

INSIDE! A SCHOOL STORY BY FRANK RICHARDS!

**THE SILVER JACKET**  
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*Starting Inside!*

THE STORY OF  
SUBMARINE

**UNBROKEN**

BY  
ALASTAIR  
D.S.O., D.S.C.

*also* PREVIEW OF THE  
1954 REDEX TRIAL

THIS MONTH! HOW TO BIND YOUR "SILVER JACKETS".

# The Sportsman!



A SCHOOL STORY  
By  
**FRANK RICHARDS**

"We're going all the same!" said Dudley Vane-Carter.

"We can't!"

"We can—and we are!"

"Oh, shut up!" exclaimed Harry Compton, Bob Drake, and Dick Lee, all together. They were already exasperated: and V.C.'s cool assertion that they were going to do what they knew they couldn't do, was the last straw.

Feeling was high, in the Fourth Form at Carcroft.

It was Wednesday, a half-holiday, and the date of the Lexham match. And the whole form was 'gated.'

That did not matter very much, so far as more than half the form were concerned. Nobody cared a boiled bean if Turkey Tuck, and Levett and Leath, and other such useless persons, were gated. But it mattered frightfully in the case of eleven fellows booked to play Soccer at Lexham School that afternoon.

On Tuesday there had been an early fall of snow. That was the cause of the trouble. The Fourth had come out of class to find the quad white and thick with it, and had naturally fallen to snowballing. Who had hurled the snowball that crashed in at the study window of Roger Ducas, master of the Fourth, nobody knew exactly—though many suspected Vane-Carter. Mr. Ducas did not know: and in stern wrath he had awarded a gating for the next half-holiday to the whole crowd of snowballers. Charitably disposed fellows believed that Roger, in the haste of the moment, might have forgotten that next half-holiday was the date of the Lexham game.

No doubt he remembered it afterwards. But what he had said, he had said! Roger's decrees were like unto the laws of the Medes and Persians—fixed, immutable; and that was that.

The next day, Wednesday, that unlucky snow had vanished. It was cold, but it was fine and clear—just the day, in fact, for football. Right up to dinner-time Harry Compton and Co. nourished a faint, faint hope that Roger might relent. After dinner Compton, as captain of the Form, ventured to his Beak's study to plead the cause of Soccer. A grim stare and a grimmer "No!" were his only reward. So he came back glumly to the Burrow, where the footballing fellows were anxiously gathered, with the news that there was nothing for it but to 'phone Lexham that the match was off.

It was then that Vane-Carter, the most reckless fellow at Carcroft or anywhere else, weighed in with his assertion that they were going all the same—Roger or no Roger. Which, of course, was impossible. V.C. was the man for mutiny, but other fellows were not quite so wildly reckless. So the Co. promptly told him to shut up. But V.C. did not shut up.

"We're going," he said, doggedly. "A Beak can't muck up football matches. We just walk off—!"

"And the porter will stop us at the gate, to begin with!" growled Bob.

"Old Cuttle can't stop us getting over the wall behind the oaks. We can get to Lexham all right—"

"And Roger, as soon as he misses

us, comes after us!" hooted Lee. "Nice to have the game stopped—even if we had time to begin it."

"Nothin' doin'!" said Lord Talboys, with a sigh. "We can't beat Roger."

"Roger won't either miss us or come after us!" said Vane-Carter coolly.

"And why won't he?" demanded Harry Compton.

"Because I heard him telling Groom that his old friend Spicer had rung him up, and that he was going to see him this afternoon."

"Who's Spicer?" asked Harry dubiously.

"Haven't the foggiest. Some old college pal of Roger's, I expect. Whoever he is, Roger's going to see him this afternoon, so he won't be hanging about here. We wait till he starts, and then hook it."

The footballers exchanged glances. They were keen, fearfully keen, to get over to Lexham and play Soccer. They were ready to take risks, if it came to that. But—! The awful possibility of Roger in pursuit—of the game being interrupted—of dismayed players ordered back to school under the staring eyes of the Lexham men. It was impossible. Heads were shaken on all sides.

"Even if Roger goes out—" said Harry.

"I tell you I heard him say to Groom—"

"Even if he does, ten to one he will tip a pre. to keep an eye on us."

"We chance that!" snapped Vane-Carter.

"And afterwards——!" said Drummond.

"Afterwards, we get six all round for cutting gates. Who cares?"

"Well, some of us care," said Lord Talboys, "Roger can whop!" The Lizard spoke with reminiscent wriggle.

"We can't do it," said Harry Compton. He was tempted. He was no reckless hunter of trouble like V.C., but he did want to play football, and he did not want to scratch the Lexham game—very much indeed he did not. But a game interrupted and stopped by an angry Beak was worse than a scratched game. It was just too awful.

V.C. looked very unpleasant.

"We're goin'!" he said. "Any fellow who funks a whopping can stay behind——"

"It's not that!" snapped Compton, "but we can't do it. It would be a frost. Roger's no fool. He would get wind of it. Is he the man to let us get away with a stunt like that? Precious set of asses we should look at Lexham, with a Beak walking on the field and ordering us back to Carcroft."

"If he did, we'd charge him off, and chance it."

"Oh, shut up!" roared Bob Drake.

"If I were skipper——!" snarled Vane-Carter.

"You're not!" Compton pointed out. "We can't do a thing. There's nothing for it but to 'phone Lexham and wash it out!"

BUT was there not?

Turkey Tuck, squinting from the Burrow window, gave a sudden excited squeak.

"Roger's going out!"

There was a rush to the window. A taxi, empty, had driven in at the gates, and stopped at the House. Forth from the House stepped a portly figure in hat and overcoat—that of Roger Ducas, master of the Fourth Form. Twenty pairs of eyes watched him, as he stepped into the taxi. It drove away.

"Going!" murmured Bob Drake.

"Going!" breathed Lee.

"Gone!" said Vane-Carter.

Taxi and Beak disappeared out of gates.

"By gad," said Lord Talboys, "V.C. was right—Roger's gone out for the afternoon. While the cat's away——"

"He won't be coming back in a hurry!" said Bob, slowly. "Roger wouldn't chuck money away on a taxi unless he was going somewhere a good distance. The station, for a train, most likely."

"Safe for the afternoon!" said Lee.

There was a change of feeling in the Burrow, veering round to V.C.'s

view. The departure of Roger, the knowledge that those eagle eyes would be at a safe distance, lifted a weight from every mind. It made the thing feasible.

All eyes turned on Harry Compton. It was for him, as skipper, to decide. His brows wrinkled in troubled reflection: Roger was safe off the scene. Even if a pre. had been tipped to keep an eye on the gated form, pre.'s could be eluded. Certainly, going out the gates was impracticable: but there was a quiet spot by the school wall, behind the old Carcroft oaks——! There would be a fearful row afterwards, but nobody really cared about a whopping, in comparison with playing Lexham School. The captain of the Fourth was sorely tempted. The most dismaying possibility—the risk of the match being interrupted and stopped by an angry Beak, and the players ordered home—seemed to be eliminated now—now that Roger

**NEXT MONTH**  
**"THE LOST STUDY"**  
another school story  
by  
**FRANK RICHARDS**

obviously had gone off for the afternoon. Compton thought it out.

Vane-Carter opened his lips—but, with unusual self-restraint, closed them again. He could see that Compton was wavering. The captain of the Fourth, at last, with a deep breath, said:

"Let's!"

And it was so.

BUT the truant juniors were very cautious. They could not, indeed, be too cautious, for such an unheard-of disregard and defiance of authority might almost have caused the Carcroft skies to fall. Roger was far and safe: but there were prefects about: and any pre. who had spotted the planned evasion, would certainly have weighed in with promptness and despatch. Indeed, Packe of the Sixth came along and glanced into the Burrow, while the fellows there were still discussing details in whispers—giving a just impression that Roger had left word with Packe. Caution was the order of the day—and for caution, on this occasion, even the wary Chingachgook had nothing on the Carcroft Fourth.

The eleven, and two or three others, were going. All the rest of the Fourth were directed to keep themselves right in the public eye: palpable evidence that a good many, at least, of the gated Form

were within gates. Necessary impedimenta, packed as small as possible, dropped quietly over a secluded wall, a little at a time, from various hands. One by one, fellows who made it a point to be visible to all eyes at Carcroft up to the last moment, quietly disappeared. At the very last moment, Bob Drake went to Packe's study to ask an innocent question about the hare and hounds run on Saturday. He was the last man to drop over the wall behind the oaks.

Fourteen fellows gathered in a cove hard by the school. Vane-Carter was cool as ice: enjoying the escapade chiefly because it was a score over Roger. Everybody else was a little excited and breathless. But all were determined. They were going to play Soccer at Lexham—and face the music afterwards. That did not matter—nothing mattered except getting through the football match uninterrupted—and that was a safe bet now.

They did not head for the train: railway stations were a little too conspicuous for a crowd of fellows out of gates in defiance of authority. They threaded a woodland path, through frosty trees, as far as the Lexham road, where they were able to pick up the Ridgate motor bus. The motor bus, which passed Lexham School, dropped them at the gates, and as they went in, Lord Talboys cast a last lingering look behind.

"Lookin' for Roger?" asked Vane-Carter, sarcastically. "Think Roger's comin' on the next bus?"

"No." The Lizard shook his head. "But—tain't easy to beat Roger."

"Rot!" said V.C. "We've beaten him."

And it really looked like it, when the whistle went and Carcroft and Lexham footballers closed in strife.

"MY dear Roger——!" said Mr. Spicer.

Mr. Spicer was a little surprised. He was a new master at Lexham School: and he had lost no time, after his arrival, in ringing up his old college friend, Roger Ducas, at Carcroft, and asking him to come over for a chin about old times. They were sitting and chatting in Spicer's study, Roger comfortably ensconced in an armchair by the window. But suddenly, Mr. Ducas seemed deaf to reminiscences of Oxford days. From the window of Spicer's study, there was an extensive view of Lexham playing-fields. Roger's eyes, glancing from the window, had become fixed on a junior football match that was going on.

Instead of answering Spicer, or even hearing what he said, Roger

Ducas rose to his feet, and stood gazing fixedly at that Soccer game. Perhaps, for a moment or two, he could not quite believe the evidence of his eagle eyes. But the distance was not great—those eagle eyes were quite and reliable—and there was no doubt about it. Easily, in spite of mud-splashes, he recognised Compton, Drake, Lee, Talboys, Vane-Carter, Drummond, Scott and the rest. With a gaze that gradually grew like that of the fabled Medusa, Roger watched them. Spicer, puzzled, joined him at the window.

"Oh!" he said, "the junior football match. Your boys, I think, Roger."

"Yes!" said Roger, "my boys!"

"They play a good game?" remarked Mr. Spicer, critically.

"Yes," said Roger, with a deep breath. "Quite a good game."

He moved back from the window, and made a step towards the door—then another step. Then he paused. Then he turned back to the window, and stood watching the footballers again.

"YE gods!" breathed Lord Talboys. The Lizard was quite pale.

It was half-time. The whistle went with the score one to one. Carcroft played good Soccer, but so did Lexham: and it was anybody's game so far.

"We've got to beat them," said Bob Drake. "We're not going to collect a whopping at Carcroft for collecting a licking at Lexham. Pull up your socks for the second half, my beloved 'earers."

"Ye gods!" repeated the Lizard faintly.

"What's the trouble?" jeered Vane-Carter. "That tired feeling?"

"Roger!" said Lord Talboys.

"WHAT!"

"Roger!"

The Carcroft fellows jumped, almost clear of the ground. In the stress of the game they had almost forgotten Roger—forgotten that they were out of gates in defiance of him. You can't play Soccer with second thoughts in your head: and Roger had been relegated to the back of their minds. But now they were reminded of him—with a jolt!

"Roger!" said Harry Compton. He stared round. "Where?"

"Rot!" almost hissed Vane-Carter. "Tryin' to pull our leg, you fathead? Where's Roger, you chump?"

"Standin' at that window, watchin' us," answered Lord Talboys, with a nod in the direction of Mr. Spicer's study window.

"Oh!" gasped Harry.

Every eye turned in one direction—the direction of a well-known

grim face that watched from a window. The rising ghost of Banquo did not startle Macbeth more—the dread figure that drew Priam's curtains at dead of night did not startle the Trojan monarch more—than that grim face at the window startled the truant juniors of Carcroft.

They had not known where Roger was going that afternoon. They had never, of course, dreamed that he was going to Lexham. And there he was—his eyes fixed on them! They gazed—transfixed. Even Vane-Carter was appalled.

"That tears it!" breathed Bob. "That tears it into little pieces. Soccer's off—"

"And we shall be off in a minute or two—with Roger behind us!" muttered Lee.

### Thanks for the tip, Melvyn.

Dear Editor,

I am a keen reader of your wonderful magazine. Nearly all the boys 'round our way think that it would be a good idea (don't think that we think you can't run *The Silver Jacket*—there is plenty of proof you can) to put on the cover THE magazine for boys instead of A magazine for boys.

Keep UP your magazine and I'm sure the boys won't let it DOWN.

MELVYN MORROW.

"Ainscourt," 38 Harrow Road,  
Bexley, N.S.W.

No sooner suggested than done. Have a look at this month's cover.—Editor, S.J.

"I jolly well knew that we couldn't beat Roger!" groaned the Lizard.

They knew what to expect now, of course—Roger striding forth in his wrath, like a lion from his lair; the game stopped, the truants ordered home, crawling dismally off under staring, astonished or amused eyes—horror on horror's head, as it were. It was appalling—overwhelming—devastating—but—

But it did not happen.

Roger stood at that window, gazing. Was it possible that he did not recognise them? Most of them, after all, were rather muddied. Was it possible—? Vane-Carter voiced the last hope.

"He don't know us—he hasn't spotted us—"

"Line up!" said Harry.

Was there a chance—a miracu-

lous chance? It seemed like it, for when the whistle went, and the opposing ranks closed once more in strife, no terrifying figure emerged—no commanding voice crashed on dismayed ears. Fellows stealing a hurried glance at that study window saw that Roger had disappeared from it, but he did not appear on the football ground. All, it seemed, was well, after all—Roger did not know—could not know. For a while, the Carcroft game was a little wild, Roger displacing Soccer in all minds, and Lexham pushed through and scored. Then the Carcroft men, confident once more, pulled themselves together, and went on to win. Vane-Carter equalised with a shot from the wing, and it was two all. In the last fifteen minutes nobody had time to think about Roger—it was hard and fast to the finish, when Harry Compton beat the Lexham keeper with a shot he hardly saw, and Carcroft came off winners by three to two.

"A GOOD game!" said Roger. His manner seemed quite genial, as he looked in at the doorway of the Lexham changing-room. His voice seemed quite genial. But it petrified Harry Compton and Co. They gazed at him there, as if turned to stone. Lord Talboys paused with a hair-brush in his hand. Bob Drake, half in his trousers, sat with one leg trousered, the other still untrousered sticking in the air. Nobody moved.

But Roger was genial.

"A good game," he repeated, "and a good win! Gratters, my boys! Quite an unexpected pleasure for me. I shall have something further to say on the subject. But a very good game indeed."

Roger walked on.

Harry Compton found his voice. "He knew!" he said.

Bob shoved his second leg into his trousers.

"He knew all the time," he said. "He jolly well knew—but he let us play it out and beat Lexham. Bother him—blow him—but he's a sportsman."

LATER, at Carcroft, Roger did have something further to say, and he said it with emphasis, and followed it up with the most extensive execution that had ever taken place in the Carcroft Fourth. Roger packed plenty of muscle, and he had had a good deal of practice, but he was a little tired when he finished—the Carcroft footballers were more than tired. Nevertheless, as they crawled away from Roger's study, feeling as if they would not be able to sit down again with comfort for weeks and weeks, they agreed without a dissentient voice that Roger was a sportsman.