splitz.
"Mein gootness! Purglars in our stutty! Tink of tat!"

It was the following morning, and all the Grimslade fellows, when they came down from the dormitories, knew that something had happened. White and Redmayes, the Housemasters, were seen with faces as solemn as owls, and at early prayers it was noted that Dr. Sparshott's face was very grim.

Fritz Splitz was the first with the news, and he brought it along to a crowd of juniors in the quad after breakfast.

"Tere vas purglars in te night!" said Fritz. "Tey have ropped te House! Tink of tat! Tere is a bolice-man in mein stutty! I go to mein stutty for some toffee, and I see a bolice-man tere! Tink of tat!"

"Burglars!" repeated Jim Dainty. "My hat! But what do they want in our study?"

There was a rush of the Grimslade fellows to Study No. 10 in White's House. A pane had been cut out of the window, evidently by the thief in the night, to reach the fastening within. Inside the study the burly figure of Inspector Rawson, of Blackslade, could be seen, and he was talking to Dr. Samuel Sparshott.

"It's the same gang, sir. No doubt about that. There have been more than a dozen burglaries in this neighbourhood the last few weeks. And we've got an eye on them."

"I'm glad of that," said Dr. Sparshott. "A number of silver cups—House trophies—have been taken from Mr. White's sideboard, as well as some other articles that are missing. If you can recover them, Mr. Rawson—"

"I have every hope, sir. For some time we've had an eye on a gang of racing men putting up at a rather disreputable public-house in this neighbourhood. One of them has been shadowed to a pawnbroker's in Blackslade, where he pawned a gold watch—now in our hands. As soon as we trace the owner, I can apply for a search-warrant and—"

"Cut!" rapped Sammy Sparshott, becoming aware of the crowd gathering outside the study; and the juniors cleared off and heard no more.

There was intense excitement that morning in Grimslade School, with the result that lessons suffered. Mr. Peck, the master of the Fourth, developed a cross temper.

Peck was driving—or trying to drive—Latin into the heads of the Fourth, and the juniors seemed more interested in the burglar than in P. Vergilius Maro. When Jim Dainty was called on to construe, he borrowed Dick Dawson's Virgil, as he had done several times of late. This time Peck spotted him.

"Dainty, why have you not brought your own book into class?" he snapped.

"Where is your Virgil, Dainty?"
Jim coloured. Certainly he could not tell his Form master where his Virgil was—in the shed at the back of the Black Boy Inn.

"I—I couldn't find it, sir," he stammered.

"Nonsense!" rapped Mr. Peck. "Do you not keep your books in your study?"

"Yes, sir; but it—it wasn't there."

"Mein gootness!" squealed Fritz Splitz, in great excitement. "I tink tat te purglar take tat pook, sir! Tat purglar vas in our stutty, sir, and now Tainty's pook is gone!"

"Nonsense!" hooted Mr. Peck. "Be silent, Splitz! You do not suppose that your book was taken by the thief last night, Dainty?"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Jim. "But it—it's gone!"

"Have you searched for it?"

"Several times, sir!" answered Jim, not adding that his searches had been in the vicinity of the Black Boy Inn.

"Well, as I suppose a possibility exists that the burglar may have taken it, I will say no more about it!" snapped Mr. Peck.

And the matter was dropped, much to Jim's relief.

After school that day most of the Grimslade fellows were still discussing the burglary in White's House. But Jim Dainty was not giving it a thought. He had something more pressing to think about. Dick Dawson, in flannels, with a bat under his arm, called to him, but Jim shook his head.

"I'm going to have another shot at getting that dashed book!" he said. And, leaving his chum at cricket practice, Dainty went out of gates. And Ginger Rawlinson of Redmayes House, whose eye was on him rather curiously, left Bacon and Bean at games practice and followed him.

Dainty sauntered down Middlemoor Lane with a careless air. When he reached the footpath on the field that bordered the Black Boy Inn he gave a quick glance round, and started as he saw a red-headed junior behind him. Ginger came on at a run.

"Hold on, Dainty!" he said. Ginger's face was very serious. "Look here, I jolly well know where you're going—"

"Mind your own business!" snapped Dainty.

"Don't be an ass!" said Ginger. "Look here, we were larking yesterday—but this is jolly serious. Sammy would be as mad as a hatter if he found you out. It's all very well for a cad like Fenwick, but it's not good enough for you, Dainty. You used to be a decent chap."

"You silly owl!" said Jim in measured tones. "Do you think I'm going to the Black Boy to put money on a horse, or to smuggle cigarettes?"

"I don't see what else—"

"You boiled owl! I'll tell you, then!" growled Dainty. "Last week Fritz went there to take a message to a bookie for Fenwick. I went after him and kicked him out. Monty Moss, the bookie, grabbed me, and I had a tussle with him. I had a Virgil in my pocket—I had some verses to mug up for Peck—and it dropped while I was scrapping with the brute in the shed. I missed it afterwards. And it's still there!"

"My giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Ginger. "A book belonging to you in that disreputable den!"

"Yes—a Grimslade School book, with my name written in it. It must have got mixed up in the straw in that shed. I never missed it till afterwards. I've got to get it back. If it turned up—"

Ginger gave a prolonged whistle.

"If it turned up you'd get the flogging of your life! It would be proof that you'd been in the place!"

"Blow the flogging!" growled Dainty. "Sammy would think me a low-class rotter—that's what I don't want! Still, I don't want the flogging, either. I couldn't tell Sammy I went in after that fat idiot Fritz. I've got to get that dashed book back somehow! I've tried it on three or four times already. A brute there set a dog on me once—that blighter with the pimples. You saw him yesterday? He seems to be using that shed for something—blessed if I know what! Now you do understand that I'm not going blagging, you red-headed freak?"

"Keep your wool on!" grinned Ginger. "Of course, I thought—"

"Rot! You've got nothing in that copper knob to think with!"

"You cheeky White's tick!" roared Ginger.

"You pie-faced Redmayes worm!"

That was enough for Ginger! He had followed Dainty with quite kind intentions. Now he forgot his kind intentions. The next moment they were scrapping. Dainty's arm was flung round Ginger's neck, and a red head went into chancery. Ginger roared and struggled wildly. With a mighty heave he sent Jim toppling backwards, and sprawled over him.

Splash!
Jim Dainty landed on his back in the ditch beside Middlemoor Lane. Ginger landed on him, forcing him right under.

"Urrrrrrgggh!" spluttered Jim.
"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger.

Dainty heaved up, drenched with water, smothered with mud. Ginger was struggling up the side of the ditch. Dainty grabbed at him and jerked him back. The Redmayes junior rolled in water and mud, spluttering frantically. Jim was first out of the ditch. Ginger crawled after him, gurgling. They stood dripping water and mud, smothered from head to foot, gasping for breath.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Ginger. "You silly ass."

"Oh scissors!" gurgled Jim. "You howling chump!"

And they tramped back to Grimslade for a change! They needed one!

Unexpected!

"DAINTY!"

"Yes, sir!"
"Is this your book?"
"Wha-a-a-t!"

It was the following morning in the class-room. The Fourth had taken their places, when Mr. Peck picked up a book from his desk and called to Jim Dainty.

Jim gazed at it in horror.

It was his Virgil—the book he had lost in the heap of straw in the shed at the back of the Black Boy a week ago. He had feared that it might turn up some time or other, and land him in trouble. Now, evidently, it had turned up!

"Dr. Sparshott gave it to me to hand to you," said Mr. Peck. And he handed the book to Jim, who fell rather than sat down.

Morning lessons passed like a sort of nightmare to Jim Dainty. The lost book had been found—evidently at the Black Boy; it could have been found nowhere else. It had come into Dr. Sparshott's hands—obviously, Sammy must know where it had been found! Sammy, apparently, had said nothing to Mr. Peck—but it was pretty certain that he would have something to say to Dainty!

Several times that morning Jim was in trouble with his Form master for inattention to lessons. He hardly heard Peck—hardly remembered that he was given lines. His mind was in a whirl.

Dick Dawson slipped an arm through his when the Form was dismissed for break. His face was deeply concerned.

"This is pretty rotten, Jim," he muttered. "I—I never believed the beastly book would turn up! How on earth did it get to Sammy?"

"Can't make it out!" groaned Jim. "But it has—I was afraid all the time that it would! I wish now I'd got out at night and tried for it! I was going to, but— Well, it's too late now! The game's up!"

"Look here, you'll have to tell Sammy that you went in after that fat idiot Fritz!"

"I can't give Fritz away!"
"Well, I suppose you can't. But— My hat! Here comes Sammy. You're for it!"

Jim Dainty breathed hard. Dr. Samuel Sparshott came out of Big School, and down the path towards the juniors. Jim's heart beat fast.

He had no doubt that it was coming now! Sammy knew—he could not fail

(Continued on page 495.)

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THE FOURTH FORM AT GRIMSLADE!

(Continued from page 487.)

to know, when Jim's book, with his name written in it, had been found within the precincts of the Black Boy, and had come into Sammy's hands!

To Jim's utter amazement, the Head did not stop to speak. He gave the juniors a kind nod and a smile as they raised their caps, and passed on. Dainty gazed after him, dumbfounded.

"Well, my hat!" said Dawson blankly. "Doesn't he know? But he must know your book was found at the Black Boy, and so he must know that you were there. He can't be going to look over it! You'd be sacked for it, only they never sack a man at Grimslade! But—"

Dawson shook his head, hopelessly puzzled. Dainty was equally puzzled! Apparently the Head was putting off dealing with the matter. But why? It was not like Sammy to keep a fellow in suspense!

Every moment in break Jim expected to be called before the Head. But no summons came; and the Fourth Form went in for third school. After morning school there was no summons—and so Jim expected to be sent for after dinner. Still he was not sent for; and the afternoon passed without anything happening.

There was a very interesting topic in the school that afternoon. Inspector Rawson had run down the burglars, and the articles stolen from White's House had been recovered—the silver once more adorned the sideboard in the dining-room at White's. That was a thrilling topic to most of the fellows; but Jim Dainty hardly heeded it.

He was not interested in the burglars, or in their capture; or even in the House cups. He was thinking all the time of that dreaded summons to Sammy's study, to face the stern eyes of the Head!

Still the summons did not come! "I can't stand this!" said Jim, after tea in Study No. 10. "Sammy jolly

well knows I've been to the Black Boy now—and he must think I went there blagging! He can't overlook it—and doesn't mean to! It's a dirty trick keeping a fellow in suspense like this! I'm jolly well going to have it out!"

And Jim Dainty, having made that resolve, marched away to Big School, to have it out with Sammy. Anything was better than suspense! He went direct to Dr. Sparshott's study, tapped at the door, and opened it.

Sammy was there—not alone! Inspector Rawson was with him, and the inspector was speaking.

"A complete haul, sir," said Mr. Rawson. "Everything that was stolen at Grimslade, and a stack of other things, all found in the same place—hidden under a heap of straw in a shed, at the back of the Black Boy Inn. The landlord swears that he knew nothing of it—he had let the shed to a man named Brown for storage purposes, he declares—a man named Brown, alias Pimply Joe! We shall see! The oddest thing—"

Dr. Sparshott frowned at the junior in the doorway.

"You should not interrupt me, Dainty!" he said. "What is it?"

"Sorry, sir!" stammered Jim. "But, I—"

"Oh, this is Dainty!" said Inspector

Rawson, glancing at him. "The boy to whom the book belonged!" He smiled. "You've got your school book back, my lad."

"I—I—yes!" stammered Jim. "I—"

"That's the oddest thing, as I was saying, sir," said Mr. Rawson. "There was a collection of all sorts of things, but the oddest thing was to find a schoolboy's Virgil among them. Why they should have troubled to take a boy's school-book when they broke into Mr. White's House beats me—but I suppose all was grist that came to their mill!"

Jim Dainty stood as though rooted in the doorway.

He understood now.

That unpleasant pimply man at the Black Boy was the burglar. He had used the shed for concealing his plunder. The police had found the loot there, hidden in the straw—and, at the same time, Jim Dainty's Virgil! That was how it had reached Sammy—returned to the school as part of the plunder taken from White's House by the burglar!

Jim fairly gasped.

"What do you want, Dainty?" barked Sammy. "You have interrupted me—but now you are here, what do you want?"

"Oh! Nothing!" gasped Jim.

"Nothing!" barked Sammy, staring at him. "You came here for nothing? Then I will give you something! Take two hundred lines!"

"Oh! Yes! Yes, sir!" gasped Jim.

And he backed out and shut the door. Dick Dawson stared at him when he came back into Study No. 10 in White's House. He had not expected his chum to come back looking happy and relieved.

"Doesn't Sammy know—" he began.

"No fear!" chuckled Jim. "There are things that even Sammy doesn't know—and he jolly well never will!"

And Sammy never did!

(Fatty Frits rolling in money—or so it seems! Look out for plenty of laughs in next week's rollicking school story of the Grimslade chums. Next Saturday's RANGER will also contain another Free Photo Plate.)

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