

36. Day  
MEET—"THAT TOUGH GUY HOBBS!"—INSIDE!

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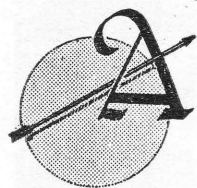




# THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS

By FRANK RICHARDS.

## Winged Death!



N arrow whizzed from the little hut under the cliff, flashing swiftly through the air in the glimmering moonlight. There was a yell from Fritz Splitz that woke most of the echoes of Castaway Island. The hat on the fat German's head spun round, with the arrow sticking in the brim, and Fritz Splitz sat down on the sand with a bump, yelling wildly.

"Ach! I vas vun tead Cherman! Mein gootness, I vas killed mit meinselb pefore! Safe me, Tainty! Safe me, Chinger! Mein head it is knock off mein poddy mit itself after!"

Dr. Samuel Sparshott stared round angrily. Jim Dainty & Co. for a moment were anxious; but one glance was enough. Fritz's hat had fallen two or three yards from Fritz, with the arrow sticking in it. Fritz's belief that he had been killed was evidently an error.

"Silence!" barked Sammy Sparshott. "Get into cover! And be quiet!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Fritz. "I vas shot mit an arrow! I vas killed tead! I vas derribly vounded—"

"Get him into cover!" barked Sammy.

Fritz, as he sat and roared, was a mark for another shot. Jim Dainty and Ginger Rawlinson jumped at him, grabbed him, and dragged him behind the rocks. They rolled him over without ceremony. There was no time for ceremony, with the convict Lautrec fitting another arrow to his bow in the hut he had captured from the Grimslade castaways. But Fritz yelled and howled in frantic protest as he was rolled.

It was a strange night scene on Castaway Island. Dr. Sparshott and the juniors were in cover of the rocks at a little distance from the hut that backed under the tall cliff. Lautrec, the leader of the gang of convicts who had escaped from Devil's Island, was in the hut, with one of his comrades who was wounded in the leg, and whose groaning and savage snarling could be heard from time to time. The third convict, a bull-necked ruffian, lay bound hand and foot a prisoner with the Grimsladers, his fierce eyes gleaming at them with rage and hate.

The hour was late; but no one on that lonely island in the West-Indian seas was thinking of sleep—not even Fritz Splitz. For the last hour Fritz had been plodding homeward from the jungle, weary and worn. He was still at a distance when Lautrec let fly the arrow from the hut, and to that, and the uncertain light, Fritz owed his escape. Now he was safe behind the barrier of rocks that screened the Grimslade castaways from Lautrec's shooting. But he did not seem sure yet that he had not been killed.

"Ach! I vas treadfully vounded!" gasped Fritz. "Tat arrow pang on mein napper mit

a derribel pang. I vas prained mit tat arrow. I tink tat I tie! Is tere much plood, Tainty?" "Oh, gallons!" answered Jim. "A whole hogshhead of it."

"Mein gootness!" Fritz sat up, and clapped two fat hands to a fat head. "Mein fingers vas not vet. Vere vas tat plood?"

"In the hogshhead," explained Jim. "Your napper, old fat bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Grimsladers.

Fritz blinked at Jim Dainty with his saucer eyes. A hogshhead, he knew, was some sort of a barrel. It took him some time to realise that his own napper might also be so described.

"Peast and a prute!" snorted Fritz. "You choke mit me, ven tat I vas derribly vounded pefore. Mein prains vas all knock out mit tat arrow. Vere vas mein hat, peast and a prutal pounder?"

## THE ESCAPED CONVICT WHO WAS BOWLED OUT—BY A BOULDER!

"Over yonder, with the arrow in it," grinned Streaky Bacon. "You haven't been hit, you fat chump!"

Failing to discover any trace of a wound on his "hogshhead," Fritz realised at last that he was not hurt. He rose to his feet to fetch his hat, and a back-hander from Sammy Sparshott laid him promptly on the sand.

"Keep in cover, you young ass!" snapped Sammy.

Another arrow whizzed over the rocks. Had Fritz risen to his feet, as he had started to do, his head, instead of his hat, might have stopped an arrow this time. The missile dropped on the sand and stuck there, quivering. Fritz blinked at it, and his fat face grew colourless.

"Ach Himmel!" he gasped. "Ve vas not safe here. I tink tat I grawl away mit meinselb after."

And Fritz promptly crawled. He had come back to camp hungry—fearfully and frightfully hungry. But he forgot now even that he was hungry.

"Keep low!" barked Sammy.

But Fritz did not need telling that, now that he realised the danger. Taking great care to keep low the fat Rhinclander crawled down the sand in the darkness, only thinking of placing a safe distance between his fat person and the desperate man in the hut. He disappeared, grunting, in the shadows.

Dr. Sparshott knitted his brows grimly. Since he had rejoined the schoolboy castaways he had been in cover with them, watching the hut. Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson, Ginger and Bacon and Bean, expected Sammy to handle the situation in his usual masterly manner, now that he was on the spot. So far, however, Sammy seemed as much at a loss as the boys had been in dealing with the desperado in the hut.

The strong building was impervious to pistol-shots. Lautrec was safe from the revolvers so long as he kept within. He was skilled in the use of the bow and arrows he had made in the jungle, and to rush the hut, in the face of his fire, was to ask for death. Death had no terrors for the headmaster of Grimslade; but he was not there to throw his life away.

Sammy was thinking hard. And while his wounded comrade groaned and snarled Lautrec was watching, like a wild beast in a corner, his deadly bow ready to twang from the spyhole in the door, and chinks in the walls. The slanting roof of the hut was a wreck, open to the stars. It had not been repaired since the convicts had set it on fire.

Now that the moon was well up Sammy could scan every detail, peering cautiously round the rocks. He could see the rope of plaited lianas hanging on the face of the cliff, by which the Devil's Island gang had descended and taken possession of the castaways' headquarters. But a similar proceeding on Sammy's part was impossible, with Lautrec watching below, though he thought of it. He thought of it, only to shake his head.

"We've got to get him, sir," said Ginger Rawlinson, breaking the silence. "Everything we've got is there, and that villain's in possession."

"We shall get him, Rawlinson," said Dr. Sparshott quietly. "For the moment, at all events, he cannot escape."

But Sammy knew that it was not escape that the black-haired desperado was thinking of. He had entered upon a struggle for the mastery of the island, and the possession of the castaways' supplies and stores, and he had gained an advantage in getting hold of the hut. Lautrec was not thinking of escape, but of a desperate hope of victory. If so much as an ear showed over the rocks in the clear moonlight it would be marked by an arrow. How that struggle was going to end the juniors could not tell; but their faith in Sammy was great. Sammy, somehow, was going to pull it through.

Whiz! Crash!

Dr. Sparshott gave a violent start as an arrow dropped from the air, missing him by a foot or so, and burying its sharp barb deep in the sand.

"What—" panted Sammy.

It seemed as if the missile had fallen from the sky. He stared up; then he realised the truth. He had to deal with a man as cunning as a fox. Lautrec had marked the spot where the castaways clustered behind the rocks. He was shooting arrows into the air through the gaping roof of the hut, aimed to fall from above behind their defences. And that narrow miss showed how closely he had calculated.

Sammy gritted his teeth. Retreat was a hateful word to him. But this meant retreat—the convict's new move drove the castaways from their position.

"My giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger. "This is getting hot!"

"Retreat!" barked Sammy. "Don't stand;

crawl away on your hands and knees down the beach! Quick!"

There was no moment to lose. They heard the twang of the bow again from the hut; another arrow was whistling up, to fall almost with the force of a bullet on their heads. The juniors promptly crawled away down the beach—the way Fatty Fritz had gone.

Sammy was about to follow, but he remembered the prisoner. The captured convict, lying bound close at hand, was in as much danger as the Grimsladers. If Lautrec knew it he did not care in his savage ferocity. He was thinking only of carrying death to his enemies.

At the risk of his life Sammy Sparshott paused, to drag the bull-necked ruffian to safety after him. Even as he paused an arrow came crashing in its downward flight. A fearful cry rang out in the night—it was the cry of a man mortally stricken. Jim Dainty whirled back.

"Sammy!" he panted.  
"I am safe—keep on!" barked the headmaster's voice.

"But who—"  
Sammy did not answer. One glance he gave at the bull-necked convict—past all help now, lying transfixed by his comrade's arrow. Then he followed the juniors. And they, realising what had happened, crept on down the beach with white faces. From the hut came a yell of triumph. Lautrec had heard that terrible death cry ringing from the night.

"La mort! La mort!" yelled the black-haired convict.

"Fool and villain!" rang back Sammy's voice. "You have killed your comrade."

A howl of imprecations answered from the hut. Another and another arrow dropped. But they dropped behind the Grimslade cast-aways at a safe distance from the beach. There, with grim faces and sleepless eyes, they waited for morning.

**Sammy Knows How!**

**D**AWN came up on the Atlantic. The darkness rolled away like a curtain drawn.

Hardly an eye had closed during the night. Only Fritz Splitz, curled up in the crazy old boat in which the convicts had reached the island, slept and snored. He was still snoring when the dawn called the cast-aways to activity, and he was left to snore.

Jim Dainty went off to the palm grove with Friday, the monkey, scuttling at his heels, to gather coconuts for breakfast. Friday climbed the palms and tossed down the nuts into a bag which Jim held. Coconuts and bananas and cold water made the breakfast; all other supplies were in the hut, where Lautrec and his wounded companion were making a much more substantial meal.

After the meal was over Dr. Sparshott strode up the beach and halted at a distance from the hut, his eyes keenly on it. From the spyhole in the door an arrow whizzed, showing that Lautrec was on the watch. But Sammy had not gone near enough for danger—the missile dropped short. He did not even seem to see it, but stood regarding the hut with a fixed, thoughtful frown on his brow.

The juniors watched him anxiously. Sammy, they felt, would deal with the strange situation, but they could not guess how.

He came back to them at last, with a faint smile on his face. They could see that he had decided.

"We're getting after those brutes, sir?" asked Ginger Rawlinson.

"Quite!" assented Dr. Sparshott. "We are rather in luck, my boys. Hunting those rascals in the woods was a long and dangerous task, and they have trapped themselves for our benefit. They must not get away again."

The juniors were silent. They knew that the hut, with a desperate marksman inside, was almost impregnable as a fortress, and there were ample provisions to last two men for weeks, if not months. Even water was not likely to run short, as several casks were kept there in case of emergencies—a wise pre-

caution, though now it was serving the enemy's turn. Sammy, however, seemed to think that he had the matter in hand.

"I shall have to trust you boys to keep guard here, while I leave you," went on the headmaster of Grimslade. "Keep in cover, and watch the hut. When those rascals come out—"

"Will they come out, sir?" asked Jim Dainty blankly.

"Yes, Dainty! If they come out unarmed, and with their hands up, take them prisoners. If they come armed, shoot them down. Fire at their legs. I shall leave all three of the revolvers here. Mind, they are not to get away."

"Trust us, sir," said Streaky Bacon, taking the six-shooter Sammy handed to him. "But will they come out?"

"I have said so. Bacon! Now keep watch and ward!"

Dr. Sparshott swung away. He was a man of few words, and he expected his orders to be obeyed without question. He could rely on the Grimslade fellows for that. But they could not help doubting whether Sammy, for once, had made a mistake. It seemed to them incredible that the convicts would leave the shelter of the hut, at all events in the daylight. They could be shot down like so many partridges as they came. How was Sammy going to make them do it?

"Trust Sammy!" said Sandy Bean. "Sammy knows."

They watched the tall figure of their headmaster out of sight. He disappeared through the palm grove, and they had a glimpse of him again, fording the stream. He vanished from their sight on the other side, but they guessed whither he was bound now.

He was heading for the inland side of the great cliff on which the hut backed. The rope by which Lautrec and his followers had descended still hung from the top of the

come? If they did Sammy's orders would be obeyed to the very letter.

They waited and watched, with anxiously beating hearts, while Fritz Splitz, still curled up in the boat, snored on and dreamed of the fat sausages of his native land, and Friday the monkey sat in the sand and solemnly scratched himself.

"My giddy goloshes! There's Sammy!" breathed Ginger Rawlinson. He made a gesture towards the tall summit of the cliff over the hut.

High on the cliff, against the sky rosy with sunrise, appeared the athletic figure of the headmaster of Grimslade. He was visible to the juniors on the beach as they looked, but he was well back from the edge, invisible to the convicts if they looked up through the gaping openings in the roof of the hut.

Watching him anxiously, they saw him drop on hands and knees, and crawl to the giddy edge. He was at the spot where the long rope was fastened; and in spite of their faith in Sammy's sagacity, the juniors' hearts beat painfully. If he swung down—

They saw that Sammy had grasped the rope on the cliff. But he did not swing down. He shook it, apparently to draw the attention of the convicts below. The lower end of the rope snaked through a gap in the burnt roof.

The yelling voice of the black-haired convict rang loudly.

"Vous voila, monsieur le maitre d'ecole! Venez si vous voulez!"

"That," said Ginger, "means 'there you are, Mister Schoolmaster! Come if you like!'"

"Go hon!" remarked Jim Dainty. "Shut up—Sammy's calling!"

Loud and clear Sammy's voice rang from the cliff top, audible to the juniors on the beach as well as to the French convicts in the hut.

"Lautrec! Listen to me! You and your companion will go out of the hut at once, unarmed, with hands up, and surrender! Go armed and you will be shot down like rabbits; remain, and you will be crushed to death! I give you five minutes before I hurl the rock!"

Sammy Sparshott disappeared from the cliff edge. A yell of rage answered from Lautrec. It was followed by a howl, more of terror than of rage, from his companion. The juniors could hear their voices from the hut, raised in savage and angry dispute.

"Watch out!" breathed Ginger. "They'll

*From the edge of the cliff Sammy's mortar-board appeared in sight. There was a twang of a bow, and an arrow tore through the mortar-board, transfixing it. "Thanks," said Dr. Sparshott calmly—but he knew now that Lautrec, the convict, was still alive.*





be coming! That's Sammy's game! Isn't he a nut? Isn't he a peach? I never thought of that dodge!"

"Sammy did!" grinned Sandy Bean. Breathlessly the five juniors watched. The minutes crawled by. The door of the hut remained closed. Faint sounds came on the still air, floating from the summit of the cliff. Those sounds were made by Dr. Sparshott rolling a rock up to the summit from the sloping inland side. Five minutes had elapsed when the schoolboys saw him again. Between him and the edge of the precipice was a great boulder, ready to be pushed over. They heard his clear voice ring out.

"Are you going?"  
"Non!" came Lautrec's scream of rage. There was a grinding sound of a rolling rock, a spattering of dust and stones, and the rock came whirling down from the cliff. The watching juniors felt their hearts throb. Down it came, crashing on the dismantled roof of the hut. One of the stout joists was in its way, snapping like a dry stick under the impact. Taking with it a broken joist and a mass of charred thatch, the rock crashed down into the hut with a deafening concussion. "My giddy goloshes!" breathed Ginger, his face white.

If that rock had fallen on either of the convicts, he was crushed instantly to death. Sammy was the man for grim measures. He had given the villains their chance, and they had not taken it. But no doubt Sammy hoped that the convicts had dodged the falling rock, and that the warning would be enough.

The juniors hoped so from the bottom of their hearts, and they were thankful to learn a few moments later that it was so. Two voices rang from the hut—one yelling with fury, the other shrieking with fear.

Jim Dainty wiped the perspiration from his brow. From the boat came a startled squeal. That terrific crash had awakened even Friedrich von Splitz.

"Ach! Vat was tat?" squealed Fritz. "Is tat tunder? I tink tat I hears sometings tat vake me oop mit meinselt after!"

Nobody answered Fritz Splitz. The juniors watched the hut, revolvers at the level. They heard the sound of bars torn away from the door.

The door flew open, and a wild-looking, bearded, tattered figure leaped out—a man who limped and stumbled with a bandaged leg. He howled as he came, his hands, empty, in the air. Wildly, gabbling with terror, the convict ran and stumbled down the path towards the beach. But the door slammed after him the next moment. Although deserted by his last companion, Lautrec was still defiant!

#### At Last!

"SURRENDER!" shouted Jim Dainty. There was no other thought in the mind of the terrified, limping convict. Three revolvers were covering him, and his hands were empty. He ran and stumbled towards the Grimslade juniors.

An arrow whizzed from the hut. It clattered, spent, among the boulders. Ginger Rawlinson grasped the limping man as he came within reach and dragged him down behind the rocks. Jim Dainty's revolver was jammed to his head while Sandy and Streaky bound him hand and foot. A helpless prisoner, he lay in the sand, still gasping with terror. One of the last two convicts was secured now.

"Good old Sammy!" chuckled Ginger. "That's the stuff to give the troops! Sammy knows how to handle 'em!"

"Mein gootness! Vat vas all tis?" Fritz Splitz came crawling out of the boat. "Have you sometings to eat? I vas derribly hungry! I vas so derribly hungry as neffer vas before." "Shut up, you Boche bloater!" grunted Ginger.

"Peast and a prute!" Fritz blinked at the prisoner. "Have tuse peastly convicts gone out of te hut? Ten I vill go and get some prekker—"

"Oh, do!" grinned Streaky. "Lautrec's still there, and he will get you with one of his jolly old arrows. That will be no loss to anybody."

"Ach himmel!" Fritz dropped promptly behind a rock. "Have you some pananas, or

gokernuts? I vas so hungry tat I have vun colossal bain in mein pread-pasket."

"Here you are, fatty!" said Ginger, tossing a coconut to the fat Rhinelander. "Catch!" "Yaroooooh!" roared Fritz, as he caught the coconut with his little fat pimple of a nose. "Peastly prute and pounder! Vill you knock me off to nose, you peast, Chinger?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Mein gootness! I vish tat I vas pack in Chermany—"  
"Shut up! Sammy's talking!" snapped Jim Dainty.

Fritz Splitz grunted, rubbed his damaged nose, and started on the coconut. From the cliff top Sammy had watched the surrender of the wounded convict. Now his voice rang out a warning to the desperate man who remained in the hut below.

"Five minutes more, Lautrec!"  
A howl of fury answered him. Dr. Sparshott disappeared from the juniors' sight; but they soon heard the sound of another great rock rolling up the inland slope of the cliff in the headmaster's powerful hands. Strong as he was, Sammy was panting when he got it at last to the edge and paused there to mop his streaming brow. Jim Dainty compressed his lips.

"Look out!" he breathed.  
"What-ho!" murmured Ginger.

There was a brief pause. Sammy was giving the man his chance. But the black-haired desperado, watching like a cat through the gaping roof of the hut, ready for a desperate dodge, gave no sign. A long minute passed, and then a heave from Sammy's sinewy hands sent the big rock over the edge, and it crashed down through the roof of the hut. Broken timbers and torn thatch crashed in with it. Dust from the charred thatch rose in a cloud.

"Gurrrrggh!" gurgled Fritz Splitz, swallowing too much coconut, as he jumped at the crash.

"Quiet, fathead!" hissed Jim. The juniors listened with painful intentness. There was no sound from the hut. Had the falling rock struck the black-haired man? If so, there would never be a sound from him again. And there was no sound. Savage brute as he was, a cornered wild beast, the juniors felt a thrill of horror. They would have been glad to hear a sound to tell that the wretch still lived. But no sound came to their ears.

"My giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger, wiping the sweat from his brow. "Is he—is he—"

"Have you anodder gokernut?"  
"Wha-a-at?" gasped Ginger.  
"Anodder gokernut! I vas derribly hungry!"

Ginger did not answer Fritz. He reached out and punched hard. There was a roar from Fatty Fritz.

"Mein gootness! Vy for you pang me in te pread-pasket? Ach himmel! Now I have no more to breff! Urrrrrggh!"

"Shut up, you blithering bloater!" hissed Jim.

From the hut came no sound. Was the black-haired convict lying there, crushed to death under the falling rock? Or was he playing possum, silent, watching for a chance to catch Sammy with a whizzing arrow? The juniors could not tell.

From the edge of the cliff Sammy's mortar-board appeared in sight. The juniors could see that Sammy was holding it on the end of a stick. But the man in the hut, if he was watching, could see only the mortar-board. Was he alive and watching? They soon knew. There was a twang of the bow, and an arrow tore through the mortar-board, transfixing it.

"Thanks!" said Dr. Sparshott. He pulled back the mortar-board and replaced it on his head, after jerking out the arrow and tossing it down. Evidently, Lautrec had not been struck by the rock. But he had found in Sammy Sparshott an adversary as wary as himself.

Ginger Rawlinson gave a chuckle. "He won't catch Sammy in a fearful hurry," he remarked.

"No fear!" grinned Streaky. The convict was heard again now. His trick had failed, and his voice was heard howling savage imprecations in his own language. Mingled with his furious yells came

the sound of another rock rolled up the inland side of the cliff in Sammy's hands.

The juniors watched it as it tumbled over the edge and whizzed downward; they watched it crash through the gaping roof, carrying smashed fragments down with it; they heard its fearful impact on the earth. Crash on crash followed, of falling beams loosened and broken by the rock. More than half the roof of the hut was tumbling and crashing in.

This time the crash was not followed by the convict's silence. Loud howls and yells rang from the hut in mingled pain and fury. The rock had not struck the convict, or he would have been killed instantly. But it was clear that some of the falling debris had struck him.

"Watch out!" breathed Ginger. But the door did not open. Lautrec's voice could still be heard howling like a tiger's, and there was also a sound of scuffling and struggling within the hut. He was not coming out—perhaps he could not!

Jim Dainty & Co. looked up anxiously towards the cliff top. Dr. Sparshott stood there, his head bent, listening to the howling voice below. Perhaps he was suspicious of another trick. But he seemed convinced at last, and the juniors saw him lean his head over the edge and look below.

What he saw from above was hidden from the schoolboys; but, whatever it was, it was enough for Sammy. They saw him grasp the hanging rope and swing himself down.

"That does it!" gasped Ginger. He leaped up and ran towards the hut. Dr. Sparshott's action could only mean that the black-haired convict was powerless. But, in any case, the Grimsladers were not going to hang back when Sammy went forward. The red-headed junior raced for the hut, Jim Dainty at his heels, the other fellows following fast—with the exception of Fritz Splitz. Fritz had found a bunch of bananas, and they occupied his whole attention.

Swinging down the rope as actively as Friday could have done, Dr. Sparshott dropped through the gaping roof. He was there before the boys, and they heard him trampling in the wreckage. The door was flung open as they reached the hut. Dr. Sparshott gave them a faint smile.

"Bear a hand here," he said. Then they saw Lautrec. He was struggling to release himself from a heap of debris. Broken beams and slats and charred thatch pinned him to the floor. A great mass of the falling roof had overwhelmed him, and little more than his savage, swarthy face could be seen, ablaze with fury. His bow lay smashed under a beam.

In a few minutes, perhaps, he might have struggled free; bruised and battered and breathless as he was, he did not seem to have been seriously injured. But he was not given even one minute.

Dr. Sparshott's strong grasp closed on him. The juniors lent their aid. The convict's hands were dragged out and promptly bound together with a cord that was knotted and knotted again. Then the rest of the wreckage was dragged off the panting ruffian, and he was allowed to crawl out of the hut. Ginger took a turn of the cord round his ankles, and Lautrec lay in the sand, a prisoner at last, panting for breath and spitting like a cat with fury.

"Grimslade wins!" roared Ginger Rawlinson. "Hurrah!"

"Quite!" assented Dr. Sparshott. Sammy glanced rather whimsically round the hut.

"That roof," said Sammy, "will need some repairing. I hope you fellows are ready for a hard day's work!"

*The convicts have been captured—but what will the Grimslade castaways do with their desperate prisoners? Even Dr. Sparshott isn't quite decided—until something dramatically unexpected happens which completely solves the problem. For, unknown to Jim Dainty & Co., rescue from Castaway Island is near at hand! Make sure you read next week's extra-thrilling story, in which the castaways will be leaving their cruise home for good!*