

FREE—A SUPERB PHOTOGRAVURE PLATE—INSIDE!

The

RANGER

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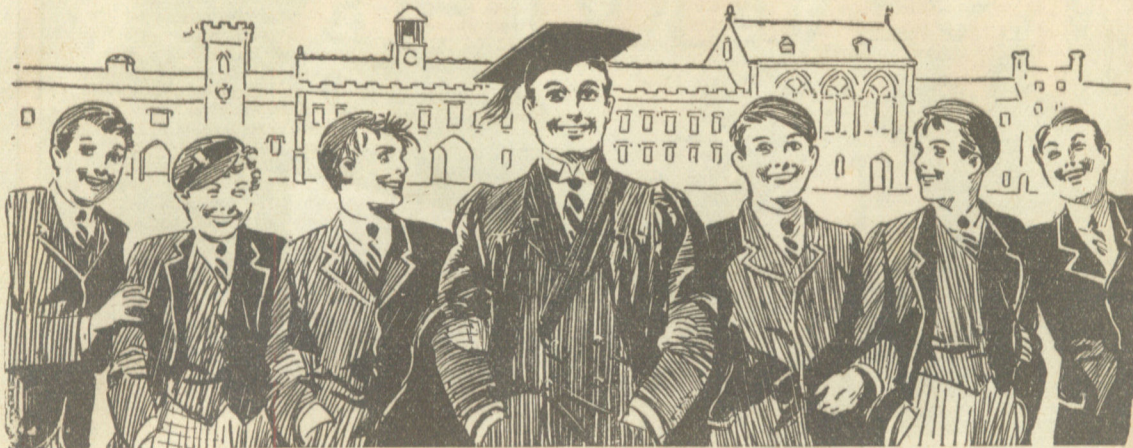
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HERE'S A MERRY SCHOOL YARN TO DRIVE AWAY YOUR BLUES!

The Fourth Form at GRIMSLADE!

By Famous FRANK RICHARDS.



A GRIMSLADE OLD BOY GIVES THE SCHOOL A LOOK IN THIS WEEK—TO GIVE HIS OLD FORM MASTER A GOOD HIDING!

Fritz in a Fix.

“AND six jam tarts!” said Jim Dainty.

“Mein gootness!” murmured Fritz Splitz.

“And six doughnuts!” said Dick Dawson.

Fritz’s saucer-eyes glistened.

The fat German junior of Grimslade stood in the doorway of the post office in Middlemoor. That establishment was a grocery and a tuckshop as well as a post office. It was the tuckshop department that Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson were patronising.

It was a half-holiday at Grimslade School, and the chums of White’s House were going for a ramble on the moor, and had called in for supplies on the way. Mrs. Binks, who was postmistress and the whole staff of the little village store, placed two paper bags before the two juniors at the counter. And Fritz von Splitz, at the same moment, had a brain-wave. He rushed in.

“Tainty! Tawson!” he roared. “Quick! Poor old Pilly White!”

Dainty and Dawson spun round from the counter.

“What about Billy White, fathead?” asked Jim.

“He is run ofer!” gasped Fritz.

“Oh, my hat!” exclaimed Dawson.

“Billy” White was Housemaster of White’s at Grimslade. With one accord the two juniors rushed out of the shop, regardless of the two paper bags on the counter. Mrs. Binks, equally startled by the news, turned away and pressed her plump face to a section of the shop window to look into the street. And Fritz Splitz grabbed the two paper bags from the counter, one in either podgy paw, and rolled towards the door.

Really, it was a brain-wave, and very bright of Fritz. Nobody had been run over, but Fritz hoped to escape with the tarts and the doughnuts before Dainty and Dawson discovered that interesting fact. But in the brightest of schemes there is often a catch somewhere. That little scheme did not work according to programme.

For Dainty and Dawson, tearing through the doorway, tore right into a man who had just come round the corner of the shop. There was a terrific crash.

The newcomer was a big man—a tall, broad-shouldered, muscular man, with a square jaw rather like a bulldog. But, powerful as he was, the sudden impact of the two juniors sent him spinning. He staggered across the pavement and

sat down with a bump, with Dainty and Dawson sprawling over him.

“Oh, sorry, sir!” panted Dawson.

“Our Housemaster’s been run over.”

“You young rascals!” roared the big man, scrambling to his feet. “You’ve knocked me over. Oh! You’re Grimslade boys, are you?” he added, evidently recognising the Grimslade caps, and as he spoke he grabbed the two juniors by their collars. “Nobody’s been run over, you young ruffians. You won’t get away with that! Grimslade boys weren’t liars in my time! Now, take that—and that—and that!”

The collision had evidently made the big man lose his temper. Judging by his words, he was an old Grimslade boy himself, which might have made him go easy with Grimsladers. But he didn’t! Gripping the two juniors in powerful hands, he banged their heads together—once, twice, thrice.

Dainty and Dawson roared and struggled, and that was the scene that met Fritz Splitz’s saucer-eyes as he rolled to the door with his plunder in his fat paws. Instead of speeding up the street in search of the supposed accident, Dainty and Dawson were just outside, and it was impossible for the fat Rhineland to escape unseen.

Fritz backed promptly into the shop. He blinked round him in dismay. Mrs. Binks’ face was still glued to the window. Fritz jumped to the door of the little parlour behind the shop to get out that way. As he opened the door there was a growl from a dog within, and Fritz promptly shut the parlour door again.

Fritz did not like dogs at close quarters. Escape both ways was cut off, and it looked as if Fritz would have to abandon his loot. But that was a last, desperate resource.

The telephone cabinet stood in a corner, and there was a little space behind it. Fritz squeezed into that little space. He was out of sight now, at all events, and he hoped for the best.

Meanwhile, Dainty and Dawson were struggling in the grasp of the big, bad-tempered man who had once been a Grimslader.

“Let go, you rotter!” roared Jim.

“I’ll jolly well hack your shin!”

Bang! came his head against Dawson’s for the fourth time, and as there was nothing else to be done, Jim hacked. The big man, with a howl, released the two juniors, hopping on one leg.

Leaving him hopping, Dainty and Dawson, in a rather flustered and

breathless state, went back into the shop. They glared round for Fritz, but Fritz was not to be seen; neither were the bags they had left on the counter.

“That Boche bloater!” hissed Jim Dainty. “He pulled our leg to get his paws on the tuck! Where is he? Did you see him, Mrs. Binks?”

Mrs. Binks turned from the window. But she knew nothing of Fritz’s movements.

“Must have cut out the back way,” said Jim. “May we go through, Mrs. Binks?”

Dainty and Dawson went through the parlour, undeterred by the dog. A side door was open, and they had no doubt that Fritz had escaped that way, and they followed on.

Fritz, wedged behind the telephone cabinet in the corner of the shop, grinned breathlessly. He did not stir from his hiding-place. He wanted to make sure that Dainty and Dawson were not coming back first. In the meantime, he gobbled one of the jam tarts from the bag. He grinned as he gobbled.

There were voices in the shop. The big man had come in, and was speaking to Mrs. Binks. That good lady went into the parlour after the two juniors, and the big man came across to the telephone cabinet, and Fritz heard him moving within. It was a hot summer’s afternoon, and the telephone box was stuffy. The shop seemed to be empty, so the big man only half-closed the door after him. His voice came quite plainly to Fritz as he spoke on the telephone.

“Grimslade School? Is that Dr. Sparschott?”

Fritz pricked up his ears. The big man, who had once been a Grimslade boy, was calling the headmaster of Grimslade. His voice went on:

“Speaking from Blackslade and County Bank. Manager speaking. It’s about a cheque. The figure appears to have been altered. Can you come over? It’s rather a serious matter, of course. The sooner the better. If you could manage it this afternoon—”

Fritz’s saucer-eyes opened wide.

“Thank you, Dr. Sparschott! I shall expect you at four o’clock, then. I shall not communicate with the police until I see you. Good-bye!”

The man rang off and left the telephone cabinet. Fritz Splitz heard his heavy footsteps tramping away. In his amazement the fat German forgot to gobble tarts!

This man, who was nothing like the

manager of the Blackslade bank, had called up Dr. Sparshott, stating that he was speaking from the bank ten miles away, when he was speaking from Middlemoor Post Office, only a mile from the school. Even Fritz Splitz's obtuse brain realised that there was something very queer about this.

The Boy Who Came Back.

MR. WILLIAM WHITE, more familiarly known in his House as "Billy," had a very thoughtful expression on his face. He was looking out of his study window when Dr. Samuel Sparshott strolled by in the quad outside. "Sammy" Sparshott stopped to speak, with a rather whimsical smile on his strong, clear-cut face.

"Cough it up, Billy!" he said. The young man who was headmaster of Grimslade School, was still very boyish in many ways.

Mr. White started. "I've noticed that you've something on your mind. Is it a problem you can tell to a friend?" asked Sammy, with a smile.

"It's nothing, really," said Mr. White, colouring. "But—" he paused. "You never knew Gunter, of course."

"Gunter?" repeated Sammy. "No—before my time! I've heard of him. We never sack a man at Grimslade—but Gunter was sacked before I came here as Chief Beak!"

"I think even you would have had to sack Gunter," said Billy White, with a faint smile. "Nobody could deal with him. A big, burly, overpowering bully of a fellow—I don't know how I stood him in the House till he reached the Sixth Form. He had to go—I took him to the headmaster, and he was too old to be thrashed."

"I think I'd have chanced it!" said Sammy, with a rather grim setting of the lips. "But other men, other ways! What about him? It's years since he went."

"He went away, swearing vengeance when he was expelled—swearing that when he was a man, he would come back—and knock out the man who got him the sack—me!"

Dr. Sparshott laughed. "I saw him in Middlemoor yesterday," went on Billy White worriedly. "I believe he's putting up at the Black Boy there. I've rather wondered whether he's fool enough to remember his hot-headed nonsense after all these years, and come up here to make a scene!"

"Oh gad!" said Sammy. His clear grey eyes glinted suddenly. "If he did, Billy, he would find quite a different headmaster here! I think I should give him what he wanted when he was sacked!"

"Well, you could," said Billy White ruefully, "though even a boxing Blue might find him a handful. But I couldn't! He could have whopped me when he was a Sixth Form boy here. I've no doubt that, at his present age, he could pick up a man like me in one hand. I hardly know what to do if he barges in."

Sammy grinned. "Send word over to me at once if he does," he said. "Fact is, I'd like to meet this chap Gunter. I've heard quite a lot about him."

"I hope he's heard about you," said Billy White. "If he has, he may steer clear."

Dr. Sparshott nodded and glanced at his watch.

"I must cut," he said. "I've got to get to Blackslade at four—bank manager rang me up about a cheque."

The headmaster of Grimslade walked away with his long strides to the garage. A few minutes later, Billy White saw him running the car out to take the Blackslade road. The Housemaster remained at his window with the thoughtful expression still on his face.

A quarter of an hour after Dr. Sparshott had driven away, old Sykes, the

porter, looking out of his lodge, stared at a tall, broad-shouldered man who swung in at the gates. Old Sykes blinked at him, seeing something familiar in the stranger's aspect.

"Corks!" ejaculated Sykes. "It's young Gunter!"

It was the big man with the bulldog jaw, who had banged Dainty's and Dawson's heads together outside the post-office in Middlemoor that afternoon, and whom Fritz Splitz had overheard on the telephone. He swung in at the gateway, and grinned at old Sykes' startled face.

"Here, you, young Gunter, what do you want here?" demanded the Grimslade porter.

"Remember me, what?" asked the big man. "Is Billy White in his House, Sykes?"

"Mr. White's at 'ome," said Sykes, with dignity, "but he don't want to see you, young Gunter, what was sacked—Ow! Whoops! Corks! Wow!" Old Sykes finished up with a terrific yell as Gunter tapped him on the chest. It was only a tap; but the big man's strength was enormous. Old Sykes went back as if a mule had kicked him, and disappeared crashing into his lodge.

Gunter walked on. Two Sixth Form men, Trafford of Redmayes' House and Yorke of White's, were at hand, and they stared in surprise at the man's actions. A dozen other fellows saw him and gathered round. The two seniors ran into his path.

"Here, you!" exclaimed Trafford. "What the dickens do you mean by knocking the porter over?"

"Who the thump are you?" exclaimed Yorke.

Gunter stared at them aggressively. "Ever heard of Gunter of the Sixth?" he demanded.

"Gunter!" repeated Trafford. "There's no fellow here of that name. There was a chap once called Bully Gunter, who was sacked."

"Exactly—and he's come back to see the Housemaster who got him the boot! Stand aside."

"But—but what—"

"Get aside, I tell you! I'm here to thrash Billy White!"

"Oh, great pip!"

"If you want me to thrash you first,

it won't take long! Are you letting me pass?" demanded Gunter.

"Stand back, Gunter—if you're Gunter," said Trafford. "You certainly won't be allowed—oh, my hat!"

The captain of Grimslade was interrupted. Gunter, once of the Sixth, came straight at him, hitting out. Trafford was a big fellow; but he went over like a ninepin. Yorke jumped to his aid; and Gunter met him with left and right. The House-captain of White's went sprawling headlong over Trafford, knocked to the wide. Gunter grinned down at them for a moment, and then stalked on towards White's House.

There was a roar of excitement in the quadrangle. Many fellows were out of gates that sunny afternoon; but there were plenty about, and the news spread like wildfire that a former White's man had come back to whop White.

"Call Sammy!" exclaimed Sandy Bean. "Somebody cut off and call Sammy."

"Sammy's gone out!" yelled Paget of the Fourth. "He went out in his car!"

Mr. White, standing at his window, was gazing at the advancing "Old Boy" with almost horrified eyes. He had seen Trafford and Yorke strewn in the quad. Gunter was coming! And Dr. Sparshott had driven off to Blackslade! There was no chance of Sammy coming to the rescue. Billy White stood petrified.

"Oh, there you are, Billy!" roared Gunter. He strode to the study window, followed by a breathless, buzzing crowd of Grimsladers. "You know me again, Billy?"

"You—you—you ruffian!" gasped Mr. White. "Get out of this at once, or I will telephone for the police."

Gunter laughed. "How long will it take them to get here?" he asked, jeeringly. "You're for it, Billy. You got me the sack, and I warned you that I'd drop in some day and thrash you within an inch of your life!"

"You—you rascal!" gasped the Housemaster.

"I've been abroad since then," grinned Gunter, "that's why you've

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While Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson rushed out of the shop on a fool's errand, Fritz grabbed the two bags of tuck from the counter and, with one in either podgy paw, rolled towards the door.

THE FOURTH FORM AT GRIMSLADE!

(Continued from page 27.)

not seen me till to-day, Billy. Now I'm home again, and I've come to keep my word. You're for it!"

Slam! The window closed. Gunter, with a grim laugh, tramped round to the door, and tramped into the House. He reached Mr. White's study door; it was locked on the inside by that time. He could hear the voice of the House-master within, frantically ringing up the police-station at Blackslade.

"Come out, Billy White!" roared Gunter. "Come out and take what's coming to you! Here's the man you got sacked from Grimslade seven years ago!"

Crash! He drove his hefty shoulder at the study door, and it creaked and rocked. Crash, crash! The door groaned, the lock creaked. And Billy White, grabbing up the poker, stood desperately on the defensive, knowing that in a few moments more Gunter, once of his House, would be in the study and handling him.

Sammy in a Scrap.

"PEASTS and prutes!" gasped Fritz Splitz.

The way of the transgressor was hard! With a bag of tarts and a bag of doughnuts, Fritz had escaped from Middlemoor, while the chums of the Fourth were hunting for him in the wrong direction.

He left the village behind, and at last, in a shady spot under a tree by the Blackslade road, the fat Rhinelanders rested his weary, fat limbs and disposed of the doughnuts and the tarts. With the tuck safely packed inside, Fritz leaned back luxuriously against the trunk, feeling that he had earned a rest.

He slumbered in a sticky and happy peace, till he was suddenly awakened by the impact of a boot in his podgy ribs; and he opened his saucer-eyes to see Dainty and Dawson.

They had had to give up searching for Fritz and go on their ramble without the supply of tuck for a picnic. But their ramble led them over Blackslade Moor; and by happy chance they came on the podgy thief. Nobody, as a rule, was glad to see Fritz von Splitz; but Dainty and Dawson were very glad to see him just then. Fritz, after one terrified blink, leaped up and ran for it; and after him shot the two juniors.

"Ach! Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz. "Himmel! Peasts and prutes and pounders! I have no more te breff! Ach!"

"Stop!" roared Jim Dainty. "We're going to scrag you!"

"Ach! I neffer touch te tarts!" shrieked Fritz. "I neffer touch tem tough-nuts! I know nottings of tem—mein prain he is a perfect plank! Ach! Geep off, peast and a prute!"

Fritz was slackening; but the touch of a boot behind started him afresh. He raced down the road towards Grimslade with the chums of the Fourth in hot pursuit. From the direction of the school a car came humming along the road, with Sammy Sparshott at the wheel.

"Hallo, that's Sammy!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. "Let him pass—lots of time to handle that Boche bloater when he's gone."

And the two juniors halted in the chase and sat on a fence to wait for Sammy's car to pass.

But Sammy's car did not pass. Fritz Splitz, in the middle of the road, waved a frantic, fat hand at Jimmy. Dr. Sparshott braked, and the car halted, the Head of Grimslade staring at Fritz.

"What does this mean, Splitz?" barked Sammy. "What have you stopped me for?"

"Ach!" gasped Fritz. "I have somethings to tell you, sir." Fritz had not

forgotten what he had overheard in Middlemoor post office. It had not even crossed his fat mind to seek out Sammy and tell him of the trickery on the telephone. But he thought of it now. Now it offered him a chance of escape from the avengers on his track. Fritz was only too well aware of what was going to happen when Dr. Sparshott had passed on his way.

"Well, what?" barked Sammy impatiently.

"Ach! You was going to Plackslade, sir—" gasped Fritz.

"I cannot see how you know where I am going!" snapped Sammy. "But what about it?"

"It was vun drick!" gasped Fritz. "Tat man tat ring you up on te phone, he vas not te pank manager, sir—and he vas in te post office at Middlemoor, and I hear him on te phone! It is a choke on you, sir, a bractical choke, and you go to Plackslade for nottings."

For one moment the Head of Grimslade sat in astonished silence, staring at the gasping German. Then he barked out two or three rapid questions; and drew from Fritz a full tale of what had happened in the telephone-box at Middlemoor post office. Sammy Sparshott's face grew grimmer and grimmer as he listened.

"Tricked!" said Sammy. "But why?"

Someone—a stranger to him—had sent him on a fool's errand. That was clear; but the meaning of it was a mystery.

Sammy whirled the car round in the road. Whatever it meant, he had to get back to the school as fast as gas could carry him.

"Ach! Oh, please, sir, vill you giff me vun lift pack, please?" gasped Fritz Splitz. "I am so ferry dired, and I have sprained vun ankle—"

"Jump in!" barked Sammy.

Fritz lost no time. He huddled headlong into the car. Then it raced away down the road to Grimslade School.

"My only hat!" yelled Jim Dainty, staring after it. "That bloated Boche has got a lift from Sammy!"

"Sammy's turned back!" gasped Dawson. "What the thump—"

"How the dickens has that podgy porker wangled it?" exclaimed Jim in amazement. "We've lost him again—My hat, here comes the Blackslade motor-bus! Jump on!"

The motor-bus from Blackslade, which passed the gates of the school on its way to Middlemoor, came lumbering along. The two schoolboys boarded it, and it rolled on after Sammy's car. But Sammy's car, heedless of all speed limits, vanished rapidly from sight in a cloud of dust.

Fritz Splitz was grinning. He was safe from pursuit now. It was a very short time before the school appeared in sight; and Sammy slowed down to turn in at the gates. He stopped the car and jumped down at the porter's lodge.

"Sykes!" He stared at old Sykes. That ancient gentleman had not got up since Gunter had knocked him over. He was still gasping on the floor!

"Urrrrg!" gasped Sykes. "I been assaulted and battered, I ave—urrrgh! It's young Gunter come back, and he's raising Cain all over the school—Urrrrg!"

"Gunter!" Sammy understood in a flash. The name was enough. He knew now who was the big man Fritz had seen at Middlemoor, and who had tricked him away from the school that afternoon—and he knew why. Sammy Sparshott started for White's House as if he was on the cinder-path.

A buzzing crowd swayed and hummed before that House. A yell greeted the sudden and unexpected appearance of the Head.

"My giddy goloshes! Here's Sammy!" roared Ginger.

Dr. Sparshott strode into the House. He saw a powerfully built man crashing his shoulders at Billy White's door like a battering-ram; and as the Head arrived, the door flew wide open.

"Now look out, Billy White!" roared Gunter.

Sammy Sparshott made a leap like a tiger. His grasp fell on Gunter's shoulder and spun him round.

"Gunter, I think?" said Dr. Sparshott pleasantly. "Happy to meet you, Mr. Gunter! Always pleased to see an Old Boy back at Grimslade!"

Gunter stared at him. "You're Sam Sparshott!" he demanded.

"Exactly!"

"I thought I had you safe off the scene. I watched you start! They say you can handle any man in Yorkshire or Lancashire! You'll have to prove it if you want to stop me from giving Billy White what I promised him seven years ago!"

Sammy smiled genially.

"Always happy to oblige!" he drawled.

It was "some" fight that followed. There were no rounds and no rests; it was hammer and tongs. Hammer and tongs for a good ten minutes—but after that it was more like hammer and anvil—Sammy the hammer, and Gunter the anvil.

Big as he was, hefty as he was, Gunter was getting the worst of it—slowly but surely. Step by step Sammy drove him back, till he was out of the House doorway and out on the House steps—where a terrific right-hander on the point of the jaw lifted him and sent him spinning down the steps, to crash on his back in the quad.

"Bravo, Sammy!"

"Well hit, sir!" yelled Jim Dainty, who by this time had arrived at the school.

Unheeding, Sammy strolled down the steps. Gunter picked himself up. He staggered and gasped; and Dr. Sparshott waited for him politely. Sammy had had some severe punishment, but he did not seem to mind. He smiled at Gunter's furious face.

"Going?" he asked pleasantly.

"Not till I've thrashed Billy White! Not—"

"Ah!" murmured Sammy. "I see that I shall have to make it a real lesson to you. I must make you really tired of calling at Grimslade, Mr. Gunter!"

Gunter was a sticker; that had to be admitted. He fought a losing fight across the quad, all the way to the gates. How he stood up to it the Grimslade fellows hardly knew. But he did—though in vain. Back and back he went—under a rain of blows that might have made a rhinoceros blink. Back and back, till he was in the gateway—where he rallied for a last stand. For a full minute he fought gamely, the Grimsladers watching breathlessly. Then he crashed, and landed in the middle of the road.

He did not get up again! Twice he tried, and failed. Then he lay and gurgled. Sammy was breathing hard; but he smiled.

"Trafford, you can drive a car! This gentleman, I think, will have to be taken home. Do you mind running him down to the village and dropping him at the Black Boy? Thanks!"

Sammy lifted the gurgling Gunter into the car. Then he walked away to his rooms in Big School; deaf, apparently, to the roar of cheers with which the Grimslade crowd followed him.

It was luck for Fritz Splitz. It was Fritz who had brought Sammy back in time to handle Gunter—and Jim Dainty, instead of kicking him round the quad, stood him ginger-pop to wash down the jam tarts and doughnuts!

Never again was Gunter seen at Grimslade. Gunter, as soon as he was able to stir, vanished from the neighbourhood—and remained vanished!

(Another rollicking school story of the Grimslade chums coming in next week's RANGER—and also another Free Gift. Don't forget Frank Richards writes a long school story every Saturday in "The Magnet," price 2d. 1)