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# The RANGER 2¢

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THE  
VAMPIRE!

# THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

## Friday Takes a Hand!



“**C** HUCK ’em down!” chuckled Jim Dainty. Whiz, whiz, whiz! Jim looked upward, laughing.

Castaway Island lay scorching under the tropical sunshine. Jim Dainty stood under a tall palm on the western side of the lonely island. There

were clusters of coconuts on the palm, and coconuts were dropping round the Grimslade junior.

Fifty feet from the ground a strange-looking figure clung to the tall palm, detaching the nuts and throwing them down. It was a hairy, black-faced monkey.

There were plenty of monkeys, large and small, on that West Indian island, but certainly only one that was clad in ragged cotton shorts and a shirt, with a hat on its head. Thus clad there was something queerly human in the monkey’s aspect, and it made Jim chuckle.

The rebel of Grimslade, now on his own, had been rather glad to make friends with that monkey. He called him his “Man Friday,” and he found Friday’s companionship a relief in the solitude. He found him useful, too, in collecting coconuts.

Friday was a very intelligent animal. He would do anything but talk. And though he would not talk he chattered away at a terrific rate in his own simian lingo. Clinging to the palm by his tail, Friday grinned and chattered gleefully as he tossed down nuts to his master.

“Go it, old bean!” chuckled Jim. “Chuck ’em down! You’re not pretty to look at, Friday, but you’re jolly useful.”

For several days Friday had been Jim’s only companion. He was free to go if he liked, but he did not like. He had taken a fancy to the Grimslade junior and stuck to him.

During those days Jim had seen and heard nothing of the other castaways—Dr. Sparshott, the headmaster, Ginger & Co., Dick Dawson, and Fritz Splitz. He was as determined as ever not to go back and submit, and he wondered whether Sammy Sparshott had decided, at long last, to give up searching for him, and leave him to his own devices.

But he was not thinking of Sammy at the present moment. He watched the antics of the monkey in the tall palm, laughing as the falling coconuts plopped round him.

He did not hear a faint rustle at a little distance, and as he did not look round he did not see a tattered mortar-board that showed over a clump of mimosa. And he did not know that the steely-grey eyes of Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade School, were fixed on him.

Sammy smiled grimly.

He had run down the fugitive at last, and caught him napping. For a few moments Dr. Sparshott stood looking at the rebel of Grimslade. Then he strode forward. Jim Dainty spun round with a startled exclamation as a heavy hand dropped on his shoulder.

“Sammy!” gasped Jim.

He gave a wrench to free his shoulder, but he might as well have wrenched at a steel vice. Sammy’s sinewy grip was more than vice-like.

“Exactly!” drawled Dr. Sparshott.

“I’m not coming back!”

“Your mistake!” said Dr. Sparshott. “I think you are, Dainty!”

Jim panted.



“I’ll run away again. You don’t want me back. You’re all down on me; you don’t want me.”

“Do you expect anybody to want a headstrong, wilful, disobedient young rascal?” asked Dr. Sparshott calmly. “You are a trouble and responsibility, Dainty; but on this lonely island, where we are shipwrecked, it is my duty to keep you in my charge. Even at Grimslade”—Sammy smiled whimsically—“we never sack a man, as you remember!”

“I won’t come!” muttered Jim desperately. He made a sudden clutch at the slim trunk

Whack, whack! Every cut rang loud and hard, and it was going on till the rebel let go the palm and came away. Whack, whack!

There was an excited chattering from the monkey in the palm, unheeded by either the schoolboy or the schoolmaster. Whack, whack, whack! Friday stared and chattered, his reddened eyes gleaming from his black, hairy face. Suddenly he grasped another coconut from the palm.

Whiz! Crash! “Oh!” gasped Dr. Sparshott.

He relaxed his grasp on Dainty and staggered back as the coconut crashed on his head from above. The impact cracked the nut, and came near cracking Sammy’s own “nut.” Dazed for the moment, hardly knowing what had hit him, the headmaster of Grimslade staggered back. Jim, panting, tore himself loose.

“What—” panted Sammy dizzily.

Jim Dainty leaped away. Another second and the headmaster of Grimslade was leaping after him. His grasp would have closed on the rebel before he could get clear. But whiz! whiz! came a couple of coconuts from above, crashing on his head, and Sammy pitched forward and fell on his knees.

That was all the chance that Jim wanted. He darted away through the palms like a hunted deer. Dr. Sparshott staggered to his feet, his head spinning.

“Stop!” he roared.

Dainty vanished among the trunks. Sammy made a stride in pursuit, and then stopped, clasping his hands to his aching head. He stared up at the ape, who jabbered and chattered defiance at him, and hurled coconuts. Then, as Jim had disappeared, Friday swung himself away into another tree, and vanished also. Dr. Sparshott blinked after him.

“My hat!” ejaculated Sammy.

A mile away, deep in the tropical forest, the fleeing rebel stopped at last, and threw himself down to rest, panting, in the shade of a tree. He grinned while he panted.

“What a jolly old surprise for Sammy! He didn’t know I had a pal! Good old Man Friday, though I suppose I’ve lost him now.”

There was a rustle in the thickets, and a queer figure in trousers had dropped beside Jim. He had not lost his Man Friday. Friday did not mean to be lost.

“MAN FRIDAY,” THE MONKEY,  
DOES HIS GOOD DEED FOR THE  
DAY!

of the palm. He clasped his arms round it and held on. Sammy gave a jerk, and another jerk, but the rebel of Grimslade held desperately to the palm. He was not going back to the hut on East Bay if he could help it.

Sammy, never relaxing his grip, looked at him thoughtfully. Friday had ceased to throw down coconuts, and was staring curiously at the scene from the top of the palm, aware that something was going on, but not understanding it. Dr. Sparshott gave the monkey no heed. His eyes were fixed grimly on Jim Dainty.

“I am going to give you,” he said quietly, “the whopping of your life, Dainty, for your disobedience and rebellion. Apparently you desire me to give it to you before we return to the hut. I shall oblige you.”

Dr. Sparshott had a thick, flexible bamboo under one arm. He grasped Dainty’s collar with his left hand, and slipped the bamboo down into his right.

“Let go that tree!” he barked.

“I won’t!” answered Dainty, between his teeth.

Whack! The crack of the bamboo rang like a pistol-shot through the tropical woods. Jim Dainty gave a yell.

Whack! Whack! There was no doubt that Sammy was deeply, intensely angry, though he was not in the least excited. Sammy never got excited. But he was grimly resolved to deal with the rebel of Grimslade—drastically.

## The Men from the Sky.

BUZZZZZZ!

It was a sound like a million bees close at hand. Jim Dainty, half asleep in the tropical heat, had heard it for some time without heeding it. But at last he sat up in his hammock and took notice.

The Grimslade rebel was in his camp. A hammock, made of thick lianas plaited together, swung in the branches of a great ceiba-tree. At twenty feet from the ground it was invisible from below, screened by the lower branches, and the rebel hunters might have passed under the tree a dozen times without dreaming that the fugitive schoolboy was camped there.

The gigantic trunk of the ceiba was hollow, and in the interior Jim parked his camping outfit and his provisions and a can of water. It was a safe refuge and hiding-place if the hunt came close.

Like all dwellers near the Equator, the Grimslade castaways found it necessary to take the "siesta," or midday rest, in the tropical heat of the day. Jim was dozing in his hammock, and Friday had cleared off on some business of his own, when that steady drone far above reached his ears, and at last drew his attention.

Sitting up in the hammock, Jim listened, with a perplexed frown on his brow. Above him the thick branches shut out the sky, save for a thin gleam of blue here and there. He could see nothing but foliage as he looked up.

That continuous buzzing came from over the treetops, like millions of bees or billions of mosquitoes. But it could not be either. Familiar as the sound was at home in England, it took Jim some time to realise that it was—what it must be!

"A plane!" he breathed.

It was the purring of an engine—it could be nothing else! Jim Dainty's eyes danced as he realised it.

Castaway Island was far off the map—no vessel ever passed within sight of it. Since the Grimsladers had been shipwrecked only one craft had touched at the solitary island—the schooner of Captain Luz, the treasure-seeker from Martinique, and that was long since.

That schooner had gone down in a hurricane, and the survivors, enemies of the castaways, had not been likely to send them help. The schoolboy Crusoes still hoped to see a sail—but the hope was growing faint.

Probably it had never occurred to any of them to hope for an aeroplane. But it was a plane that was buzzing over the island now, and Jim knew it! If it was possible to signal—

He rolled out of the hammock and clambered down to the earth. For the moment he forgot that he was in rebellion against his headmaster and on terms of warfare with his old comrades. If it was possible to signal the plane it meant rescue—that was all that he was thinking of now.

From the thick tropical forest he could not see even the sky, let alone the plane, and he tore away through the trees, heading for the open beach. Breathless, excited, heedless of

the heat, though it made his face stream with perspiration, Jim Dainty ran his hardest.

He came out of the forest at last, in sight of the sea on the western shore, and gazed up. The buzz of the engine was still in his ears. Against the blue of the sky flashed a shape, flying low. It had been circling over the forest, but now it had turned seaward again and was over the water.

Jim ran down the sand towards the sea. He shouted, in his excitement, oblivious of the fact that his voice could not possibly reach the men in the plane. Were they going—believing that they had only sighted an uninhabited island?

He had to draw their attention somehow. It was not likely that the castaways on the other side of the island had seen or heard it, with the high hill in between. All depended on Jim. Almost on the margin of the sea he stopped, waved his hat, and shouted wildly.

The plane zoomed on, circling. It was over the shore again now, flying so low that Jim could make out every detail of the structure and glimpse the two men in the cockpits. It struck him that the airmen were looking for a landing-place—impossible in the wooded interior of the island.

The plane had come from the west—that is, from one of the West Indian islands—Jamaica, perhaps, or Martinique or Cuba or Trinidad. Whoever they were, wherever they came from, surely they would be glad to give help to shipwrecked castaways—at least, to take back news of them so that a ship might be sent to take them off.

Jim waved and shouted till he was tired; but he could see now that the flying-men were going to land—they were picking out a level stretch of beach for the landing.

"Oh, good!" gasped Jim, as the plane swooped down.

It landed on level sand a quarter of a mile from where he stood, and taxied along the sand as if on the tarmac. Instantly Jim Dainty started running towards it. If only his friends—they were friends again now, in his thoughts—had been there to see it!

But he would soon carry them the news. Sammy would forgive him when he brought the news of rescue! Panting for breath, Jim raced towards the halted plane.

It had stopped, and the two airmen had got down. They had seen him, and were standing beside the plane, watching him curiously as he came. The island, unknown and remote, was to all appearance uninhabited, and as they had landed on the western side they could have seen nothing of the little settlement on East Bay.

Yet it struck Jim that they were not surprised to see him. They watched him keenly and curiously as he raced towards them over the sand; but nothing in their manner indicated surprise at the sight of an English face on that lonely, deserted West Indian island.

The pilot of the plane, a short, squat man with a face like tanned leather, lighted a cigarette as he watched Jim. The other man, taller and slimmer, after a long and curious stare at the running schoolboy, turned away

and stood looking inland towards the forest, so that Jim could not see his face as he came.

Jim noticed that the squat pilot spoke to the taller man, who nodded, and then the pilot, standing squarely with his stocky legs wide apart, watched the schoolboy come up.

There was a faint grin on his hard, tanned face, not wholly pleasant. Jim, gasping for breath, stood unable to speak for a moment or two, and the man who had piloted the aeroplane addressed him.

"I guess you're in some hurry, boy!"

"Yes," gasped Jim, finding his voice. "We're castaways on this island—we've been here for months. Thank goodness you've come! I was afraid you were going on—till I saw you landing."

"I guess you needn't have worried a lot!" grinned the tanned man. "We was sure looking for this island."

"Looking for it?" panted Jim.

"Sure! I guess I've been here afore, and savvy the lie of the land, too. Though I reckon I got no rum along this trip."

Jim stared at him. Now that he was close at hand he could see that the airman looked a tough customer. He remembered that Dr. Sparshott had said that if Castaway Island was ever visited it would only be by rum-runners—liquor smugglers of the American coast. Jim glanced from him to the taller man; but the latter still had his face turned away.

"Who—who are you?" gasped Jim.

"Jever hear of Slim Stack?" asked the tanned man.

"Never!" answered Jim.

"Then I guess you're hearing of him now," said the squat man, with a grin that showed a set of teeth discoloured by chewing tobacco. "If you've been a long time on this here island maybe you ain't heard that Old Man Prohibition is dead and buried, and rum-running gettin' to be one of the lost arts! But I guess there may be something on this here island to pay for a trip, if Luz has got it right."

"Luz!"

Jim caught his breath. Was it from Captain Luz, the half-breed treasure-hunter from Martinique, that these men had heard of the island? Captain Luz's schooner had gone down in the hurricane that had driven him and his crew away from Castaway Island. The castaways had seen nothing of him since.

"I guess you know the name some!" grinned Slim Stack. "You're one of the schoolmaster's bunch, I reckon! Where's the schoolmaster?"

"On the other side of the island."

"And the rest?"

"They're with him."

The tanned man gave him a sharp, suspicious stare.

"What'll you be doing on this side all on your lonesome own, then?" he rapped.

"I—I've left my friends—there was a row," faltered Jim. "I—I say, you—you're going to help—"

He faltered. Already it had dawned on his dismayed mind that the castaways could expect no help from these strangers who had come from the sky.

"Sure! I'm going to help myself!" said Slim Stack, grinning. "Some! That's the feller I generally help! You can let the guy see your face, Luz—he's alone here, and I guess he ain't taking the news to the schoolmaster—we've got him."

The taller man turned round—and Jim gave a cry as he recognised the dark, swarthy features and black eyes of Captain Luz. It was the half-breed treasure-seeker himself who had returned to the island by air, in company with the American rum-runner.

Jim Dainty sprang back. He realised that he had fallen into a trap—or, rather, that he had run at full speed into one. There was a sour and mocking grin on the face of the man from Martinique.

"Cinch him!" yelled Slim Stack, as Jim leaped away and ran. "If he gets word to the schoolmaster—" He broke off, and rushed after the boy, the Frenchman racing by his side. With a bound Luz reached the running schoolboy and grabbed at his shoulder.

He caught hold—and as he did so, Jim, utterly desperate now, spun round and crashed his clenched fist full in the swarthy face. Captain Luz gave a yell and spun over, right in the path of Slim Stack—and the American, stumbling on him before he could stop, pitched headlong and rolled on the sand.

## FRANK RICHARDS and HEDLEY SCOTT



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Now on Sale at all Newsagents. 2<sup>D</sup>.

Jim Dainty tore on up the beach, running for his life.

**Held by the Enemy!**

**P**ATTER, patter, patter, came racing footsteps on the level sand behind the running junior.

Jim's feet seemed hardly to touch the sand as he flew—but the pattering behind kept pace with him. The sweat poured down his face—a mist of heat seemed to be round him—but he ran and ran!

To get to Sammy—to warn him that the enemy had come—that was Jim's only thought!

Bang! Something kicked up the sand almost at his feet. One of his pursuers was firing. Jim's heart leaped—but he did not pause. For life or death, he was going to carry on.

He shot a hurried glance over his shoulder. The squat flying-man had a revolver in his hand—it was he who had fired. He had pitched off his coat to run more freely, and was keeping pace with the fugitive. Luz was farther back, and he had a knife in his hand.

Bang! The big Navy revolver roared again, and a splash of sand spurted over the school-boy in a shower.

It flashed into his mind that the rum-runner was not shooting to hit. One of those shots would have hit, if Slim had wanted to hit. Rum-runner, smuggler, desperate adventurer, the man doubtless was, but no murderer. He was trying to scare the schoolboy into stopping. He was not likely to succeed! Not unless a bullet came boring through flesh and bone would Jim stop.

The nearest trees were reached now. A score of yards more, and the tangled forest would save him.

Aching with heat and fatigue, panting for breath, Jim plunged and tore on—realising that the patter of Slim Stack's feet was drawing closer behind. There was a trailing liana in his way—he leapt over it, caught his foot, stumbled and fell.

The crash on the earth knocked out what little breath remained in Jim Dainty. He lay gasping, gurgling for wind—and as he strove to struggle up, a sinewy, bony hand grasped him, and he was forced down again. A round metal rim was pressed to his forehead.

"You sure are asking for it, boy!" drawled the voice of Slim Stack. "Say, you want me to blow your roof sky-high?"

Jim Dainty struggled. Heedless of the revolver, he strove to tear himself away from the squat man. Slim Stack did not pull trigger. He grinned, and gave the schoolboy a crack across the head with the butt. Jim stretched out on the ground.

"You surely would have it!" remarked Slim, as the half-stunned boy blinked dizzily up at him. "Say, son, you've got pluck! But I guess it's bad medicine to argue with the man who's got the gun! Yep!"

The squat man was pouring sweat from his rapid run, and he dabbed it away with a red handkerchief. But he seemed cool and equable, so far as his temper was concerned.

In that, he was a striking contrast to Captain Luz, who was coming panting up, knife in hand, and ferocity burning in his swarthy face.

Jim's eyes turned dizzily on the half-breed, and he made an effort to rise. Slim placed a foot on him and pushed him back.

"Stick there, boy!" he drawled. "I guess I want you. You surely ain't carrying the news to the schoolmaster! Nope!"

"Morbleu!" Luz came panting up, and he fairly hurled himself at the prostrate schoolboy, the knife flashing in the sun.

Slim Stack coolly lifted the foot he had planted on Jim, and met the half-breed with it, knocking him backwards. Luz sat down on the ground with a sudden jar, and spat like a cat with rage.

"Forget it, bo!" said Slim. "I guess when I went into shucks with you I allowed I was going to be boss! Why, you durned penniless wash-out, you hadn't the price of a meal on you when I picked you up and let you spin me your tale! Did I tell you I was running the shebang, or did I not? Put that knife away!"

The French half-breed scowled and sheathed his knife. Slim turned to Jim, grasped him by the shoulder, and hooked him to his feet. The boy made a movement to resist, and the squat man's fingers seemed to grind like iron into his very bones.

Jim gave a gasp. Cool, equable, and evidently averse to bloodshed as the gangster was, there was a look in his icy eyes that told that he would stop at little if he was hard pressed. Jim realised that, in spite of his cool good humour, Slim Stack was a far more dangerous man than the ferocious half-breed.

With that grinding grip on his shoulder, the gangster walked Jim to the nearest tree and slammed him against the trunk. Then he called to the Frenchman, and Luz drew his knife again and cut lengths of the wiry lianas.

Resistance was impossible, and Jim Dainty had to submit while he was bound to the tree-trunk. Luz did the binding, and he did it with thoroughness.

Length after length of the wiry liana was bound round the schoolboy and the trunk, till he was unable to stir a finger, let alone a hand or a foot. Slim Stack stood watching the operation, and gave a nod of satisfaction when it was complete.

"I guess that lets you out, boy!" he remarked. "You surely won't get loose in a powerful hurry! Nope! I'll say you'll keep safe till I got your schoolmaster cinched."

With that, he turned and walked back to the beach, followed by Luz. The moment their backs were turned, Jim Dainty began to struggle with his bonds. It took him only a few minutes to realise that struggling was futile. The lianas, strongly knotted, held him like rope, or rather, like strong wire.

He was a helpless prisoner, as the adventurers well knew when they left him. The boy groaned aloud in misery. If only he could have escaped to carry warning to Sammy—but it was hopeless to think of it.

He watched the two adventurers. They walked back to the aeroplane on the beach and unpacked various things from the rear cockpit. He saw them sit on the shady side of the plane and eat a meal, after which Luz smoked cigarettes and Slim chewed tobacco.

Every now and then the American glanced at the sky, and the sun was low in the west when he rose at last and came up the beach with his companion. They were going towards the wood, and they passed a hundred yards from the spot where Jim stood bound to the tree, hardly glancing at him, before they disappeared into the forest.

Faintly, a rustling came back, and then all was silent. Jim Dainty groaned. They were starting to cross the island—towards the little settlement on the east side. The fact that they had waited so long indicated that they meant to arrive after sunset. Even Sammy Sparshott, wary as he was, would have no inkling of danger. Unsuspecting, probably asleep, the castaways would be taken utterly by surprise.

Captain Luz had the fixed belief that Dr. Sparshott had found the long-sought treasure of Castaway Island—but it was not only treasure, but revenge, that was in the savage mind of the half-breed.

If only Jim could get loose and warn Sammy—

But he could not! Again and again he tried his strength on his bonds—in vain!—while the sun sank lower and dipped into the western sea. It was almost dark when Jim heard a rustling in the forest behind him, and wondered whether it was one of the ruffians returning. He gave a gasp as a strange hairy figure in trousers, shirt, and hat skipped into view.

"Friday!" he gasped.

It was his monkey pal! The monkey gave a squeal of delight as he spotted him. Evidently Man Friday had missed Jim from his camp and had been seeking him since. He danced round the bound schoolboy, chattering and grinning with glee. But he was puzzled by Jim's motionless posture—and he passed a paw over his face, and then over the binding lianas.

A sudden hope beat in Jim Dainty's heart. If the ape could only understand—

"Friday, old man!" gasped Jim. "Get me loose—oh, get me loose, old chap! Oh, if he could only catch on—"

He struggled, wrenching madly at the binding lianas. Friday blinked at him with his red-rimmed eyes, puzzled, perplexed. Then suddenly intelligence flashed into the monkey's eyes—he understood!

He started clawing at the lianas, blinking at Jim's face in the deepening dusk, as if for approval. Jim's face brightened.

"Go it, old bean, go it!" he breathed.

And Friday "went" it—understanding now what was wanted. Knot after knot of the wiry creeper was torn and clawed away, till Jim felt his bonds loosening. He had an arm loose at last, and was able to help Friday in the work. Looser and looser, till at last, panting with relief, the Grimslade junior staggered free.

The sun dipped into the western sea—and all was dark on Castaway Island.

But Jim Dainty was free—thanks to his monkey pal, he was free—and it might not yet be too late!

He stayed only to take one deep drink from his water-bottle, and then plunged into the tropical forest, with Friday chattering along at his heels—tramping, running, scrambling, pushing on without a pause—to rejoin once more the Grimslade castaways, and—whatever their fate might be—to share it!

*(Captain Luz back on Castaway Island! Will Jim Dainty be in time to prevent him from capturing Sammy Sparshott and the schoolboy cruoeses? Don't miss next week's exciting story!)*

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