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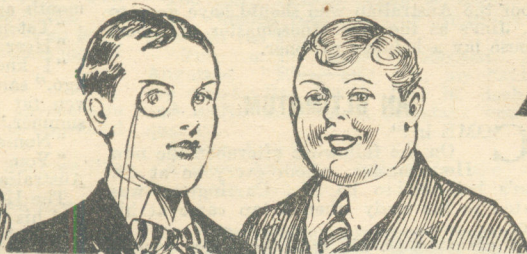


THRILLS AND GRINS FOR THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S

IT'S

ST. JIM'S

AGAIN!



THIS WEEK:
NAZI SPY AND HOUSEMASTER

THE NEW HOUSEMASTER

"GATHER round, coppers!" Harry Noble, the Australian junior, usually known as Kangaroo, uttered that exclamation as the St. Jim's juniors trooped into the quad after morning lessons. Tom Merry & Co. gathered round cheerfully enough.

"What is it—a wheeze?" demanded Monty Lowther.

Kangaroo shook his head.

"No. I've got a bit of news for you."

"What news?"

"A new Housemaster is coming to take the place of old Railton, who's joined up. I've just heard it from Kildare."

"Well, let's hope he'll be a decent sort," grunted Jack Blake.

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, I'm sure he will!" said Kangaroo.

"I've heard that he's an Australian—a Melbourne University man. That make it pretty certain that he'll be a thoroughly decent sort, and a bit above the average in intelligence."

"Oh, cheese it!" said Monty Lowther.

"Anyway," grinned Noble, "he's coming this afternoon. His name's Carrington, and he has only recently come to England. The Head knows a lot about him, but has never met him. His appointment here was arranged by the board of governors."

"Well," said Tom Merry, "if he's as good a sport as old Railton, the governors will deserve a vote of thanks."

"Hear, hear!" chorused the juniors.

"He's sure to feel pretty strange," said Kangaroo, "coming to an English school for the first time. I want you all to rally round him—like anything!"

"O.K.!" said Tom Merry. "We'll rally round Carrington, won't we, chaps?"

And the chaps promised to rally round.

"WAYLAND JUNCTION!"

The express stopped in Wayland Station. A man in a first-class compartment laid down his book, and looked out of the window over his glasses.

He was a man of about forty-six, with a clear-cut, kindly face. He took up a bag and an umbrella, put his book under his arm, and stepped out on to the platform.

"Change here for Rylcombe?" he asked the porter.

"Yessir."

"Rylcombe is the station for St. James' School?"

"Yessir."

"When is the local train, please?"

"Four-thirty; t'other platform."

"Thank you!"

Mr. Carrington, the new Housemaster, bound for St. Jim's, walked down the platform. The local service of trains was not frequent. He had over half an hour to wait.

As the express moved out of the station, a

man in chauffeur's uniform came up to the master from Australia, and touched his peaked cap.

"Mr. Carrington, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, that is my name."

"I was sent here to wait for you, sir. I am Dr. Holmes' chauffeur," said the man respectfully. "Dr. Holmes wish that you drive home with him, as his car is in Vayland now."

Mr. Carrington glanced at the man. The chauffeur had sounded his "w's" as though they were "v's." But there seemed nothing suspicious about the man's appearance.

"Thank you!" said the Housemaster.

"Will you come with me, sir?"

Mr. Carrington followed the chauffeur from the station. Outside, a car was waiting. The chauffeur opened the door, and a man inside raised his black felt hat politely to the Housemaster.

"Mr. Carrington?" he asked. "Please step in. Dr. Holmes is at the vicarage, and the car is going directly there."

Mr. Carrington stepped into the car. The chauffeur got into the driving-seat, and the car moved away down the busy High Street of Wayland.

"Allow me to introduce myself, Mr. Carrington," said the man at Mr. Carrington's side. "I am your fellow Housemaster at St. Jim's. My name is Ratcliff. I understand that you have but lately arrived in England?"

"Less than a month ago," said Mr. Carrington. "I am pleased to meet you, Mr. Ratcliff."

If Mr. Carrington had not been a complete stranger to St. Jim's and to the dwellers therein, he would have known that this plump, well-fed-looking man was very little like Horace Ratcliff, the thin and meagre Housemaster of the New House. But as he had never seen Mr. Ratcliff, he had no suspicion.

The car left the High Street, and turned into a country road. The Australian glanced inquiringly from the window.

"The vicarage is outside the town," his companion remarked. "It is at some little distance. May I ask if you had an uneventful voyage from Australia—no danger from submarines, or pocket battleships?"

Mr. Carrington smiled.

"None at all," he said. "By the way, the chauffeur Dr. Holmes employs is a foreigner, isn't he?"

"Eh? Oh, yes! A very decent and honest man—a Swiss. You are a stranger to the school?"

"Quite."

"You have never met Dr. Holmes?"

"So far, no. My engagement was arranged by the governors, with Dr. Holmes' approval, of course. I was known to him by name, and he to me," said Mr. Carrington. "But this is my first visit to England. It will be a great pleasure and a privilege to act as Housemaster at St. Jim's."

The car bumped into a rutty lane, and the Housemaster glanced from the window again. "A short cut," explained his companion. "I see you have an evening paper with you, Mr. Carrington. Is there any fresh news concerning the war?"

"Another German reverse," said Mr. Carrington, and his companion's eyes glittered for a moment. "There is also news of a German spy who has been at large in this country for some time, and has hitherto succeeded in eluding the police."

"Indeed? I have not heard of him."

"His name is Franz Goetz," said Mr. Carrington. "He held a position as a schoolmaster in Scotland before the war, and it was only lately discovered that he was a spy. He has been traced through England, and is believed to be now somewhere on the South Coast. It is difficult to trace him, however, as he speaks English like a native, and has nothing distinctive about him to indicate that he is a German."

"A dangerous character. What is he like?"

"The description is of a man of about forty-five, with a dark beard," said Mr. Carrington.

The man by the new Housemaster's side passed his hand over his clean-shaven chin.

"He has probably escaped from the country by this time," he remarked.

Mr. Carrington shook his head.

"That is not the opinion of the authorities," he remarked. "The man, they think, is more likely to remain here, and carry on with his spying. It is quite easy for him to pass himself off as an Englishman, and, as he has resided in the country for twenty years, he knows his way about. It is quite possible that at this very moment he may be teaching in some school, under an assumed name, of course."

"But that would not be easy, as he would need recommendations of some sort to obtain such a position," remarked the man in the black felt hat.

"Yes, you are right."

"Yet, if he could contrive it, it would certainly be his safest course. He would be able to serve his Fatherland unsuspected, while keeping up an extremely innocent appearance. Indeed, if he is in possession of the necessary information—which is very probable, considering his connection with the scholastic world in this country—he might even take a place in another man's name."

"It is possible," assented Mr. Carrington. The other man smiled.

"Suppose, for instance," he went on, "this spy should learn that you, Mr. Carrington, have been appointed Housemaster at St. Jim's. You are a stranger there. The scoundrel might have the effrontery to present himself there in your name, and take your place."

Mr. Carrington laughed.

"Quite simple," he said. "There would be one difficulty, however."

I wish tat as a result of dis fearful var Chermany will emerge as a happier nation."

The Housemaster's eyes flashed angrily. "Bah!" he said.

"You do not tink like tat, Franz Goetz. You must be in the pay of Hitler. Here te poy's call me an 'old Cherman,' but dey respect me. Dey know tat I am an honest man. Dey cheer dere Cherman defeat in te air or on te sea, but not in mein presence. Dey know how I must feel. Dey know, too, tat I would not betray te country who is trying to free Chermans in Chermany as well as in tis country. But you—you are not a true Cherman, and you must go from here. You must leav tis school at once, Franz Goetz, and ten I vill say nothing—tat you haf been here. But if you do not go, ten, as an honest man, I must speak to te Headmaster."

"You will betray me?"

"I vill not be an accomplice of anyone who vishes thousands of Chermans to be oppressed by one tyrant!"

"You, a German, talk of the Fuehrer like that!" cried the false Housemaster.

"I am a Cherman, and I believe in a free Chermany."

The Housemaster bit his lip savagely. He had apparently decided not to deny again that he was Franz Goetz, realising that further fencing was useless.

Herr Schneider could not be won round to his way of thinking as he had hoped.

"If you betray me," Franz Goetz said, "it will be known and remembered against you in Germany! Hitler has never yet lost a war, and he will not lose this one! You will not be able to set foot again in your Fatherland!"

"I am villing to risk that."

"Then what is your intention?" Franz Goetz hissed out the words. "What am I to expect?"

"You must go!"

"And if I do not go?"

"To-night I speak to te Head," said Herr Schneider. "I gif you until to-night to go, and if you do not you pay te penalty!"

Herr Schneider rose to his feet. He had delivered his ultimatum, and seemed to feel easier in his mind. There was a certain dignity in his bearing as he stood looking down at the enraged, baffled man before him.

"Give me until to-morrow!" muttered the Housemaster.

"Ja. Fery vell; I gif you till to-morrow morning."

"But—"

"Dere is nothing more to be said. Go ten." Herr Schneider turned to the door. "To-morrow morning you vill be gone, or at prayers I tell der Head all!"

Herr Schneider left the study, and the false Housemaster sat staring at the closed door, beaten. His scheme had been well planned. It had succeeded perfectly up to a point, but now it was tumbling about his ears like a pack of cards.

RANK TYRANNY

"GWOOH! It's cold!"

That was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's remark as he turned out of bed the following morning.

It certainly was cold. There had been a fall of snow during the night, and the quadrangle was a sheet of white. Snowflakes dashed against the high windows of the dormitory.

"By George! It is nippy!" agreed Blake. "Never mind, we'll get some snowballing before brekker, and get warm. We'll see if the New House bounders are out."

The Fourth Formers came streaming down from the dormitory, and they found Tom Merry & Co. already down. With Talbot and Kangaroo, they were looking out from School House doorway into the whitened quad. A few snowflakes were still falling.

From the steps of School House a track led across the quadrangle towards the gates, plainly marked in the snow. The juniors were looking at it in some surprise.

It was not long since the rising-bell had ceased to sound, but someone had evidently gone out very early. The track continued

all the way to the gates, and the footprints were evidently those of a man.

"Some giddy master taken to very early rising," remarked Monty Lowther. "There isn't a fellow in the school with feet that size, excepting Herries."

"Leave my feet alone!" growled Herries. "New House bounders not out yet," said Tom Merry. "We shall have to snowball Gussy. Do you mind being used as an Aunt Sally, Gussy?"

"Weally, you ass—"

"Thanks! Come on, you chaps. let's begin!"

The Shell fellows began at once. Snowballs whistled round Arthur Augustus as he stood on the steps.

"You uttah asses!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "Wing off! Oh, my hat! Oh, my nose! Bai Jove! Pile in, deah boys, and dwive those Shell boundahs wound the quad!"

"Hear, hear!"

Arthur Augustus rushed to the attack, streaming with snow, and the missiles were

"Ach, ach!"

The Housemaster gave a wild howl as the flood of snowballs burst all over him. The Shell fellows were dodging, and the master was right in the line of fire. Snowballs smashed on him on all sides. His coat, his hat, his face—every part of him came under the heavy, though unintentional, fire of the Fourth Formers.

"Hold on!" gasped Blake. "It's Carrington!"

"Cawwington, bai Jove!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The snowballing ceased at once. The Shell fellows and the Fourth Formers stood dumb with dismay as the enraged master gouged snow from his face.

The expression on his face showed what they had to expect. Mr. Railton would have taken such an accident good-humouredly, but they could see that Mr. Carrington was not going to do that.

The Housemaster rubbed the snow away, glaring furiously. He seemed speechless with



"Come on!" panted Tom Merry. The juniors did not hesitate a second. Without even thinking of the danger of tackling two desperate scoundrels, they rushed forward.

soon flying merrily on all sides. Tom Merry & Co. were driven back by force of numbers under a shower of snowballs.

With faces flushed up by the exercise, and their scarves and hair flying in the wind, the juniors warmed to their work, and were soon enjoying themselves. Tom Merry & Co., and Talbot and Kangaroo had to give ground, but they took cover in the porch of the school porter's lodge, and met their assailants with a hot fire.

But a rush dislodged them, and they were driven out. The Shell fellows backed to the gateway, and faced their foes once more. Blake & Co. advanced, delivering volleys of snowballs.

As the whizzing missiles swept in a cloud towards the gateway, a figure in an overcoat and muffler came in from the road. It was the new Housemaster. Evidently it was Mr. Carrington who had been out so early, and had left that track across the quadrangle.

Squash! Whiz! Bang!

wrath. And the Shell fellows, as they watched him, wondered a little, in spite of their dismay. They had heard his startled exclamation when the snowballs smashed on him. Why had the Australian ejaculated "Ach, ach!" in the very tones of Herr Schneider?

But they were not given much time to think about that. The Housemaster advanced upon them with eyes blazing.

"You young hooligans! You snowballed me!"

"Sorry, sir; it was an accident," said Tom Merry. "Nobody saw you. We did not know you had gone out so early."

"Quite an accident, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "We are vevy sowwy."

The Housemaster made a fierce gesture.

"Follow me to my study at once!"

"Those Shell chaps hadn't anythin' to do with it, sir. It was we who threw those snowballs."

"Silence! Follow me, all of you!"

The juniors followed him. They were

the door. His eyes gleamed through his spectacles. "Wahah not, dear boys!"

"Stump!"

"Well! Kangaroo!"

"Mum's the word," said Blake, "Kim on!"

The German master had a good start, but they knew his slow and heavy pace, and they had no doubt of overtaking him before he was a third of the way to the village.

"Look out!" murmured Blake. "I spoke him!"

The juniors slackened pace. They were in the darkest part of the lane, where big trees shadowed the narrow road. Dimly ahead of them they made out a portly figure. It had stopped.

The German master was standing in the road, and the juniors wondered why he had halted. Then, from the silence of the dusk, his voice came to their ears.

"Ach! Then you did not catch the ten o'clock train, as you promised! Why are you still near St. Jim's?"

And then the juniors started as they heard a voice that sounded familiar reply:

"I am here to meet you, Herr Schneider."

"I am here to meet you, Herr Schneider," said Tom Merry & Co. were quite close to the speakers, but invisible in the thick shadows of the trees.

"It's Carrington," whispered Tom Merry suddenly. "Carrington on his way back to the school!"

"What?" asked Blake.

"What?" asked Blake.

"Question?" asked Blake.

"Shush!" said Tom Merry, and stooped to pick up a handful of snow.

Silently the others followed suit. This was an ideal spot for the ambush they had planned.

But they stopped, petrified, as Herr Schneider spoke again. The half-gathered snow dropped from their hands, and they wondered whether they were dreaming as they heard the German master say:

"Then I go to de police, Franz Goetz!"

FRANZ GOETZ!

LAI D BY THE HELLS

The name struck the juniors like a bullet. They knew it well enough—the name of the German spy who was being hunted far and wide by the police. It was in all the newspapers.

The juniors looked thoughtful. They were game for almost anything, but ambushing and snowballing a Housemaster was a big order. "It would be as safe as houses," argued Tom; "and even if it wasn't, it would be worth a licking—"

"Gave!" murmured Blake.

Herr Schneider was coming down the passage. The German had his greatcoat on, a thick muffler round his neck, and his hat in his hand. He was evidently going out.

He did not glance at the silent juniors as he passed them, but put on his hat, and strode out into the darkness of the quadrangle. The juniors exchanged quick glances as the fat figure of the German master disappeared into the winter dusk.

"My hat!" murmured Blake. "There's a chance! A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Let's make it Schneider instead of that other beast—what?"

"Yaas, watah! We weally cannot afford to lose this opportunity, dear boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "Follow on his track."

"Hear, hear!"

"The juniors rushed for their coats and caps at once.

Tom Merry & Co., eight or nine of them, slipped quietly out of the House and hurried down to the gates. The big footprints of the German master showed up in the snow, even though the gates were not yet closed.

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Herr Schneider raised his umbrella as the two men rushed at him, but he was down in a twinkling, and a hand was clapped over his mouth.

Tom Merry & Co. had remained rooted to the ground, overcome with amazement. That the new Housemaster was the German spy Goetz, that the real Mr. Carrington was a schoolboy.

Merry bent to glance at the snow. The heavy track of Herr Schneider led away down the lane towards Rylcombe.

"Come on!" whispered Tom. "Quiet! Not a word!"

Herr Schneider turned slowly back from

A SURPRISE FOR THE CO.

W HILST the boys were having their breakfast Herr Schneider went along to Mr. Carrington's study.

The Housemaster met him with a sullen look.

"You have not gone, Herr Franz Goetz," the German master said grimly. "Is it fat I am to go to te Head and speak mit him?"

"Listen to me," said the Housemaster. "You are the German master here. You get down to the gates. The big footprints of the German master showed up in the snow, even though the gates were not yet closed.

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