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The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

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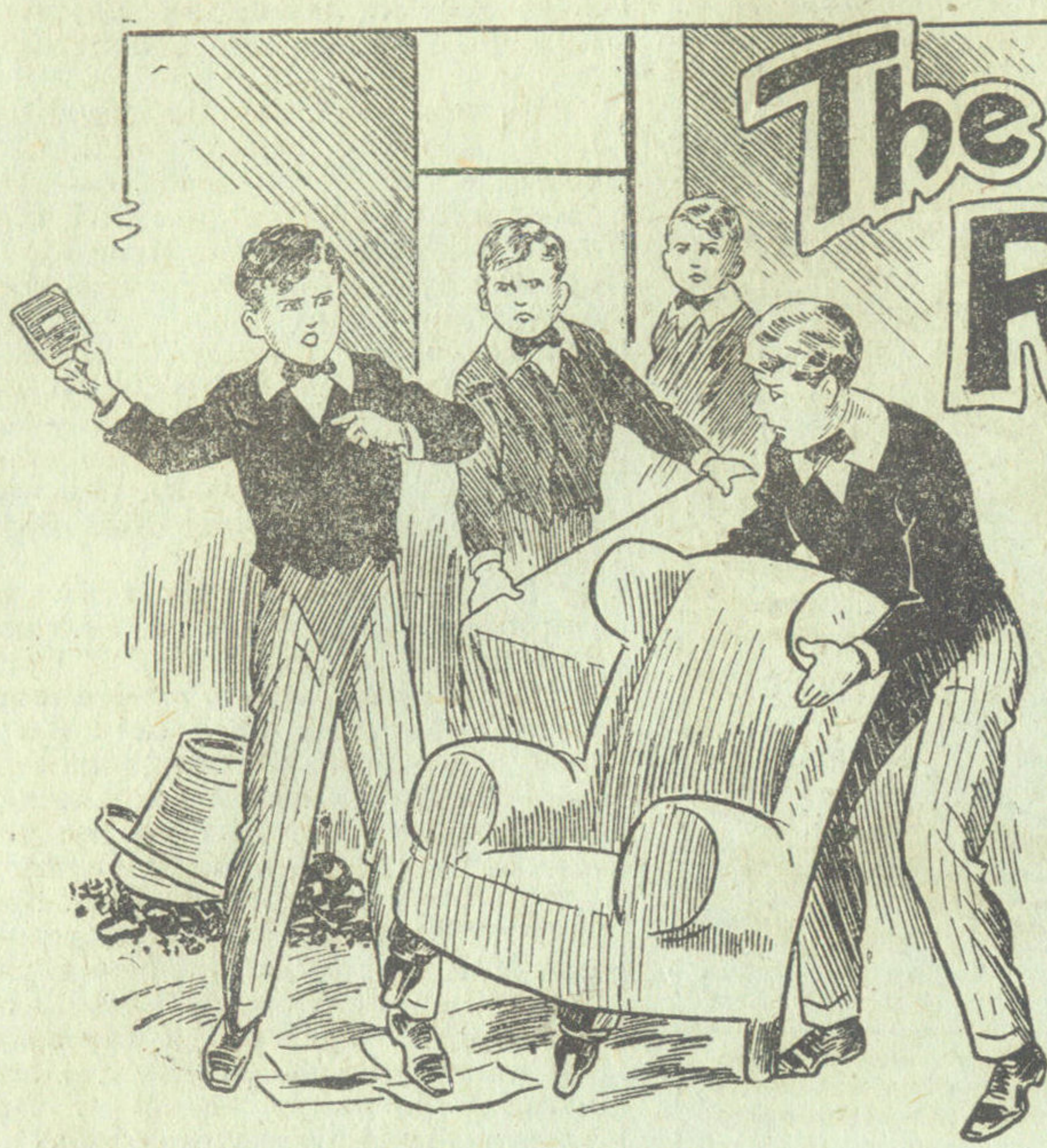
Skeleton's Treasure!

by Eric W. Townsend



"Hold, there! Fling an English slave-boy into Skeleton's well, would ye? Not by all the wild dogs of Hispaniola ye won't!" Mantanilla and his pirates stared with goggling eyes at the figure of Bad John Shamble—come back from the dead!

HIGH TIMES AT ROOKWOOD! READ HOW JIMMY SILVER & CO. GO ON THE WAR-PATH AGAINST THEIR GREAT RIVALS!



The Study Riggers!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")

The Classical and Modern Sides at Rookwood come to loggerheads.

The 1st Chapter. The Head Looks In.

"Clear!"

"What?"

"No ingress!" said Bulkeley of the Sixth, with a smile.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at the captain of Rookwood.

They were surprised.

George Bulkeley, of the Sixth Form, was stationed at the end of the Classical Fourth passage—the staircase end. He leaned on the wall, with his official ashplant under his arm.

As the Fistical Four came upstairs after classes Bulkeley slipped the ashplant from under his arm and held it across the passage, barring the way of the chums of the Fourth.

Jimmy Silver & Co. halted on the landing. Bulkeley's action was quite mystifying to them. Why they could not walk along their own passage to their own study they simply could not guess.

"Look here, Bulkeley—" began Arthur Edward Lovell warmly.

"Clear!" said the prefect tersely.

"Can't we go along to our own study?" asked Raby.

"No!"

"We've come up for tea!" said Newcome.

"Sorry!" said Bulkeley politely.

"But orders are orders! I'm here to keep the passage clear! Cut!"

"But—" said Jimmy Silver.

"Hook it!"

"Well, my hat!"

Argument with a prefect of the Sixth, and captain of the school, was not feasible. The official ashplant that barred the passage would have furnished effective and somewhat painful answers to any arguments advanced by fags of the Fourth Form.

Besides, it was fairly plain, after a moment's reflection, that Bulkeley of the Sixth was acting on instructions. It could not have been simply for his own entertainment that he was doing sentry-go at the entrance of the Classical Fourth passage.

The Fistical Four retired across the landing to the stairs, where they waited. Valentine Mornington came up, passed them, and was about to walk along the passage, when Bulkeley stopped him.

"What on earth's the name of this game, Bulkeley?" asked Morny.

"Cut!" was Bulkeley's reply.

"Can't a chap go to his study?"

"No!"

"Oh gad!"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders and joined the Fistical Four on the staircase.

"Anythin' up?" he asked.

"Looks like it!" said Jimmy Silver.

"All the fellows are being kept out of their studies, it seems."

"Is it a Head's inspection, then?"

"Oh! Very likely."

Two or three more of the Classical Fourth came up. Bulkeley stopped them, and the little crowd at the head of the stairs grew and grew. Bulkeley, standing on guard, gave no explanation, and all sorts of surmises were started by the crowd of juniors. Lovell called out to Cyril Peele of the Fourth as that youth came up the staircase:

"Better mind your eye, Peele!"

Peele gave him a rather inimical look. The black sheep of Rookwood was on the worst of terms with the Fistical Four. Only that morning, in fact, Arthur Edward Lovell had held Peele's head under a flowing tap as a punishment for having given a cigarette to Lovell's minor, Teddy. Arthur Edward Lovell had almost forgotten that incident already; but, naturally, it lingered longer in Cyril Peele's memory.

"What do you mean?" grunted Peele.

"Looks like a Head's inspection," grinned Lovell. "If you've got any smokes in your study, look out for squalls!"

Peele sneered.

"Thank you for nothin'!" he answered. "I'm not afraid of a Head's inspection. What are all you fellows hangin' about on the stairs for?"

"We're barred out of our studies," said Raby.

"Oh, rot!"

"Well, ask Bulkeley."

Peele crossed the landing, and Bulkeley waved him back.

"Hook it, Peele!"

"I want to go to my study."

"You can't."

"Why not?" demanded Peele.

"Orders!"

"Whose orders?" snapped Peele.

Bulkeley looked at him.

"You ask too many questions, Peele," he said. "Ask another, and I'll ask you to bend over!"

Cyril Peele did not ask another question. He grunted, and backed away, and joined the group on the staircase.

"Poor old Peele!" murmured Mornington. "If it's a Head's inspection it's rather rotten for you to be taken by surprise like this—what?"

Peele shrugged his shoulders.

Tubby Muffin came puffing up the stairs. He blinked at the waiting juniors, and blinked at Bulkeley, and rolled on, only to be stopped, like the rest, by the captain of Rookwood.

"I've got to go to my study, Bulkeley!" said Muffin.

"Cut!"

"It's tea-time!"

"Bosh! Get out of it!"

"But, I say—"

Bulkeley made a motion with the ashplant, and Reginald Muffin beat a hurried retreat. Bulkeley smiled, and resumed his easy posture against the wall.

More and more fellows came up, and the crowd on the stairs grew and grew. It was agreed now that it was a "Head's inspection" that was toward, and some of the fellows were rather uneasy. Once or twice in the term it was the custom of Dr. Chisholm to make an official and stately round of the junior quarters, and these visits were always paid by surprise. Had notice been given in advance, doubtless the Head would have discovered every study in a spick-and-span condition, and plenty of evidence that every individual fellow in the Form was a model character.

Surprise visits, on the other hand, enabled the Head to see things as they actually were, which meant

trouble to untidy fellows who kept their football boots in the bookcase and Latin grammars inside out on the floor. It meant still more trouble to fellows who were foolish enough to transgress the strict rule against smoking at Rookwood, and who had cigarettes in their rooms to meet the awful glance of the Head. Once the Head had actually discovered a pipe in a Shell study, and the owner had had great difficulty in convincing Dr. Chisholm that he used it only to blow bubbles with.

Peele of the Fourth, whose dingy manners and customs were well known in his Form, might have been expected to feel very uneasy now. It was likely enough that there were smokes in his study, and possibly playing-cards, and even racing papers. But Peele, oddly enough, seemed quite at his ease, like a fellow who had nothing whatever to fear. Morny, eyeing him curiously, wondered whether Peele had somehow had a tip in advance regarding the visit of inspection.

"This is all very well!" growled Conroy of the Fourth, "but a fellow wants his tea after footer practice—what?"

"It's too thick!" agreed Lovell. "But we're in luck—our study is all right!"

"Right as rain!" said Jimmy Silver, feeling quite relieved as he thought of it.

Undoubtedly there were times when the end study was not right as rain. Sometimes it was untidy. There had been occasions when it had been very untidy.

Fortunately, on this especial day, the Fistical Four had nothing to feel uneasy about.

They had not been in their study at all that day, or only for a few minutes, and it was still in the state in which the "Boys' Maid" had left it early in the morning. At least, the chums of the Fourth naturally supposed that it was.

But other fellows were disquieted. Gunner, for instance, remembered that he had had to give his study-mate, Dickinson minor, some correction that day in the study, and Dickinson minor had resisted. Dickinson minor had fled, with Gunner after him. Gunner remembered that all the chairs had been knocked over, that the table was on its side, and that there were broken crocks on the carpet. That was not the state in which a study should have been presented to the majestic eyes of the Head.

Other fellows had some grounds for uneasiness, too; few were in the happy state of satisfaction of the Fistical Four, and, apparently, Peele.

But there was no help for it. No fellow could obtain access to his room until the Head's inspection had been carried out.

They could only wait on the staircase, and hope for the best.

"Here he comes!" murmured Oswald, at last.

The majestic figure of Dr. Chisholm was sighted on the lower stairs. He was accompanied by Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth.

The juniors backed away respectfully for the Head to pass, and Dr.

Chisholm and Mr. Dalton moved on into the Fourth Form passage, and the inspection began.

The 2nd Chapter. Awful Luck!

Jimmy Silver & Co. waited.

With all due respect to the Head of Rookwood, they wished that the stately old gentleman would "buck up," so that they could get to the end study to tea. Footer practice had made them hungry.

But "bucking up" was the last thought that was likely to enter Dr. Chisholm's mind. All his movements were slow and stately.

From the end of the passage—still barred off by Bulkeley—the juniors watched him enter the first study.

They watched him almost with bated breath, for that study belonged to Peele, Gower, and Lattrey, and Peele & Co. were the black sheep of the Form. If any unpleasant discovery was made in the quarters of the Classical Fourth, it was almost certain to be in Peele's study. But Peele and Gower and Lattrey seemed quite at ease.

"No smokes there, this time, what?" murmured Lovell.

Apparently there were none, for Dr. Chisholm's face was quite unmoved when he came out of the study.

"You fellows are in luck," grinned Raby. "What have you done with your latest copy of 'Racing Tips,' Peele?"

"I haven't left it for the Head to find, anyhow," answered Peele coolly.

And the juniors grinned.

Study No. 2 belonged to Higgs, Jones minor, Putty of the Fourth, and Tubby Muffin. Mr. Dalton entered with the Head, and looked out again.

"Higgs!"

"Here, sir!" said Alfred Higgs, in some dismay.

"Please come here!"

"Yes, sir."

Higgs passed Bulkeley, and went to Study No. 2. He almost cringed in the doorway, as he met the glance of the Head.

Dr. Chisholm pointed to the bookcase.

"Are these your boots, Higgs?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Higgs.

"Is it your custom to keep football boots in the bookcase among your books?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Do you generally leave your boots

had been a steam-roller rolling down on him.

Dr. Chisholm progressed to Study No. 3.

That study belonged to Pons, Van Ryn, and Conroy, the three Colonials. Mr. Dalton glanced out of the doorway.

"Is Van Ryn there?"

"No, sir," answered Jimmy Silver. "I left him in the changing-room."

"Shall I send for Van Ryn, sir?" asked Mr. Dalton, turning back into the study.

"It is not necessary, Mr. Dalton," said the Head. "You will see that he writes out two hundred lines for leaving his dictionary on the floor."

"Certainly, sir."

Progress proceeded to No. 4, the study of Mornington and Erroll. This study passed muster, and so did Study No. 5, which belonged to Townsend and Topham and Rawson.

Study No. 6, the quarters of Oswald, Flynn, and Hooker, escaped criticism, but at Study No. 7 the Head halted in the doorway with a frown.

"This is a very untidy room," he said. "To whom does this room belong, Mr. Dalton?"

"Gunner and Dickinson minor, sir."

"I have seldom seen even a junior room in so untidy a state," said the Head. "Perhaps you will call both Gunner and Dickinson minor, Mr. Dalton?"

"Certainly, sir," said the Fourth Form master.

"I like that!" murmured Gunner indignantly. "All through that young ass Dickinson minor being cheeky. He said I couldn't play footer for toffee, and, of course, I had to wallop him."

The juniors chuckled.

Peter Cuthbert Gunner's drastic methods with his study-mate were well known, and most of the fellows considered that a caning from Mr. Dalton was exactly what Gunner wanted.

Dr. Chisholm and Mr. Dalton progressed now to the end study. The visit of inspection was almost over.

The Head stopped in the doorway. To the surprise of the Fistical Four, who were watching him along the passage, thunder gathered on his stately brow.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Head.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Dalton.

Both masters stared into the study, apparently surprised and shocked by what they saw there.



RAGGING THE MODERNS! Whilst his comrades looked after Tommy study, Lovell's methods were not gentle thing he saw, he knocked over—everything that was breakable he saw.

lying about in such an extremely muddy state?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"You will take five hundred lines of Virgil, Higgs."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" stuttered Higgs.

"Perhaps you will kindly make a note of it, Mr. Dalton?"

"Certainly, sir."

The Head made a stately motion to the doorway, and Alfred Higgs jumped away as if the headmaster

"What on earth's the matter now?" murmured Raby. "Our study's all right, isn't it?"

"Something's up!" said Newcome. Dr. Chisholm turned to the Fourth Form master.

"Whose study is this?"

"Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome," said Mr. Dalton.

"Kindly call them here."

Jimmy Silver & Co. passed Bulkeley, and walked up the passage in a

