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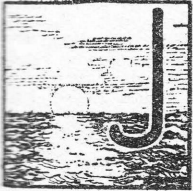


The
Wembley Hero

THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!

By FRANK RICHARDS

Lost to the World!



JIM DAINTY stood on the low sandbank, with the rising sun behind him, and stared with longing eyes into the west. Ginger Rawlinson sat in the sand, rubbing his drowsy eyes. Friday, the monkey, perched on the bows of the beached boat, solemnly

scratched himself. Sprawled on the sand, Fritz von Splitz snored.

Dawn brightened the vast Atlantic, gleaming on the rolling waters, on the low-lying sandbank that jutted from them, on the tangled bush that covered most of its extent, on the fragments of wreckage that lay strewn on the shore. How far away was Castaway Island, where Dr. Samuel Sparshott and the rest of the shipwrecked Grimsladers must have given up the boat's crew as lost?

Many, many a long mile westward, below the sea-line, lay the fertile island which had been their Crusoe home—how many miles, neither Jim nor Ginger could even guess, for they had hardly the faintest idea how far the gale had blown them out into the ocean.

Not a sign of the gale remained. In endless procession the Atlantic rollers passed the sandbank. For long, long minutes Jim stared into the west, and turned at last to his companion. "We've got to make it somehow, Ginger!" he said. "Sammy will think we're drowned in the gale. We've got to get back."

"If we had a rag of sail—" grunted Ginger.

"We haven't! We've got the oars."

Ginger Rawlinson rose from the sand, with another grunt.

"Fathead!" he said. "If we knew the distance, and could pull it, we've got no grub."

"Precious little here," said Jim.

"We can dig crabs out of the sand, and there's still some of those beastly nuts that Friday found in the bush. And there's water in the rain-pools. We can keep alive here—we couldn't in the boat. Let's scout for brekker instead of talking rot. Hi, wake up, Fritz!"

Ginger planted the toe of his boot in Fritz Splitz's fat ribs.

"Ach! Vat was tat?" yelled Fritz. He sat up and rubbed his saucer-eyes. "Peastly prute, vy for you vake me up ven I tream tat I was pack in Chermany, and tat I eat lofely Cherman sausages pefore?"

"Tumble up, you Boche bloater!" growled Ginger. "If you want any brekker lend a hand hunting for it!"

"Peast and a prute! Leaf me to slumper!" answered Fritz Splitz. "I was not vun hungry peast like you fellows! Go and eat goke!"

And Fatty Fritz settled down to slumber again. Ginger Rawlinson gave a snort, and tramped away. Jim followed him. They were both desperately hungry and felt as if they could have eaten almost anything. It was amazing that Fritz Splitz, generally the hungriest, was not even more keen on brekker. But it was plain that his unearthly appetite, for once, was not worrying him, and he had slept soundly all night, while the other fellows had been kept awake most of the time by a gnawing vacancy inside.

An hour was spent digging crabs, and then Jim and Ginger, with their hats full, returned to the boat. Fritz Splitz was still snoring.



Friday, the monkey, understanding what was required of him, suddenly claved hold of Fritz, and dragged him over backwards.

Taking no heed of the fat German, they stirred up the camp-fire, fed it with splinters of driftwood, and filled a can from the rain-pool. As if the scent of cooking had a magical effect, Fritz Splitz awoke, and sat up, yawning. He sniffed.

"Vat was tat you gook?" he asked. He got up and blinked into the steaming can. "Mein gootness, I like not tat to eat mit meinself!"

"You jolly well won't have any, either!" growled Ginger. "If you want grub you can root after it like your betters, you fat frog!"

THE MONKEY WITH A HUMAN BRAIN!

"Posh!" said Fritz. "Ruppish! You can keep all tat—I tink tat I goes and looks for some nuts after mit meinself."

And Fritz Splitz rolled away along the shore, turned into the thickets in the interior of the islet, and disappeared from sight.

"It's not so jolly bad!" said Ginger, as he tasted the mess in the can. "Better than those dashed nuts, anyhow. What's the matter with that fat freak? I thought he would want to wolf the lot."

"Same here," said Jim, puzzled.

The meal finished, Jim set himself to gathering driftwood for the night's camp-fire, while Ginger fished. For the umpteenth time Jim hunted among the wreckage in the faint hope of finding something in the way of stores that might have been washed ashore from some sunken ship. But he found nothing of that kind; there was plenty of wood, and that was all.

Having piled up a sufficiency of wood for the night, Jim went through the bush to gather some of the small nuts, which were now diminishing in number. The voice of Fritz von Splitz came to his ears—singing! Fritz, it seemed, was in good spirits—which was not only strange but unaccountable, unless the fat German was getting lightheaded.

Jim pushed through the brambly bush and came on him suddenly. Fritz was moving

along the edge of a deep gully which was choked with tangled bush. He seemed to be looking for a place to descend into it; but as he heard the rustle of Jim Dainty coming up he spun round, with a startled expression on his fat face, his singing stopping of a sudden. Jim looked at him in sheer wonder. If ever there was guilt written in a human countenance it was written in Fatty Fritz's. He looked as he had sometimes looked when caught pilfering the tuck from the study cupboard at Grimslade School. But why, was a mystery.

"Ach! Vas tat you?" gasped Fritz, his saucer-eyes popping at Jim. "Peast and a prute, vy for you vatch me apout mit yourself after?"

"Who's watching you, you bloated bloater?" growled Jim.

"Ten go away mit yourself!" said Fritz. "I like not your gompany!"

"If you want your cheeky head punched—"

"Peastly prute, you geeep off!" exclaimed Fritz, jumping back.

He forgot, in his alarm, that he was standing on the edge of the gully. Missing his footing as he jumped back, he plunged backwards into the gully, and there was a tearing and rending sound as he crashed through the tangled mass of bush.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim Dainty. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach! Peast and a prute!" yelled Fritz from the bottom of the gully. "I was scratched mit t'orns pefore—I vas all scratched and torn mit meinself after! Mein gootness! I have colossal bains! Peastly pounder!"

Jim ran forward and stared down the gully. Fritz's fat carcass had torn a passage through the bush that filled it, and he was sprawling nine or ten feet down, almost hidden by bush. His fat face glared up at Jim.

"Ach! I was fearfully tamaged!" gasped Fritz. "I vas tamaged all ofer!"

"I'll help you out, fathead!" said Jim Dainty, and he made a movement to clamber down after the fat Rhinelander.

"Ach! Go pack!" roared Fritz. "I vant not your help, peast and a prute!"

Jim stared at him.

"You blithering, bloated Boche!" he roared.

"Help yourself out, then, and be blowed to you! Go and eat coke!"

And leaving Fatty Fritz wriggling and grunting at the bottom of the gully, Jim Dainty strode away. He returned to the boat, to find Ginger there. The red-headed junior had met with no luck; not one solitary fish had he caught.

So once again crabs figured on the menu of the midday meal. Fritz put in an appearance, but turned up his nose as he saw Jim and Ginger eating the cooked crabs.

"Look here, Fritz, aren't you hungry?" asked Jim quite gently. "You're a lazy slacker, but you can take your whack if you like."

"I gannot eat tat peastly stuff, Tainty!" "Well, if you like the nuts better—" said Jim, amazed.

"Te nuts?" Fritz grinned for a moment. "Ja! Ja wohl! Tat is it, Tainty—I like te nuts mooch petter!"

And Fritz rolled away into the thickets again and disappeared.

Fritz's Secret!

FRIDAY, the monkey, came scuttling out of the bush, and grinned and grimaced before his master, with something under his hairy arm.

Jim Dainty did not heed him. He sat on the sand, leaning back against the boat, looking seaward, towards Ginger, who was out on the shoal again with his fishing-tackle. There was something like despair in Jim's heart. Sea and sky—sky and sea—met his weary eyes wherever he turned them.

But the persistent monkey drew his attention at last. Jim turned—and then started violently with amazement. He could not believe that it was real—that the monkey had lain a bag of ship's biscuits on his knees!

He stared at it dazedly for long moments before he stirred. Friday, grinning, jerked a biscuit from the bag, and transferred it to his mouth. He seemed to like it. Jim, still in a sort of trance, did the same. It was captain's biscuit. It seemed to melt in his mouth. He gasped.

"Oh, Friday, old pal! Where did you find that?" gasped Jim Dainty.

He leaped to his feet. His first thought was for Ginger. Taking the bag in his hand, he ran down to the water, and waded out, waving the other hand excitedly.

Ginger Rawlinson stared at him, his first impression being that Jim had gone "batty" from the sun. But as Jim clambered on the shoal, and held out the bag of ship's biscuit, he jumped.

"My giddy goloshes!" he yelled. He fairly grabbed at it. Hungry as he was, he had not realised how hungry till he saw good food before him.

"How did you get it?" gasped Ginger at last, his mouth full.

"The jolly old monk picked it up somewhere! We fancied that there might be grub washed ashore with the other stuff, but we never found any. Friday's found it! Must be deep in the bush somewhere—the sea rolls right over this sandbank, you know, in a storm." Jim Dainty chuckled. "Let's go and look for Fritz—that fat bloater will chortle for joy when he sees this!"

"Fritz!" repeated Ginger. He gave a sudden start. "My giddy goloshes! That's it!"

"Eh! What's that?" asked Jim. Ginger Rawlinson clenched his fists, and punched at the air, as if he saw a fat face there! His face was red with rage.

"I'll smash him!" he gasped.

"What the thump—" "I'll pulverise him into little pieces! Can't you see?" howled Ginger. "Fritz never wanted any crabs—he never wanted any nuts—he's been living on air—I don't think! Can't you see, you fathead! Fritz has found this—"

"Wha-a-at?" "That's why!" panted Ginger. "That's why he disappears into the bush—that's why he doesn't want any of our prog! I'll bet you the monk has seen him gorging in the bush and got hold of that bag! I'll bet you

there's lots of it, and that fat scoundrel spotted it the first day on the sandbank—and he's kept it dark!"

"Come on," said Jim Dainty, between his teeth. "The fat brute's in the bush now. I fancy I know where to look for him, too—I can guess why he didn't want me to go down into that gully to help him out! Come on, old fellow!"

With grim faces, the two juniors waded ashore from the shoal. Friday skipped after them as they made for the bush. Jim Dainty led the way directly towards the sandy gully into which Fritz Splitz had tumbled earlier on. He had no doubt that the secret lay there. Possibly the clumsy Fritz had tumbled into it on the first day on the island, and so made the discovery.

"Quiet!" whispered Jim, as they reached the thickets.

Stepping softly, they approached the deep gully in the middle of the islet. There was no sign of Fritz Splitz to be seen. But as they stopped and peered down at the thick masses of bush, a fat chuckle reached them from below.

"Mein gootness! Tat peef is goot! It is ferry goot! It is not so goot as a German sausage, but it is ferry goot!" Chuckle again. "And tat biscuit, he is ferry goot also! Tat peastly prute of a monkey steal vun pag of biscuit, plow him, but presently I giff him vun goot kick, ven de fellows was not looking!"

The thick bush hid Fatty Fritz from sight in the gully. But there was a break in it where Fritz had gone down, and Jim Dainty jumped into the opening, followed by Ginger. They crashed through cracking bushes, and there was a fearful yell as they landed, one after another, on something fat and soft. It was Fritz Splitz!

"Yaroooh! Mein gootness! Ach!" yelled Fritz wildly, as he sprawled. "I was grushed to a banecake—I have no more te breff—urrrrgh!"

Jim and Ginger picked themselves up. Fritz sprawled and gurgled, all the wind knocked out of his fat carcass. Under the thick bushes was a sort of sheltered hollow, where evidently the fat German had made his camp.

A wooden case, packed full of cans of beef, lay open—they remembered how Fritz had taken the axe into the bush, under pretence of chopping firewood—which he had never chopped! Another case, packed with bags of ship's biscuit, was also open.

There was a crumpled mass of canvas, part of a torn sail, on which Fritz had been sitting, and a tangle of ropes. Probably enough, the bush hid more remnants of the wreck in the recesses of the gully. But the castaways had found enough for the moment.

"What did I tell you?" gasped Ginger. "The bloated blighter!" panted Jim Dainty. "Collar him!"

How many thumps, and punches, and bangs, and kicks, Fatty Fritz collected during the next hectic ten minutes he never knew. It was a wrecked and battered Fritz who escaped at last, scrambling away frantically among thorny thickets, yelling and gasping and gurgling.

Leaving it at that, Jim Dainty and Ginger loaded themselves with bags of biscuit and cans of beef, and made their way back to camp. For the first time since they had been on the sandbank, they made a wonderful meal—pausing every now and then to pet the monkey, who had rooted out Fritz's secret, and was really to be regarded as the founder of the feast.

"My giddy goloshes!" said Ginger. "This is good! And lots of it, old man—lots and lots and lots! Lots to stack in the boat—and we can try to make that trip now—what?"

"What-ho!" said Jim Dainty. "Hallo, there's Fritz!"

He picked up a chunk of rock. Fatty Fritz, hovering in the distance, blinked at them. The rocky chunk flew and just missed a fat pimple of a nose. There was a fiendish yell from Fritz Splitz, and he disappeared into the bush again—and the two juniors chuckled and resumed the happy feast.

Short Commons.

"**W**HAT ripping luck!" said Ginger Rawlinson.

"Topping!" agreed Jim Dainty. It was the following morning. Jim and Ginger, having had a hearty supper the previous night, had slept soundly. But not so Fritz. As a punishment for his trickery, he had been denied any grub at all—which, to Fritz, was a punishment indeed.

For a change, it was the German junior who had spent a sleepless night. He had hoped Jim and Ginger would relent when the new day dawned. But they had not relented; and Fritz had not partaken of breakfast!

Now Jim and Ginger were investigating the hoard which had been so unexpectedly revealed.

Fatty Fritz's discovery was more extensive than Fritz had dreamed. Fritz had been satisfied to find the stores; but Dainty and Ginger hunted further, and found many other things.

It was clear that in some terrific storm the Atlantic had swept right over the low sandbank, filling that gully, now dry as tinder, with raging water. Some hapless vessel had come to grief there, shattered and smashed to fragments. Much of the wreck had been washed away in the storm that had caused it; but much remained, embedded in the sand or tangled in the bushes. Everything that remained was deeply hidden by the bush; but the juniors rooted out one thing after another.

There were cases packed with canned beef, and beans, and other things; cases of biscuit-bags; all sorts of utensils, masses of torn canvas and ropes, an anchor, a shattered boat, all sorts of tackle and broken timbers. Much of it—most of it—was useless to the castaways. But much of it was exactly what they needed.

They had lost the boat's sail in the storm, but here was ample canvas to replace it; it only meant work! And Jim and Ginger were more than ready to put in all the work required. The mere thought of getting back to Castaway Island, to Dr. Sparshott, and Dawson and Streaky and Sandy, spurred them on.

It was a busy morning. It was as busy for the hungry Fritz as for the other fellows. They made him work! Trip after trip was made, from the bushy gully to the boat, and at every trip the three juniors were heavy-laden.

Fatty Fritz staggered and groaned and perspired under his loads. The sun was hot—blazing down from a cloudless sky. What Fritz wanted was a big feed, and a snooze in the shade afterwards—while the other fellows did the work!

What he got was painfully unlike what he wanted! Ginger playfully told him that the work would give him an appetite—at which Fritz groaned dismally.

But in the torrid heat of noon, even Jim and Ginger had to stop for a rest. They sat down in what shade they could find, and made a gorgeous meal from their new supplies. Certainly they did not prize grub as Fritz did; but there was no doubt that good food, and plenty of it, made them feel much more hopeful and happy.

Fatty Fritz eyed them wolfishly as they sat down to dinner, and Jim Dainty was disposed to relent. But Ginger was adamant.

"What about letting the fat brute off now, Ginger?" asked Jim, and Fatty Fritz's long face brightened with hope.

"What about not talking silly rot?" was Ginger's reply, and Fritz's fat face was overcast again. "He kept us without grub for days while he was guzzling! We ought to keep him just as long, to be fair! But we'll let him off lightly. He can pile in at brekker to-morrow—if he works well for the rest of today!"

Groan!
"Shut up!" murmured Ginger sleepily.
"Peast and prute!"
"If I turn out—"

Fritz Splitz suppressed the sounds of woe. He did not want Ginger to turn out and deal with him. Ginger had a heavy hand. Fatty Fritz was silent, and Ginger Rawlinson went to sleep again. Jim Dainty had not awakened.

The day's work had tired out the two Grimsladers, and they slept like tops.

But Fritz could not sleep. Fritz, without food all day, was too hungry to sleep.

He sat up on the soft sand, and blinked drearily round him. The full, round moon sailed over the Atlantic, and the bushy sandbank; it was almost as light as by day. But it was hours yet to day; and how he was to endure a state of famine till morning, was a mystery to Friedrich von Splitz.

He blinked at the boat. It was at high-water mark, and the painter pegged to the sand. The tide was full now, running past the sandbank, and the boat afloat. It rocked at the rope.

Fritz gazed at it longingly. Stacks of food in the boat and Fritz ravenous! But he dared not raid the provisions! If Ginger heard him and woke—

But under the spur of his unearthly appetite Fritz's fat brain worked at double pressure. Slowly an idea came into that fat brain. He blinked round cautiously at the two sleepers, and rose silently to his feet. Stepping on tip-toe, making no sound on the soft sand, he reached the boat. One tug at the peg, and the painter was free. Knee-deep in water beside the boat, holding on to the gunwale, Fritz blinked round at the sleepers farther up the shore. They were not stirring.

He grinned. He gave the boat a shove and bundled headlong into it, and it rocked away from the shore. There was a sharp, startled squeal. Friday was sleeping in the boat, and the fat German had landed on him. Loud and sharp rang the monkey's squeal, and a hairy paw clawed at Fritz.

"Peast of a monkey!" gasped Fritz. He scrambled up and grasped the oars. A shout came from the shore.

"My giddy goloshes! What—"

"The boat!" yelled Jim Dainty.

"Ach himmel!" gasped Fritz Splitz, as the two startled juniors came racing down to the shore. He clattered the oars into the rowlocks and pulled frantically. Jim and Ginger reached the water's edge, but Fatty Fritz was already out of reach. In the bright moonlight the boat rocked a dozen yards from the beach.

"He's got the boat!" gasped Ginger. "Why, you blithering Boche—you potty porpoise—bring that boat back!"

"Peast and a prute!" yelled back Fritz. "I vill gum pack ven I have had mein supper; but before tat I vill not gum pack! Yah!"

"My only hat!" gasped Jim Dainty.

Grinning at the two exasperated juniors on the sandbank, Fritz pulled hard. It had not occurred to Fritz's fat brain that some whirl of the currents, eddying round the sandbank, might shoot him past the end of the bank and start him on an unintentional voyage across the Atlantic!

"After him!" panted Jim, plunging desperately into the water and swimming.

"My giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger. He realised, like Jim, that the boat was their only hope. It was packed ready to make sail in the morning; all was ready to make the attempt to get back to Castaway Island. If it was lost—

He plunged in after Jim, and swam for the boat.

"Peasts and prutes!" gasped Fritz Splitz. He bent to the oars, with the perspiration running down his fat face.

Exerting all his strength, his eyes fixed on the two dark heads dotting the water astern,

he pulled and pulled, and did not even notice that the low sandbank was gliding away from him, and that the current was driving the boat past the end of it.

But Jim and Ginger could see. They knew, if Fritz did not, that it was no longer possible for him to make the sandbank again—doubtful if they could make it themselves by swimming!

It was for life itself that they were swimming now, their own lives and Fritz's.

With desperate efforts, the two swimmers reached within a few fathoms of the boat. But they could gain no farther. Fritz kept his distance; and as he saw that they could not overtake him, he grinned, a breathless grin of defiance and derision.

"Go pack!" yelled Fritz. "Go pack mit yourself before, peasts and prutes and pounders! I gum pack after tat I have had mein supper, you peastly plighthers!"

"Friday!" yelled Jim Dainty frantically. The monkey was capering in the boat, a queer figure in the moonlight, in his cotton trousers and shirt, in a state of wild excitement. Friday was an intelligent animal, as he had proved more than once. It was clear to Friday that his master wanted to get to the boat, and that Fritz Splitz was preventing him. Jim's desperate yell reached his ears, and Friday sent back an answering squeal.

"We're done!" groaned Ginger.

Fritz Splitz was pulling on, nothing doubting that when he had dropped the pursuit, he could pull in to the shore as soon as he liked! He had forgotten the monkey in the boat. He was reminded of him now.

Friday's intelligent brain grasped the fact that Fritz was keeping his master out of the boat! As soon as Friday quite understood that, Friday began to take a hand in the proceedings. He skipped behind Fritz Splitz, and suddenly clawed hold of his neck from behind and dragged him over backwards.

"Ach himmel!" squealed Fritz Splitz.

Up went Fritz's fat legs in the air! Head and shoulders banged on the bottom of the boat. The oars, dragged in as he rolled over backwards, clattered from his hands.

"Ach! Peast of a monkey!" howled Fritz.

He struggled frantically up. Friday, squealing and howling, clung to him and clawed. The boat, turning broadside to the current now that Fritz was not pulling, rocked and rolled, and almost plunged gunwale under. Fritz rolled over, wildly mixed up with the monkey. Jim Dainty and Ginger, exerting every ounce of their strength, came cleaving the water. Now that the boat had lost way, they fairly shot down to it and clambered aboard.

Fritz, at last, had succeeded in hurling Friday off, and was on his fat knees when the two drenched and dripping juniors came bundling headlong in. They crashed on him, and flattened him down in the bottom of the boat again.

"Urrrrrgh!" gurgled Fritz, as he collapsed.

Ginger scrambled along to the tiller. Broadside on, the boat was in imminent danger. Ginger grasped the tiller and brought it round to the current. The boat steadied at once. Jim Dainty staggered to his feet. He stared across the tumbling water. In the bright moonlight, the sandbank they had left was a mere blur on the sea, fast fading away into the distance. The current whirled them on.

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Fritz Splitz. "Peasts and prutes! I tell you tat I vill have mein

supper, I vas so hungry. Ten I vill go pack—"

Jim Dainty grasped him by a fat ear and forcibly turned his podgy face in the direction of the disappearing sandbank.

"Look, you fat fool!" he hissed. "Look, you blithering idiot! Look, you pie-faced, piffing porker! Do you think you could get back? None of us could get back! If we hadn't got hold of the boat, you'd have gone to sea on your own, and we should have been drowned!"

"Vat!" gasped Fritz. He blinked across the moonlit water. "Mein goodness! Vere is tat sandpank? Ach himmel!"

He blinked at the blur on the water in utter consternation. For the first time it dawned on his fat brain that he had been running out to sea alone in the boat! His teeth chattered.

"Friday's saved our lives—yours as well as ours, you blithering, benighted bloater—"

"Ach, but I neffer tink—I have not tink—"

"Take the tiller, Dainty!" said Ginger quietly. "I've got something to say to Fritz!"

Jim grinned and took the tiller. Ginger stooped in the boat and fumbled. Fritz Splitz blinked at him. He eyed Ginger hopefully, apparently under the impression that the red-headed junior was sorting out provisions for him. That was quite a mistake on Fritz's part! Ginger was sorting out something else.

"I vill have some peef, Chinger," said the hopeful Fritz. "Also I vill have some peans! And I vill have some biscuit, and—"

"You're going to have beans," said Ginger grimly. "You're not going to have beef, and you're not going to have biscuit; but you're going to have beans—lots of them—lots and lots!"

Ginger rose, with what he had been looking for in his hand. It was a length of thick rope. He knotted the end. With the rope's end in his right hand, he grabbed Fritz's fat neck with his left, and twisted him over a thwart. There was a howl of apprehension from Fatty Fritz, as he realised what kind of "beans" he was going to get! Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Ach! Leaf off to pang me on mein trousers!" yelled Fritz, struggling wildly. "Mein goodness! I have vun colossal bain—yaroooh! Peast and a prute, tat you leaf off!"

Whack, whack, whack! rang the rope's end, and louder still rang the wild yells of Fritz Splitz. Ginger did not leave off till he was tired. By that time, Fritz was more than tired!

For quite a long time Fatty Fritz forgot even his desire for beef and biscuit after that liberal helping of "beans."

* * *

"Help—help!"

The cry, in French, came over the rolling waters of the Atlantic. Jim and Ginger saw a man swimming in the last stages of exhaustion; they saw, too, a shark, cutting through the water towards its prey!

"To the rescue!" cried Jim.

Momentous results hang upon the rescue of that Frenchman—Jim and Ginger find themselves face to face with terrible peril! Make sure you read next week's thrilling story featuring the Grimslade castaways!

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