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The RANGER

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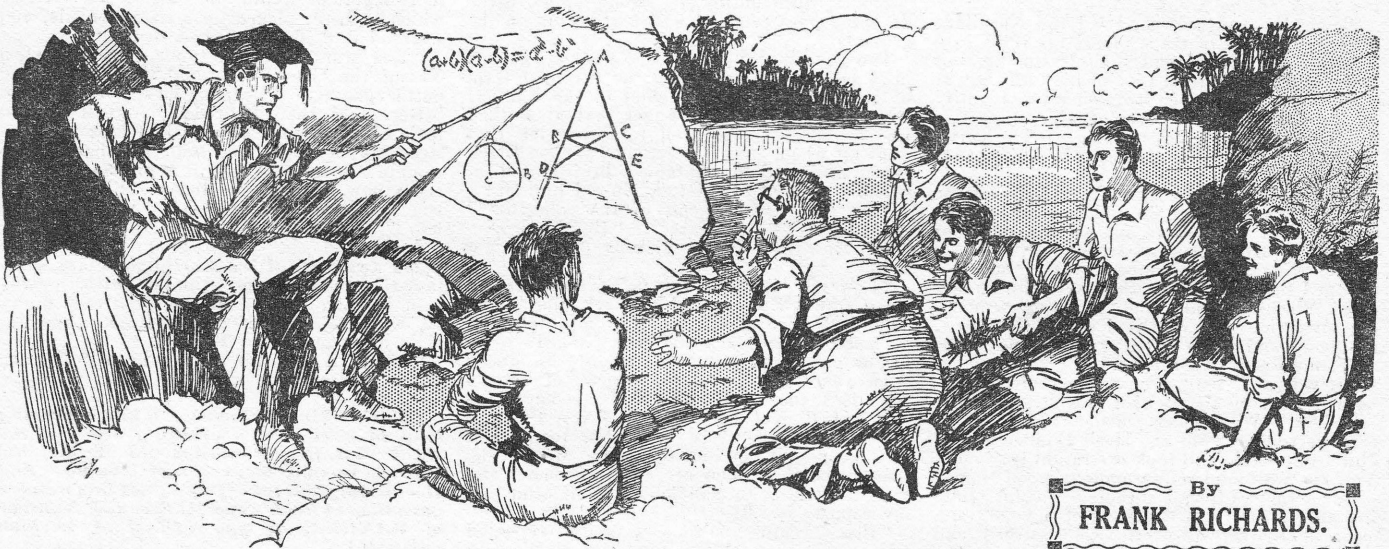
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One for his Nut!

**READ "THE CHEERIO
CASTAWAYS" INSIDE**

THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!



By
FRANK RICHARDS.

Fritz in Exile!



“T
AINTY—”

“Hook it!”
“Tawson—”
“Bunk!”
“I vill not punk!”
roared Fritz Spltz.
“I vas hungry, and I vant some tinner, and I vill not punk mit meinsel after.”
“Sammy’s orders!”
said Jim Dainty.

“Now then, you fellows—all of you kick him together.”

Fritz von Spltz jumped back. Five fellows drew back their right feet, as if moved by the same spring. Fritz dodged in time. But he did not hook it! He did not bunk!

There was a delicious smell of cooking at the castaways’ hut on the lonely island. Ginger Rawlinson was making a stew for dinner. It was simmering on the stove, and Ginger was stirring it with a long tin spoon. The scent of cooking drew the fat German junior like a magnet. He could not tear himself away.

“Mein tear jums!” wailed Fritz. “I have had nottings to eat mit meinsel since prekker! Do not be peasts and prutes. I have eaten nottings tis morning since prekker, except a tozen pananas and some gokernuts! I must have some tinner, or I tink tat I tie!”

“Better ask Sammy!” grinned Dick Dawson.
“Tat Sammy is a peast and a prute!” groaned Fritz. “All of you vas peasts and prutes! I tells you vunce more tat I did not dake te peef yesterday before! Mein prain is a perfect plank.”

“Who did, if you didn’t?” demanded Ginger Rawlinson.

“Das weiss ich nicht—I know not, unless it vas vun of you fellows. Perhaps it vas you, Chinger—”

Ginger Rawlinson drew the long tin spoon from the stew he was stirring. He reached out and tapped Fritz’s little fat pimple of a nose with it. There was a fearful yell from Fritz. The spoon was hot!

“Ach! Yaroooh! Peastly prute!” yelled Fritz. “Vy for you punn me te pokoi! Take tat, you peastly pounder!”

Fritz had a coconut under his fat arm. He slid it into his hand, and hurled it at Ginger. There was a loud crack as it landed! Ginger’s nut was hard; but the coconut seemed harder! The red-headed junior of Grimslade roared.

“My giddy goloshes! I’ll—I’ll—” He jumped at Fritz Spltz.

The fat Fritz fled—but not in time. Ginger’s boot landed on him as he went, and Fatty

Fritz flew! There was a bump and a yell as he rolled over in the sand.

“Well kicked!” yelled Streaky Bacon.

“Goal!” chuckled Sandy Bean.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Ach himmel! Mein gootness!” gasped Fritz, and he rolled away, scrambled up, and ran for it.

Ginger brandished the spoon after him.
“Come back and have some more!” he roared.

But Fatty Fritz did not come back! He did not want any more! Even the smell of cooking could not tempt him near the hut again.

“The blithering Boche!” growled Ginger, resuming the stirring of the stew. “He can’t have much space to fill if he’s scoffed those two cans of beef he snaffled yesterday. I’m jolly

THE MONKEY THAT PERFORMED THE HAT TRICK—WITH COCONUTS!

glad Sammy’s turned him out, and I jolly well hope he’ll keep him turned out.”

“Hear, hear!”

There was no sympathy for the hapless Fritz among the Grimslade castaways. Two tins of canned beef were missing from the reserve of provisions. Nobody doubted for a moment that Fatty Fritz had been at the stores. The fact that he denied it only made it more probable that he had done it! Besides, if Fritz hadn’t, who had?

There was nobody on the island except Dr. Sparshott, the headmaster of Grimslade School, and the six juniors who were cast away with him. Ezra Sarson, their old enemy, had been taken out to a rocky islet five miles seaward, and marooned there, out of harm’s way. Certainly he was not the guilty party. So it was Fritz or nobody! And the shipwrecked schoolboys fully approved of Dr. Sparshott’s sentence on the grub-raider.

Fritz von Spltz was turned out of the little community on Castaway Island—to shift for himself! No doubt, sooner or later, Sammy Sparshott would allow him to return. But not till he had learned his lesson!

Friedrich von Spltz groaned dismally as he waddled away. His exile had lasted only since breakfast that morning; but it already seemed very long to Fritz! He had stuffed liberally on the tropical fruits of Castaway Island. But any number of bananas and

plantains were merely trifling snacks to Fritz Spltz! He wanted something solid! He would have given the hidden treasure of Castaway Island for a dish of the sausages of his native land.

Dr. Sparshott was hoeing in the cultivated patch near the hut, which the industry of the castaways was turning into a fruitful garden. Fritz Spltz blinked at him from a distance dubiously, and then approached the Head of Grimslade.

“If you please, sir—” he mumbled.

Dr. Sparshott glanced round.

“Be off!” he barked.

“But I vant to gum pack to tinner, sir!” wailed Fritz.

Dr. Sparshott laid down his hoe and picked up a bamboo. He stepped towards Fritz von Spltz. Fritz turned to depart—in haste, and the bamboo whistled in the air, and caught him across his trousers as he departed.

With a yell, Fatty Fritz broke once more into flight, and Dr. Sparshott calmly resumed his hoeing.

“Mein gootness!” gasped Fritz. He stopped in the shade of the big ceiba-tree, near the palm-grove, and mopped his perspiring fat brow. “Mein gootness, vat gan I do when I vas so ferry hungry! Peasts and prutes and pounders!”

Dismally the fat Rhinelander gathered coconuts. He sat down under the shady tree, with a little heap of the nuts beside him, and cracked them one after another. With gloomy eyes he watched the juniors at the hut in the distance. Munching coconuts, he saw the castaways sit down to lunch and Sammy Sparshott join them. Fritz’s wide mouth watered for the stew! What was the good of coconuts to a fellow who was really hungry?

But a dozen or so of the nuts took the keenest edge off Fritz’s appetite. He leaned back against the trunk of the ceiba and drew his hat over his fat face. There was always sleep—and Fritz liked sleep!

Full of coconuts, the fat German closed his eyes under the shade of his hat, and a rumbling snore awoke echoes round the ceiba-tree. Then, just as he was slipping on to an entrancing dream of Germany and its sausages something jerked at his hat.

“Leaf me in beaces, peasts and prutes!” mumbled Fritz, and grabbed at his hat, which was just leaving his head, and gave a startled howl as he found himself looking into a black, hairy face only a foot away!

The monkey, perhaps, was as startled as Fritz Spltz, for he gave a squeal, and leaped into the branches overhead, where he clung

out of the fat German's reach, chattering at him in great excitement.

"Mein gootness!" It was tat peastly monkey!" gasped Fritz.

He glared up at the chattering, grimacing monkey on the branch. He knew that mischievous animal! There were plenty of monkeys on Castaway Island—the woods swarmed with them—but most of them were small. This monkey was a large fellow—almost as tall as one of the juniors, his face black as the ace of spades.

Fritz had seen him before. He had bagged Jim Dainty's hat yesterday, just as he had now tried to bag Fritz's. The juniors had nicknamed him Tarzan, and Ginger Rawlinson had mooted the idea of catching him and taming him, and making a pet of him. But Tarzan was not likely to be easily caught!

Like all monkeys he was imitative. He had seen the schoolboys put hats on their heads, and he wanted to put a hat on his own! Fritz Splitz shook a fat fist at him. Under Tarzan's hairy arm was a coconut, which he did not drop as he clambered into the tree. It was one of Fritz's nuts—that monkey seemed as unscrupulous a grub-raider as the fat German himself!

"Peastly prute of a monkey!" roared Fritz. "You tink to dake avay mein hat, isn't it, and you dake avay vun of mein nuts? I tink tat I knock you off tat tree after!"

Fritz grabbed a coconut. Taking careful aim, he hurled it up at the grinning monkey. It missed Tarzan by about a yard. Fritz hurled another, which missed him by about two yards! Fatty Fritz was not a good shot!

But the monkey was! Tarzan grabbed the coconut from under his arm, and pitched it in return at the fat Rhinelander. Perhaps Tarzan thought it was a game, and that it was time for him to play up!

Crack!
"Whoooooop!" roared Fritz Splitz, as the coconut landed on his bullet head. The nut cracked, and Fritz felt as if his head had cracked, too. "Ach! Mein kopf! Peastly prute! Whooooop!"

There was a squeal of delight from the monkey. Tarzan was enjoying this game if Fatty Fritz wasn't. Tarzan skipped gaily along the branch, swung himself by his tail into a neighbouring palm-tree, and grabbed nuts therefrom.

Whiz, whiz, whiz! Crack, crack, crack!

Three more coconuts rained down on Fritz Splitz's head with painful force, to an accompaniment of happy chattering and squealing from the monkey.

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz, and he fled from the fusillade. Tarzan, squealing with glee, was left in possession of the field of battle!

For Life or Death!

"MY giddy goloshes!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson.

He lifted his spade and pointed. The fierce heat of the tropical day was over, and the castaways were working in the cultivated field by the hut. There were wild potatoes on the island, and Dr. Sparshott was planning to plant out tubers, and get a potato field close at hand.

The juniors worked with a will, under the direction of their headmaster. Weeds, on Castaway Island, grew with tropical luxuriance; cultivation was an unending battle with weeds.

Ginger, with his hat on the back of his head, his face as red as his hair with exertion, stopped to mop his perspiring brow, and his glance happened to fall on the beach and the bay. Then he roared, and pointed with his spade.

"The boat!" ejaculated Jim Dainty. "Fritz!" yelled Dawson.

Work in the field ceased at once. The juniors stared—and Dr. Sparshott stared, his tanned face growing grim. The boat which the castaways had captured from Ezra Sarson was beached at night, out of reach of the tide. During the day, however, it was moored to a palm-pole driven into the sand, and left afloat, being very frequently in use for fishing. It was in no danger—the castaways had the island to themselves. Certainly it had

occurred to no one that it might be in danger from Fritz Splitz!

But it was! The fat German had got into it and cast off the mooring-rope. He was sitting at the oars when Ginger spotted him, pulling out into the wide bay that fronted the Atlantic. His saucer-like eyes were fixed on the group near the hut, and he was seen to grin, as he observed them strike work and stare at him.

"The cheeky Boche!" exclaimed Dawson. "He's bagged the boat! What on earth is his game?"

Dr. Sparshott dropped his spade, and started for the beach at a rapid run. Jim Dainty & Co. followed him at once. Fritz Splitz, grinning, pulled at the oars. Fritz rowed about as well as he did everything else. But the bay was as calm as a pond, and even Fritz succeeded in getting the boat along.

It went slowly, for though it was too small to carry the castaways from the lonely island, it was too large for the fat German to handle with ease. But it moved—and it was a good many fathoms out by the time Sammy Sparshott trampled on the margin of the sea, and shouted to Fatty Fritz.

"Splitz, bring that boat back at once!" shouted Sammy.

Fritz von Splitz rested on his oars, and grinned back at his headmaster. He was out of reach, and safe from reprisals. When he was out of danger, Fritz could be as bold as brass.

"Posh!" he answered coolly. "What?" barked Sammy.

"Posh! Biffle!" said Fritz. "I pring him not pack! I dakes him and I geepts him! I pring him pack, if you vill let me gum pack mit meinsel after. Oddervise I pring him not pack vunce more at all!"

"My giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger. "The fat villain's trying to make terms with Sammy!"

"Sammy's getting waxy!" murmured Streaky Bacon.

Dr. Sparshott, ankle-deep in lapping water, stood staring across at the fat German in the boat, with knitted brows. Had Fritz been within reach, he would have had "six" from a bamboo, on the spot. But Fatty Fritz was

safely out of reach, and could keep out of reach. The podgy grin on his face showed that he considered himself master of the situation.

"You are in danger in the boat, Splitz!" rapped Sammy. "As soon as the tide turns—and it is on the turn now—you will be carried out to sea! Come back at once!"

"I tink tat I can sail a poat!" said Fritz Splitz disdainfully. "Tainty sail tat poat, and Chinger sail him, vy for I not sail him?"

"Because you are a clumsy, foolish, incapable young ass!" answered Sammy. "I order you to bring that boat in immediately."

"Can I gum pack to te hut?"

"No!" roared the Head of Grimslade.

"Ten I geepts tat poat!" said Fritz. "If I leaf you, I dakes te poat mit me after! I vill go along te coast in tat poat, and live in te poat, if you vill not let me live in te hut! And ven tat you vant te poat, you make signal tat I gum pack mit meinsel after!"

The oars dipped again, and Fatty Fritz pulled away. Dr. Sparshott clenched his hands hard. There was no doubt that, as Streaky had remarked, the headmaster was waxy.

Defiance from Fritz von Splitz was rather hard to bear with patience. But, angry as Sammy was, he was more anxious than angry. Fritz might believe that he could handle the boat—but nobody else on Castaway Island believed so. The tide was on the turn, and Fritz, though he was unaware of it, was in great danger of being carried out into the boundless Atlantic.

But the fat German was in deadly earnest. If he was going to be turned out of the little community on Castaway Island, he was going to take the boat with him. His idea was to run it into some sheltered cove along the shore, and use it to camp in. Also, as Fritz well knew, some provisions were kept in the lockers, in case of need—enough to last the fat exile a day or two, at least.

And the loss of the boat was a serious matter to the castaways—serious enough, Fritz considered, to force Sammy to come to terms. Fritz had thought it all out, in the depths of his podgy brain, and had it cut and dried.

Jim Dainty & Co. watched their headmaster in silence, wondering what Sammy would do in these peculiar circumstances. They, as well as



"Leaf me in beaces, peasts and prutes!" mumbled Fritz, and grabbed at his hat, which was just leaving his head. Then the German junior gave a startled howl as he found himself looking into a black, hairy face only a foot away!

Sammy, realised the fat Rhinelander's danger, though Fritz was quite blind to it. Fritz intended to pull in to the shore at a distance, far along the curve of the wide bay; but when he came to do so he was likely to make the startling discovery that it was impossible. They could imagine his feelings when he made it!

"The blithering, burbling, babbling Boche!" breathed Ginger Rawlinson. "If a chap was near enough to kick him—"

"Sammy's off!" muttered Dawson.

Dr. Sparshott had made up his mind. He started running along the beach to the south. At the southern end of East Bay, a long spur of rock ran into the sea. If Sammy could reach that point before Fritz passed in the boat, he had a chance of intercepting him. The juniors stared for a moment or two, and then they understood.

"Come on!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. "After Sammy!"

And the schoolboys raced after their headmaster. They were all good at sprinting, but Sammy Sparshott soon left them behind. Sammy's feet seemed scarcely to touch the sand as he ran. At Grimsdale the juniors had seen him on the cinder-path; but they had never seen him running as he was running now.

It was not only the loss of the boat, though that was serious enough, but it was the life of the fatuous Fritz that was in danger. It was for Fritz's life that Sammy was running. And he ran like the wind.

Meanwhile, Fritz Splitz was resting on his oars. A little pulling at a heavy boat went a long way with Fritz. Besides, the tide, now turned and gathering strength, floated him on his way. All he had to do was to steer, and consider where and when he should run in to the shore. There were a good many little coves and inlets along the shores of East Bay, and Fritz had only to make his choice.

He grinned as he noted Sammy racing along the sandy beach, and out on the long spur of half-submerged rock at the mouth of the bay. Even Fritz's podgy brain jumped to it that Sammy was there to intercept him; but that mattered little, as he did not intend to go so far as that.

He was not going out of the bay at all; he was going to select one of the coves along its circling shores. As Sammy had reached the southern extremity of East Bay Fritz decided on the northern shore, and, taking up the oars again, he started pulling in.

"Mein gootness!" murmured Fritz.

A startling discovery made him jump. The outgoing tide carried him onward. To reach land he had to pull across the current, and he could not even keep the boat broadside to the tide. It whirled round again and ran on seaward.

Started terror leaped in Fritz's saucer-eyes. For two or three minutes he struggled frantically with the oars, by which time he was breathless and exhausted, and in a state of dire funk. For every fathom he made shoreward, he made a dozen fathoms seaward, and it rushed into his podgy brain that he never could reach land.

A squeal of terror left his lips. Panting for breath he dropped the oars into the boat, and blinked round him dizzily. There was a wind from the sea which met the outgoing tide and ruffled the water, and the boat was rocking rather wildly.

A handy fellow like Jim Dainty or Ginger could have got up the mast and the sail and put the boat before the wind, and defied the pull of the tide. Fritz Splitz was anything but a handy fellow, but he realised that his fat life depended on stepping the mast and setting the sail.

He tried to pull himself together to make the effort, but as he moved a ruffling wave rocked the boat, and he pitched over. His weight as he pitched rocked the boat dangerously; it shipped water, and a few gallons of the Atlantic washed over Fritz.

"Ach! I was tead!" shrieked Fritz.

He huddled in the bottom of the boat. His nerve was gone, and he dared not even get on his feet lest the boat should capsize and leave him in the water. Huddled in water, squealing with terror, the fat German drifted helplessly on.

Dr. Sparshott had now reached the extremity

of the spit of land that ran out like a breakwater at the mouth of the bay. He was ahead of the boat, but it was drifting down fast on the tide, unguided, rocking and wallowing in the ruffled water.

One moment the Head of Grimsdale paused to draw a deep breath and kick off his shoes; then he dived in and swam. If he reached the course of the drifting boat before it drifted past Fritz was saved; if not, he was lost, and, in all likelihood, Sammy was lost, too, for he knew only too well that it might be a task far beyond his powers to fight his way back against the tide.

Jim Dainty & Co., breathless, with beating hearts, ran out on the spit of land. On the last rock they gathered in an anxious group, watching Sammy.

"Will he do it?" breathed Jim.

"Trust Sammy," murmured Ginger; but his face was pale and set as he watched.

Sammy Sparshott was swimming strongly, desperately. Every ounce of strength he had was put into those long, strong strokes. If the drifting boat passed before he could intercept it—

But it did not pass. Sammy Sparshott, straining every nerve, was ahead of it, cutting it off from the open sea. And as it drifted down on him the juniors saw him reach for the gunwale, grasp it, and drag himself on board. And from every throat came a yell:

"Good old Sammy! Bravo!"

An Amazing Mystery.

"MEIN gootness! Vat vas tat?" squealed Fritz Splitz.

Something heavy bumped on him as he huddled in terror in the bottom of the boat. He blinked with terrified saucer-eyes while the boat rocked violently and shipped a wave. It was Sammy Sparshott who sprawled over him. Sammy was up in a second, leaving Fritz gasping and gurgling.

Fritz sat up dizzily. He realised that it was Sammy who was on board, and half his terrors left him. Sammy was there—Sammy was there to save him. The fat Rhinelander squealed wildly.

"Ach! Safe me—safe me! Safe me, or I vas trowned and tead!"

Sammy paid him no heed. He was grasping the boat's mast, and getting it into position. It did not occur to the dazed Fritz to attempt to lend him a hand. He sat and blinked and gurgled in six inches of water.

Up went the mast, stepped and stayed in Sammy's rapid hands. Up went the sail, flapping and belying in the wind from the Atlantic. Sammy had spun the boat's nose round to the tide, and, as the canvas caught the wind, the drift out to sea was stopped.

Sammy Sparshott sat on the stern lockers, the sheet in his right hand, his left arm over the tiller. And the boat, no longer dragged by the tide, spun before the wind from the sea, Sammy handling it with a master hand.

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz, wiping salt water from his eyes. "I vas safed! Ach, dake me pack to land! Only dake me pack to try land, and I vill neffer, neffer dake tat poat vunce more after! Mein gootness! I tink two times pefore I dakes tat poat vunce more!"

Dr. Sparshott did not even glance at him. He trimmed the sail and ran the boat to the inner side of the spit of land, where the juniors were grouped watching him. They waved their hats to him, and Sammy gave them a cheery nod and a smile. The boat ran in, and Jim Dainty & Co. rushed down to meet it—ran waist-deep into the water and grasped the gunwale.

"What about sailing home, sir?" gasped Ginger Rawlinson.

They were more than a mile from the hut.

Sammy nodded.

"Exactly!" he said. "Get out, Splitz!"

"But I gum pack in te poat also pefore!" gasped Fritz.

"Get out!" roared Sammy.

"Ach himmel!" groaned Fritz.

A lick from Sammy's foot started him. He clambered out of the boat, and splashed to the rocky reef. Dismally, though thankful to find himself on terra firma again, Fritz Splitz started tramping along the rocky spit to the

beach. Jim Dainty & Co. clambered into the boat, Jim handing over Sammy's shoes, which he had picked up where the headmaster had left them.

Dr. Sparshott put the boat before the wind again, and ran up the bay for home. In spite of the tide the wind from the Atlantic drove the boat merrily along, deeply laden as it was with five schoolboys and their headmaster. On the shore of the bay the figure of Fritz Splitz could be seen tramping wearily along in the sunshine.

"I fancy Fatty won't try to bag the boat again in a hurry," chuckled Ginger Rawlinson, as the schoolboys landed.

Dr. Sparshott moored the boat, and walked up the beach to the hut. The juniors followed him. They were going back to the potato patch to resume their interrupted labours when Sammy uttered a sharp exclamation, and ran towards the doorway of the hut.

"What the dooce—" barked Sammy.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" exclaimed Ginger Rawlinson. "Who's done this?"

The castaways stared into the hut. The stack of canned beef by the wall was disturbed—five or six of the tins lay scattered over the floor. Sammy, with a rapid eye, counted the tins.

"Thirty-two! Two more are missing! What—" He broke off in blank amazement.

"My only hat!" gasped Jim Dainty. "It's not Fritz this time! But who—what—"

In utter amazement the castaways stared; they almost gaped. They were alone on the island. There was no other human being within hundreds of miles, save Ezra Sarson, marooned on the rocky islet five miles out to sea. Yet the hut had been raided during their absence.

It was an amazing, an unnerving mystery. It was seldom that Sammy Sparshott was beaten, but he was beaten now. He could only stare, like the juniors utterly at a loss.

"I begin to think," he said quietly, "that Splitz was not the guilty party yesterday. Someone else—"

Sammy Sparshott broke off. Was there "someone else?" What did it mean? Sammy stepped from the hut and swept the beach and the jungle with his eyes. A black-faced monkey grimaced at him from the ceiba-tree by the palm grove; but there was no other living thing in sight. It was a hopeless puzzle.

Sunset was red at Castaway Island, and Ginger was cooking supper outside the hut, when a weary, dreary, fat figure came tottering up. Fritz Splitz blinked at the Grimsdalers with dismal saucer-eyes.

"Blease I have gum pack!" he groaned. "I vas so ferry hungry, and vunce more I say tat I neffer, neffer did dake tat peef yesterday pefore! Ach, I vas so dired, and so hungry I tink tat I tie!"

"Is that Splitz?" barked Sammy, from the hut.

"Ja—ja wohl!" groaned Fritz. "I tink tat I tie if you vill not led me gum pack!"

"You may come back."

"Ach goot!"

"I think, Splitz," said Sammy, looking out of the hut, "that you were telling the truth when you stated that you did not take the stores. Let this be a warning to you not to tell lies, Splitz. It may be a valuable lesson to you. Now you may sit down to supper."

Fritz's fat face beamed. He sat down to supper, and soon demonstrated that his day of exile had given him a tremendous appetite. Over supper the other fellows discussed the strange mystery of the vanished stores, but Fritz did not join in the discussions. For a long, long time his podgy jaws were too busy for speech.

(Sammy Sparshott clears up the mystery of Castaway Island in next week's novel story of Jim Dainty & Co. Look out for it, buddies, and don't forget there's another sheet of Pictures in next Saturday's RANGER.)

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