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# The RANGER 2<sup>d</sup>



# THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!



By  
**FRANK RICHARDS.**

## Hard Lines for Fritz Splitz.

R. SAMUEL SPARSHOTT, headmaster of Grimslade School, grinned.

A less humorous man than "Sammy" might have grinned.

It was "school" on Castaway Island. Under the shade of the palm fronds, five juniors sat in the sand—Jim Dainty,

Dick Dawson, Ginger, Bacon, and Bean. But Fritz von Splitz was not present. And Dr. Sparshott had gone to look for Fritz Splitz.

From behind a bush quite close at hand, there came a deep, resonant, prolonged snore—whereat Dr. Sparshott grinned. Jim Dainty and Co., who heard it from a further distance, grinned also. Fritz Splitz was out of sight, not discoverable to the eye. But his presence was revealed to the ear!

"Snore!  
"My giddy goshes!" murmured Ginger Rawlinson. "Watch Sammy!"

The grinning juniors watched Sammy. With a stick in his hand, the headmaster of Grimslade was stepping round the bush, from behind which came the snore of Fritz Splitz. Evidently Friedrich von Splitz was going to have a sudden awakening!

Since the Grimslade schoolboys had been cast away, with their headmaster, on that lonely island in West Indian seas, there had not been much in the way of lessons. There had been plenty of work on hand—building the hut, exploring the island, and all sorts of useful and interesting occupations.

Then had come the visit of the schooner *Courlis*, bringing Captain Luz and his villainous crew to Castaway Island; and plenty of excitement, till the schooner was driven away in the hurricane. But at Grimslade School, far away on the northern moors in England, the new term was going on; and Sammy was not the man to let his boys slack.

Every morning, therefore, Sammy had instituted a class lasting one hour, which he considered long enough, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, and which the juniors agreed in considering too long by exactly sixty minutes.

There had been lessons on the holiday cruise, but it was, as Ginger Rawlinson remarked, a sheer stroke of luck that all the school-books had gone down in the wreck of the *Spindrift*. Much more useful things had been stocked on the raft on which the castaways had escaped from the wreck. Space had been limited, and on a desert island, a box of matches was worth more than all the educational works in existence. Only one book, in point of fact, remained:

and that was Sammy's own pocket edition of Virgil's *Æneid*—now used as a school-book. And all the juniors agreed that they wished Sammy had let it go down with the rest.

"Ach! Himmel! Yarooop! Whooop!" came a sudden roar from behind the bush.

Fritz had awakened! Extended on his pedgy back, with his saucer-eyes shut, and his wide mouth open, Fritz had been enjoying a nap; dreaming that he was back in his happy Fatherland scoffing German sausages. From that vision of bliss, he was startled by a sharp "whop" from Sammy's stick. Fritz bounded out of slumber with a roar.

"Ach! Peast and a prute!" roared Fritz. "Tat you pang me not mit tat stick pefore! Tainty, you peast—"

"Splitz!" barked Sammy. "Go into class at once."

"Mein gootness!" Fritz blinked at his headmaster. "Ach! I did not know tat it vas you, sir, I tink tat it vas some odder peast!"

LESSENS, LICKINGS, LINES—AS USUAL, ON CASTAWAY ISLAND!

"Go!" barked Sammy, and he added a lick from the stick which made Fritz Splitz start in a hurry.

The fat German rolled along to the group under the palms, followed by the headmaster. He groaned as he sat down.

"Tat Sammy is a peast!" he mumbled. "Vat is te use of lessons on tis peastly island, tat perhaps ve neffer leaf? Also I vas dired, and I vant to go to sleep mit meinself after!"

For once, the Grimslanders rather agreed with Fritz. They would rather have been exploring the tropical island, or hunting for the treasure of King Christophe of Hayti, which the rascally Captain Luz believed to be hidden there.

But there was no arguing with Sammy. Sammy's word was law. Without their headmaster, it was very doubtful whether the schoolboys would have pulled through so many deadly perils. They would not have been without Sammy for worlds. Still, they rather wished that Sammy would forget that he was a schoolmaster.

"You are ten minutes late for class, Splitz!" said Dr. Sparshott. "You will take twenty lines."

"Lines!" murmured Jim Dainty. And the juniors stared.

A small quantity of writing materials had been preserved. But to waste them in writing lines was unthinkable. The juniors wondered, for a

moment, whether Sammy had forgotten that he was a castaway on a desert island, and fancied that he was back at Grimslade School.

"Mein gootness!" ejaculated Fritz. "How vas I to write tem lines pefore?"

"I will tell you later, Splitz! We shall now proceed!" said Dr. Sparshott, opening the volume of Virgil.

And they proceeded. Sitting under the palms, with the glistening beach stretching before them down to the bay, and the blue Atlantic rolling beyond to the horizon, it was not easy for the juniors to fix their attention on Latin. Easy or hard, it had to be done however; and they did it. For a blackboard, the ingenious Sammy used a big sandstone boulder.

Class was over at last.

"Dismiss!" barked Sammy.

Fritz would have sidled away as the others went. But the eagle eye of Dr. Samuel Sparshott was on him.

"Splitz!"

"Ach himmel! Ja, mein Herr!" groaned Fritz.

"You have twenty lines to write! Neither ink nor paper can be wasted. Fortunately, there are other means. Take this stick, and sharpen it to a point."

Fritz obeyed wonderingly, while Jim Dainty and Co. looked on, also wondering.

"Now," said Dr. Sparshott. "Here is a level stretch of sand, smooth as a billiard board! Here is Virgil! You will trace the lines in the sand, Splitz!"

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz. "But I cannot, sir! Neffer gan I do tat ting after."

"I will show you," said Dr. Sparshott, and taking the stick from Fritz, he traced in the smooth sand, with swift strokes—

*Arma virumque cano, Trojac qui prima ab oris.*  
It was slow work, even in Sammy's capable hands. It was likely to be much slower in Fritz's.

"I shall expect the lines to be done before dinner," said Dr. Sparshott.

"But it vas not possible after—"

"Otherwise you will have no dinner!"

"Mein gootness!"

Dr. Sparshott walked away, leaving Fritz to his task.

## The Demon of the Dark!

DR. SPARSHOTT clambered actively up the rocky waterfall in the ravine, and reached the rock shelf above, which led to the mouth of the cave. At a distance he could hear the merry voices of the juniors. They were gathering coconuts, and a roar from Ginger Rawlinson hinted that one of the nuts—perhaps by accident—had dropped on Ginger's own nut. Sammy Sparshott smiled, and stepped

into the cave. He did not want any of the schoolboys with him in his present undertaking; and they were all busily employed at a distance.

Inside the cavern, Sammy lighted a lantern. Over his arm hung a coil of stout, strong cord, brought on the raft from the wrecked Spindrift. Sammy was going to explore. Holding up the lantern, he tramped along the rugged floor of the cavern, and reached the fissure in the rocky wall which the juniors had discovered in their treasure hunt.

Following the narrow fissure, he reached the abyss which opened at the end of it; a sheer precipitous drop of unknown depth. He flashed the lantern light into the space below. It was a perilous spot, and after the juniors had reported their discovery, Dr. Sparschott had strictly prohibited them from visiting it again. He was only too thankful that none of them had tumbled into that fearful gulf during their exploration of the mountain cave.

Standing on the dizzy verge with perfect calmness, Sammy looked down into the blackness below. Far as the light fell, there was no sign of the bottom. The other side of the gulf could not be seen—it seemed to stretch away endlessly into the mountain, arched over by solid rock.

Sammy's brow was thoughtful. On the edge of the abyss, Jim Dainty had picked up a Spanish doubloon—surely an undoubted clue to the treasure. The skeletons found in the cave were obviously those of men who had helped the "Black Marquis" to bring the treasure there from Hayti. And Sammy could not doubt that the gold of King Christophe had been lowered into that deep chasm—the safest hiding place that the "Marquis of Marmalade" could have found for it.

After surveying the abyss for long minutes, with a thoughtful brow, Dr. Sparschott set down the lantern and fastened one end of the long rope securely to a jutting spur of rock. He tested it several times—Sammy was a careful man. He had the courage of a lion, but he was not the man to take careless risks. Then he fastened the hurricane lamp to his belt. Taking the rope with both strong, sinewy hands, he lowered himself over the precipice.

Hand under hand the active Sammy went down the rope. He had ten fathoms of rope—surely long enough for the purpose? Swinging easily against the rugged rocky wall, he descended, the lantern-light gleaming on dark rock and dark space.

Lower and lower—till a faint gurgling sound came to him from below. It was the sound of water. He wondered whether the bottom of the chasm was in communication with the sea. It was probable enough. The cavern in the ravine was not a hundred feet above sea-level—probably only seventy or eighty. But if it was flowing water from the sea that gurgled below Sammy, his rope was not long enough to reach it.

Swinging at the end of the sixty-foot rope he stared downward. A gleam came up from the water that washed about his feet as he hung. Five feet below the extreme end of the rope it glimmered, and Sammy hung on to the knotted end and scanned it in the lantern light. The water was in motion; it was no stagnant pool, and it was clear that there was some subterranean inlet from the sea.

"Rotten!" said Sammy.

Another fathom of rope would have done it! He could at least have tested the depth of the water if his rope had reached. As it was he could do nothing. Once he let go the rope there was no possibility of getting hold of it again. He would make another attempt later on; he knew now what was wanted. Strong as his arms were, the strain on them was great, and he prepared to climb up.

As he did so there came a sudden grasp at his ankle.

Iron-nerved as Sammy was, he started, shuddered, and almost let go the rope in his sudden surprise and horror.

What had seized him in that black depth of the earth? Holding on convulsively he stared down. Something huge, dark, shapeless, loomed on the surface of the water, and round his ankle was a whip-like thong. It amazed him, and he dragged wildly to release his foot. But the thin whip-like thong held fast and thickened as it gripped. With a rush of horror Dr. Sparschott realised what it was—the tentacle of an octopus!

"Oh, heaven!" breathed Sammy Sparschott.

Gripping the rope, he dragged frantically. Not for an instant had he dreamed of an enemy

at the bottom of the mountain chasm—and such an enemy!

As he dragged another hideous tentacle came whipping out of the water, groping blindly for what the first tentacle held. Once that second grip was on him he knew that all was lost. Madly he struggled to release his foot. But he could not release it—and the tentacle thickened and thickened, and dragged and dragged, with a power that no human strength could resist. Sammy, strong as he was, desperate as he was, felt himself being dragged from his hold on the rope.

"The boys!" groaned Sammy. It was like him to think of the boys, who needed his care and protection, at that fearful moment.

One more wild effort he made—in vain! The knotted end of the rope slipped from his aching fingers. For a second he hung with his left hand, while he tore the knife from his belt with his right. The knife was grasped in his hand as he dropped.

The lantern was instantly extinguished. All was blackness. In the blackness, struggling in the water, Sammy slashed like a madman, and to his joy the grip of the tentacle relaxed. The knife had slashed home and he was free.

Close to him, round him, under him, he felt and heard the horrible tentacles thrashing, winding, seeking—and desperately he swam, he cared not whither, to get beyond their reach. And he could have cried aloud with joy as the thrashing and rippling grew fainter, and he knew that he was for the moment at least out of reach of the groping tentacles of the octopus.

**A Surprise for Fritz!**

JIM DAINTY chuckled. "Not finished yet, old Boche bloater?" he asked.

Fritz Splitz gave a groan.

"Nein! I tink tat I neffer finish pefore!"

Tat Sammy is a peast and a prute!"

"Buck up and come for a swim, Fritz!"

"Ach! It is too hot to puck up!" groaned Fritz.

The juniors ran down the sand to bathe in the bay. Fritz Splitz was left once more to his unfinished task. It was nearly noon now, and

certainly it was hot—it was always hot on Castaway Island.

Fritz sat and glared at the volume of Virgil which Sammy had left him to write his lines from. If that beastly book hadn't been saved from the wreck lines could not have been given out. And a cunning gleam came into Fritz's fish-like saucer-eyes. Suppose that volume disappeared! It would be an end of lines at any rate.

Fritz blinked round him cautiously and picked up the volume. Throwing it into the sea was his first idea, but the juniors were swimming there, and certainly they would have seen him. Besides, the volume might be washed back by the returning tide. Fritz had to find a safer place than that!

Deeply reflecting on this important matter, Fritz gave a sudden chuckle. He had thought of a safe place—a very safe place indeed. And taking Virgil under his arm, Fritz Splitz rolled away to the hut for a lantern and then clambered up the ravine.

Fritz did not like clambering—he had a lot of weight to lift. But it was worth while to get rid of P. Vergilius Maro in a spot from which the only Latin book on Castaway Island could not possibly be recovered!

Where Dr. Sparschott was he did not know or care, so long as he did not meet him. He lighted the lantern and rolled into the cavern. Grinning, he turned into the fissure that led to the chasm. Holding up the light before him, Fritz trod on very cautiously, peering uneasily to and fro in the shadows.

The loneliness and silence of the deep cavern banished the fat grin from his face. He remembered the skeletons, and did not like the thought of them. But he kept on till he reached the end of the fissure, flashing his light over the verge and keeping well back from it.

In his other hand he lifted the hated volume.

"Peastly pook!" growled Fritz. "I tink tat vunce you go town tere you neffer gum up again after! I tink tat tat peastly prute Sammy giff me no more lines from tat prute of a pook!"

A moment more and the volume would have been hurled into the deep chasm.

But at that moment there came a sound from below. Fritz was so startled that he dropped the book and almost dropped the lantern.



"Buck up and come for a swim, Fritz!" "Ach! It is too hot to puck up!" groaned Fritz. The juniors ran down the sand to bathe in the bay, and Fritz Splitz was left once more to his unfinished task of writing lines from Virgil in the sands.

It was the booming echo of a shout far below. "Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz. "Vat vas tat?"

Terror rooted him where he stood. His fat knees knocked together, and his saucer-eyes almost bulged from his podgy face. Thoughts of skeletons and ghosts brought icy shivers down his back.

The booming roar echoed and thundered again. It was repeated in countless echoes in the hollows of the mountain, and it was hard to make out clearly. But Fritz realised that it was a human voice that shouted, and at length he made out words:

"Help! Hallo, Grimslade! Help!"  
 "Oh, grumbs!" gasped Fritz. "Oh, grikey! Tat is Sammy! Ach, mein gootness!"  
 "Help!" boomed up again.

Fritz gazed at the black pit in horror. None of the juniors knew where Sammy had gone that morning. But Fritz knew—now! He was at the bottom of that fearful gulf, and unable to get out! Fritz dared not lean over the verge; he dared not step within three feet of it. But he collected his wits at last and shouted back:

"I hear you! I will go for help mit meinselb after!"

His fat squealing voice did not carry half the distance down the chasm. Forgetful of the book lying at his feet, Fritz turned and made his way hurriedly back along the fissure into the cavern. There he broke into a breathless run, making for the mouth of the cave.

He was streaming with perspiration when he emerged into the daylight at last. Leaving the lantern there, he scrambled and clambered down the ravine, gurgling for breath, tottered through the palm grove and staggered down the beach.

The chums of Grimslade had come out after their swim and were dressing on the sandy beach when they sighted Fritz. They stared at him in wonder. Crimson with exertion, bedewed with perspiration, Fritz came rolling towards them, waving his fat hands in wild excitement. "My giddy goloshes!" exclaimed Ginger.

"Has that Boche bloater gone potty?"

The juniors wonderingly ran up the beach to meet the breathless Fritz. He tottered against a boulder, gurgling.

"Gum!" he spluttered. "Gum quick! Mein gootness! Sammy—"

"Anything happened to Sammy?" exclaimed Dick Dawson.

"He fall in te pig hole in te gave!" gasped Fritz. "Mein gootness! I tink tat it vas vun ghost ven he shout! Ach!"

"If you're pulling our legs Fritz—" began Ginger, suspiciously.

"Come on!" rapped Jim Dainty. The terror and excitement in Fritz's fat face told that he was speaking the truth. Jim Dainty started at a run for the ravine and the other fellows rushed after him.

In hot haste they clambered up the ravine and raced along the rock-ledge over the stream. At the cavern's mouth they found Fritz's lantern, which he had left burning. Catching it up, Jim Dainty ran into the cave, the other fellows at his heels.

They reached the fissure at top-speed and then proceeded more cautiously. At the end of it, on the dizzy verge of the abyss, they crawled on hands and knees. Ginger gave a shout as he spotted the rope Sammy had tied to the spur of rock, which Fritz had not gone near enough to the chasm to observe. Jim Dainty, leaning over the dizzy edge, shouted:

"Sammy!"

"Help!" came back an answering shout from the black depths.

Jim Dainty fastened the lantern to his belt, grasped the rope and swung himself down into the darkness.

**For Life or Death!**

**S**AMMY SPARSHOTT had given up hope. In the black darkness at the bottom of the chasm he had swum out of reach of the thrashing octopus, and the sound of the fearful brute had died away at last. Probably, missing its victim, the brute had sunk again to the bottom of the sea-pool—perhaps had left it by the deep channel that communicated with the sea. Sammy could not know!

There was no gleam of light in the dense darkness. Swimming cautiously, in dread of attracting again the attention of the terrible creature, the headmaster of Grimslade made the circuit of the sea-pool. On every side he touched cold, wet rock, and groped over it in the faint hope of finding some projection by which he could climb. But he found nothing but smooth, clammy rock. It was impossible to climb even as far as the end of the hanging rope, even if he could have discerned where the rope was—which he could not.

All he could do was to keep afloat till his strength failed—or till the octopus found him once more! He had not told the boys where he was going—there was no help! Even if they missed him while he yet lived, they would never guess where he was. And he had forbidden them to enter the cave without his presence.

Hullo, Everybuddy!!  
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 THE "RANGER!"

In that terrible hour the courage of the Head of Grimslade was put to a severe test. But he was cool, calm, steadfast as ever. He had looked on death many times and he was not afraid of it. His chief thought was for the boys in his charge, who needed him.

Then suddenly the blackness was broken by a glimmer of light far above, and Sammy shouted desperately. He did not hear the answering yell of Fritz Splitz; the light vanished and all was dark and silent again. And Sammy Sparshott wondered whether it had been a fancy, whether his eyes had deceived him.

It was hardly more than half an hour later—but it seemed to him hours, long hours, if not days—that a light flashed again from the darkness above, and this time it stayed. Faintly from the great height came a voice calling his name.

"That is Dainty!" breathed Sammy. And he shouted back for help.

The position of the light, winking and twinkling over the edge high above, showed him the position of the juniors. Guided by it, he swam back to the spot where the rope hung. He moved with caution, fearful of the octopus. But to his intense thankfulness there was no sign, for the moment, of the terrible beast.

He heard a rustling and brushing above his head in the dark. It was made by Jim Dainty as he swung himself down the rope. Sammy shouted:

"Go back, go back!"

"I'm coming, sir!" called back Jim Dainty.

"Go back!" roared Sammy. "There is danger here—fearful danger!"

Jim's voice came back coolly:

"I know. That's why I'm coming!"

Headless for once of his headmaster's orders, Jim swung himself down and down, the light of the lantern, as it neared the swimmer, marking his descent. He reached the end of the rope at last and, hanging on with both hands to the big knot, stared below. In the lantern-light the white, drawn face of Sammy Sparshott looked up from below.

On the glimmering surface of the pool there came a stirring and rippling, and Sammy Sparshott's flesh crept on his bones, as he knew that it was the sea-devil stirring in the depths. The light perhaps had reached its plate-like eyes in its lair. Hoarsely Sammy cried to the boy above:

"Dainty! Go back—go back! I command you! Get two of the longest ropes in the hut. Join them and lower it. But go back! There is an octopus here—it may reach for you at any moment. Go back!"

Jim Dainty set his teeth hard. Something that looked like the thong of a whip lashed from the water—seeking its prey! It was long before the boy forgot the fearful horror of that moment. But he did not flinch.

"Get hold of me, sir!" His voice came staccato. "You can climb over me while I hold the rope! Quick!"

Sammy groaned.

"You could never stand the strain! Go back—I will not drag you to death!"

"I won't go back! Quick!" yelled Jim as the tentacle dashed the water only a yard from the swimming headmaster. "Oh, quick, Sammy—quick!"

A hideous, clammy thing in the water touched Sammy. He shuddered at the contact.

"Dainty—go back!"

"Not without you, sir!" said Jim between his teeth.

"Then hold on, and heaven help both of us!"

Jim Dainty clamped his hands to the knotted end of the rope. Sammy's grasp was on him now, and as he hung Jim had to bear the whole weight of the headmaster of Grimslade. With teeth set, he bore it, though every second it seemed that he must be torn from his hold.

A tentacle began to wind round Sammy's waist, but Jim kicked it away. He held on desperately, and Sammy's grasp passed him, and fastened on the rope above him. The boy panted as he was relieved of the weight.

"Go up!" breathed Sammy. "You first, boy! Go!"

This time Jim obeyed him. He clambered quickly and actively up the rope hand-over-hand, and as soon as he was clear above Dr. Sparshott climbed after him. As he climbed he felt the gliding tentacle of the octopus touch his leg and curl round it. But a quick jerk freed him before the hold could close, and, with a desperate effort, Sammy swarmed up the rope.

"Jim!" panted Dick Dawson as his chum's face appeared dimly at the rock-edge above. He reached out, grasped Dainty and dragged him to safety. A minute later Sammy Sparshott—drenched, exhausted, white but cool—stood with the juniors.

Deep down in the abyss the sea-devil settled in the dark waters—grim guardian of the treasure that had been sunk there long ago!

"Splitz!"

"Ach!"

"Your lines!"

"Tat pook is lost!" gasped Fritz Splitz. "I know not vat pecome of him—I tink perhaps some monkey gum and snap him up! Mitout tat pook I gamot do tese lines, mein gootness!"

Dr. Samuel Sparshott looked grimly at the fat German. Fritz hastened to enlarge his statement.

"I see tat monkey!" he said. "I see him run from te trees, and he grab tat pook and run off mit it."

"And he left it in the cavern—what?" asked Dr. Sparshott.

Sammy drew from his pocket the volume of Virgil which he had picked up before leaving the fissure with the juniors—nothing escaped Sammy's eye. Fritz jumped.

"Mein gootness!" he gasped.

"Why did you take the book there, Splitz?" asked Sammy quietly.

"It—it—it vas not to trow it into te pig hole," groaned Fritz. "I tink not of tat at all! I—I—I—"

The juniors grinned. They had wondered how Fritz had discovered Sammy's peril. Now they knew!

"You young rascal!" said Sammy. "Play such a trick again, and I will give you the whopping of your life! I shall forgive you this time, as it was very fortunate you came into the cavern. And you need not do the lines."

Whereat Fritz beamed. And when Sammy went into the hut to change his drenched clothing Fritz chuckled.

"Tat is all right before, ain't it? How ferry lucky it vas tat Sammy trop into tat pig hole, vat? But for tat I should have to do tese peastly lines after. So I tink—yarooocoooh!"

Fritz roared as all the juniors kicked him.

(A huge tree trunk floating out at sea looked harmless enough, but hidden among the branches of the tree was something which caused panic among the Grimslade castaways and brought them face to face with death! Read next week's amazing story of Jim Dainty & Co.—and be thrilled!)

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