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An Enthralling Story of the Chums of Rookwood School!

The 1st Chapter.

The Sportive Muffin!

"Punch his nose!" suggested Arthur Edward Lovell.

Lovell's ideas were often of a drastic nature.

"You see—" said Jimmy Silver dubiously.

Lovell grunted.

"Who's junior captain at Rookwood?" he demanded.

"Little me!" admitted Jimmy.

"Well, being junior captain isn't all honey," said Lovell.

"Junior captain has duties to do."

"Among others, punching fellows' noses?" asked Raby, with a grin.

"Yes—if they ask for it."

"Has Tracy asked?" inquired Newcome mildly.

"Hasn't he?" snorted Lovell.

"Asked for it, I should say so—begged for it, in fact! Look here, Jimmy, I'll punch his nose if you like. It always does Tracy of the Shell good to punch him, anyhow. Shall I go along to Smythe's study now and punch Tracy?"

Lovell rose from his chair in the end study, evidently prepared to act upon his own suggestion, as junior captain's delegate.

But Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Leave Tracy's nose alone, for the present," he said.

"I'm not sure that it's a case for punching noses. He's an awful rotter, of course. But—"

"Oh, go and give him a tract!" said Lovell, in great disgust.

"That's more in your line, I suppose."

Jimmy Silver smiled serenely. He was used to emphatic criticism from Arthur Edward Lovell.

"You see, though I'm junior captain, I'm in the Fourth," he said.

"Tracy's in the Shell. There's a certain amount of delicacy in the matter—laying down the law to a higher Form."

A loud snort from Arthur Edward Lovell announced what he thought of considerations of delicacy.

"But I'm going to look into it!" said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully.

"It looks to me as if Tracy is playing some low-down game. I don't know that it's my bizney, especially if those asses in Smythe's study play the goat generally. But this time I can't help thinking that there's something very fishy in it. Oh, for goodness' sake, clear off, Tubby!"

added the captain of the Fourth, as Reginald Muffin rolled into the end study.

"To-morrow's Wednesday!" said Tubby Muffin.

"What about it, fathead?"

"It's a half-holiday," said Tubby.

"And—and if you could lend me five bob for to-morrow, Jimmy—"

"I couldn't!"

"It's a very special occasion," said Tubby persuasively.

"I can promise to return it by evening. At the same time, I shall settle up some other small sums I owe you. I am also going to stand a big spread in my study, and I want all you fellows to come. The feed will be unlimited. So in the cires, Jimmy—"

"Coming into a fortune to-morrow?" asked Lovell sarcastically.

"Not exactly a fortune, Lovell," said the fat Classical. "But I shall be handling two pound ten."

"Then what do you want with my five bob?" asked Jimmy Silver.

Tubby hesitated.

"Owing to—circumstances, I can't get the two pound ten without having the five bob first," he explained.

"You fellows wouldn't understand—but that's how it is."

The Fistical Four of the Classical Fourth stared at Reginald Muffin. Reginald was rather mysterious; but the veil of mystery was not very thick, and all four of the juniors could see through it quite easily.

"You fat chump!" said Jimmy Silver, in measured tones.

"You're thinking of making a bet."

"Hem!"

"You're going into Tracy's little game—what?"

"Hum!"

"I've heard that he offered ten to one last Wednesday," said Jimmy Silver.

"That would be two pound ten to five bob. You frabjous lump of fat—"

"Well, isn't it a good thing?" demanded Tubby Muffin. "I wish you fellows would be a bit more sporting—like me. Where's the harm in a little flutter? Last Wednesday Tracy took on three or four fellows with bets of ten to one against the favourite, and he won all along the line. Stands to reason it can't happen again. It's understood that he's offering the same odds to-morrow. I'm on it. I can tell you. If Tracy makes a book on the three o'clock race to-morrow, I'm going to nail him down."

"Precious game to be going on at Rookwood!" snorted Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Oh, you ain't sporting!" said Tubby Muffin.

"Why not go in for it? Be a man, you know—like me!"

"Oh, I say—" "And your Form captain is your keeper to some extent," continued Jimmy, "I'll lend you something else. Hand over that fives bat, Newcome."

"Ha, ha! Here you are!"

"Why, you cheeky rotter—" roared Tubby Muffin, in great indignation and alarm.

"If you—Yah! Oh!"

Jimmy Silver took the fat Classical by the collar with one hand, and the fives bat in the other. There was the sound of a loud, ringing whack, followed by a louder yell from Reginald Muffin.

"Now, that's for your own good, old chap!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Whenever you think of backing a horse in future, think of the fives bat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! You awful beast—"



RAGGING THE ROOKWOOD ROGUE! "Hands off!" shrieked Tracy, as the angry juniors, equipped with cricket-stumps and knotted handkerchiefs, collared him. But there was no mercy for the Rookwood rogue. He was stumped ruthlessly, and then well inked, ragged, and rolled!

"Oh, my hat! A man—like you!"

"A lot of fellows are keen to take on Tracy, if he goes the whole hog again!" said Tubby.

"I can tell you, it's a good thing. He took awfully long chances last Wednesday. It can't come off again. Lightning never strikes twice in the same place, you know. I know Tracy pocketed three whole quids last week. He's going to shell out if he plays the same game to-morrow—what!"

"Fathead!" said Raby. "Do you think a fat duffer like you can beat a keen rotter like Tracy of the Shell?"

"There's the law of chances, you know," said Tubby. "Tracy can't bring a thing off twice like that. Stands to reason."

"So a lot of fellows are going in for this, are they?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a worried look.

"Regular crowd," said Tubby. "Lattery and Gower and Flynn, and a lot in the Shell. Tracy will be doing business to-morrow like a regular bookie."

"Are you going to punch his nose now, Jimmy?" inquired Arthur Edward Lovell.

"I'm going to think it out," said Jimmy.

"Rot!"

"What about that five bob?" asked Tubby Muffin anxiously.

"You don't want me to miss a sure thing like this, do you, Jimmy?"

Jimmy Silver rose to his feet.

"I won't lend you five bob to back a horse, Tubby," he said.

"But as you're a born idiot—"

"Now buzz along!" said Jimmy, twirling the fat junior out of the study.

"Next time you want a loan for backing horses, come along to this study. The fives bat is always at your service."

"Yah! Rotter!" roared Tubby Muffin, and he rolled away in a state of righteous indignation and wrath. Applying a fives bat to his tight trousers was not really a respectful way of treating a merry sportsman.

Jimmy Silver sat down at the tea-table again, with a thoughtful frown on his brow.

Uncle James of Rookwood had plenty of food for thought in Allan Tracy's latest development. He hated to interfere; and as a rule he paid no heed to the sportive ways of the "Giddy Goats of Rookwood."

But Tracy's latest was rather out of the common, and Jimmy Silver felt bound, in the peculiar circumstances, to give it his very best attention.

The 2nd Chapter.

Trouble in Smythe's Study!

Adolphus Smythe of the Shell was about to light his after-tea cigarette, when a tap came at the door of his study.

Adolphus hastily thrust the cigarette into his pocket.

His studymates, Tracy and Howard, followed his example.

The door opened, and Jimmy Silver of the Classical Fourth walked into the study.

"Oh! Only a dashed fag!" said Smythe, and his cigarette came into view again.

"That's all!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "Only a dashed fag—the same as yourself, Smythe!"

"If you've come to my study to be cheeky, Silver—" began Adolphus loftily.

"I've come to speak to Tracy."

"Oh, my aunt!" said Adolphus, with a whistle. "Are you in it, too, Silver? I really thought that the end study was far above that sort of thing. I never knew you'd heard of such a thing as a racehorse. Has the end study—the giddy palladium of the school—fallen from grace?"

The nuts of the Shell chuckled.

"My dear man," said Tracy, "I'm open to take you on, with the rest! But there's nothin' doin' until to-morrow!"

"I've not come here to make dirty bets, as you know jolly well," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "It seems, Tracy, that you've been making a start in the book-making line."

"Nothin' to do with you, unless you want to back your fancy!" answered Tracy.

"It's a sermon!" said Howard. "Silver is great on sermons! Let him rip. But chuck it about seventhly, Silver! Have some consideration for unhappy sinners, you know."

"Yaas, go it up to seventhly, and then travel!" grinned Adolphus.

Jimmy Silver did not heed the badinage of the merry nuts. His face remained quite serious.

"I've been making a few inquiries up and down the Fourth," he said. "You seem to have had a lot of luck last week, Tracy."

"I laid against the favourite," yawned Tracy. "Never thought much of his chance."

"Ten to one was long odds, though."

"I took the risk."

"It was a thumping risk for a Shell

Tracy was goin' it rather recklessly last Wednesday, but it came off. I know I'm not backin' against Tracy any time."

"Same here," said Howard, with a nod.

Jimmy Silver surveyed the nuts of the Shell. There was vague suspicion somewhere in his mind. Tracy's racing exploit and its success really seemed remarkable. A "system" on horse-racing was, as Jimmy knew, all rot. Yet certainly the result seemed to speak for itself.

Jimmy had vaguely supposed the existence of some kind of scheme in Smythe's study, but he could see now that if there was anything "crooked" going on, Smythe and Howard were not in it. Their admiration for their comrade was too open and genuine for that.

"You're playing this game again to-morrow?" asked Jimmy, after a pause.

"That depends," said Tracy. "I'm thinkin' of makin' a little book on the three o'clock race to-morrow. But it depends on the latest news in the paper to-morrow mornin'. I've got to mug it up and think it out. I'm not offering ten to one unless I feel pretty sure about it, you can guess!"

Jimmy compressed his lips.

"I'm not sure that it's my bizney to interfere," he said slowly.

"Take my word for it, old bean—it isn't!"

"But this isn't your usual silly rot, that you call sporting!" said Jimmy.

"This seems to be a bookmaking scheme for making money on a pretty large scale. If it goes on the prefects will get to hear of it in time. And I can't understand your luck, Tracy."

"It wasn't luck—just knowledge of the form of the gee," explained Tracy. "I worked it out that the favourite couldn't win, to my own satisfaction, and risked my money on it."

"That sounds jolly steep, to me! And is it against the favourite that you're laying the money to-morrow?"

"If I lay at all," assented Tracy.

"There's one thing that strikes me about it," said Jimmy slowly. "Last Wednesday, from what I hear, the race was run at just three. But you didn't make up your book on the race till after three o'clock."

Tracy nodded.

"It comes to the same thing," he answered. "The result isn't known here till the evenin'. Bets are made any time up to the announcement of the result. I suppose you don't think I'm a giddy spiritualist, and that spooks breathe the winner's name in my ear?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Smythe and Howard.

"I don't see how you could get the result of the race in time," confessed Jimmy Silver. "You couldn't get a wire here without its being known, and you wouldn't dare to ring up a man on the race-ground on a telephone in a master's study, I suppose?"

Tracy gave him a quick look.

"So you're so jolly suspicious as all that?" he asked, with a sneer.

"Luck like yours needs explaining, somehow!" said Jimmy Silver dryly.

"And laying the bets after the race is run looks fishy!"

The door opened, and Arthur Edward Lovell looked in.

"I haven't heard any row!" he said.

"Row! What row?"

"Didn't you come here to punch Tracy?"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"No, ass!"

"Well, I'll punch him, as I'm here!" said Lovell. "He's a disgrace to the school, and he ought to be punched!"

"Look here—" roared Tracy, jumping up as Lovell made a rush at him.

"Get out, you ruffian!" yelled Adolphus Smythe.

"Lovell—" gasped Jimmy.

Arthur Edward Lovell had Tracy round the neck, and was punching him with great vigour. Allan Tracy struggled and yelled frantically. Never had the cause of morality been served by a more hefty champion than Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Stop it!" shrieked Howard. "Stop him! Stop them! Stop—Oh crumbs!"

"Leggo!" raved Tracy.

Punch, punch, punch!

The struggling juniors crashed against the tea-table, and there was a clatter of crocks on the study carpet. Adolphus yelled with anguish as the milk-jug was deposited on his elegant waistcoat.

Jimmy Silver seized his strenuous chum by the arm, and fairly dragged him out of the study. Tracy roared, and dabbed at his nose.

"I haven't finished yet!" gasped Lovell. Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"You have, you fathead! Come on."

"Another punch or two—"

"Come on, you ass!" And Jimmy Silver dragged Lovell away.

"Well, I hope it's done him good," remarked Arthur Edward, as he consented to be led off at last.

Judging by Tracy's looks in the study, the punching had done him no good at all, and Arthur Edward's hope was ill-founded.

The 3rd Chapter.

Uncle James Works it Out!

Jimmy Silver on the following day was giving a good deal of thought to Allan Tracy of the Shell, and his "latest."

So were several other fellows in the Fourth.

Jimmy noted—grimly—that other fellows as well as the sportive nuts were taking an interest in the afternoon's race at Newstead: the thing was spreading, as it were. Newstead was fifty miles from Rookwood, in another county: it was a well-known racing centre, and the three o'clock race was a rather big event. From the talk in the studies, it seemed that Bully Boy was the favourite for the three o'clock, and the latest news in the sporting columns of the newspaper was that Bully Boy would start at odds on.

If Tracy laid against the favourite, it

(Continued overleaf.)

ANSWERS EVERY MONDAY PRICE 2

Jimmy Silver & Co., the Popular Chums of Rookwood School, are Still Going Strong! Here They Are Again in a New Adventure!

