

36 Day  
"DYNAMITE DON"—WILD WEST THRILLER—STARTS TO-DAY!

The

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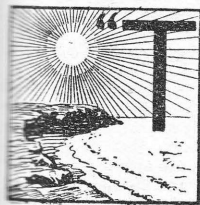


DYNAMITE  
DON—  
*The  
Flying  
Sheriff*

# THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

## The Men from the Sea!



"HE boat!" yelled Streaky Bacon.

On the summit of the cliff behind the hut on the beach of Castaway Island, Streaky tore off his hat, waved it round his head, yelled and danced like a maniac.

Sandy Bean and Dick Dawson stared up at

the excited Streaky from the beach.

It was hot afternoon on the lonely West Indian island. Long, long days had passed since Jim Dainty and Ginger, Fritz Splitz and Friday, the monkey, had been blown away to sea in the gale.

With every day the castaways' hopes of seeing them again lessened and lessened. But every morning, in the sunrise, every afternoon when the heat of the tropic day had passed, one or other of the juniors climbed the high cliff to scan the sea with a faint, lingering hope of seeing the boat coming back with their lost comrades.

It was Streaky's turn this blazing afternoon, and he clambered to the summit and stared seaward over the rolling Atlantic, stretching as far as the eye could reach round Castaway Island. Eastward, only the endless sea and the heat haze met his eyes to the far horizon. But as he turned his gaze to the southward he gave a sudden jump at the sight of a dark shape on the water that appeared in sight beyond the rocky headland at the end of the bay.

It was a boat—too far off to be picked up clearly—but a boat; Streaky knew that it was a boat. And he waved his hat and yelled, and fairly danced.

"They're coming back!" roared Streaky. He pointed. "Look! The boat—they're coming back!"

Sandy Bean and Dick Dawson stared round. From the beach down below they could not see what Streaky saw from the cliff-top. But their faces were bright, their eyes shining. If Streaky had seen a boat coming in from the sea, what could it mean but that their friends had been spared and were returning? What other craft was likely to be seen in the solitary waters round Castaway Island, where they had watched so long in vain for the sight of a sail or a steamer's smoke.

"Hurrah!" roared Sandy, and Dick Dawson echoed his shout. Streaky Bacon came clambering down from the cliff in hot haste—such hot haste that half-way down he missed his footing and came rolling to the bottom. He landed bumping on the sand, rolled over, sat up, and spluttered.

"Oooogh!"

"Sure it's the boat, Streaky?" exclaimed Dawson.

"It's a boat!" Streaky picked himself up, gasping. "Not likely to be any other boat, I fancy! It's coming round South Point—must be Jim and Ginger—who else could it be? Oh, why isn't Sammy here?"

Dr. Samuel Sparshott, the headmaster of Grimslade, was away across the island that afternoon. The juniors expected him back by dark; and already the sun was setting, level rays glowing crimson across the sea. They looked round; but there was no sign of Sammy yet. Then they ran down to the edge of the sea and strained their eyes across the wide



blue bay for a sight of the boat. Sandy pointed.

"There it is! Oh, good luck! It must be Ginger—"

"It must be Jim!" exclaimed Dawson.

"And Fatty Fritz!" grinned Streaky. "Jolly glad to see even old frowsy Fritz again, what? And the jolly old monkey!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Sandy Bean.

Far off on the sea at the southern end of the bay the shape of the boat could be discerned. There was no sail to be seen; but there was

**LANDED, STRANDED ON A  
DREARY DESERT ISLE;  
BUT THE GRIMSLADE JUNIORS  
STILL KNOW HOW TO SMILE!**

hardly a breath of wind that burning afternoon, and they did not expect to see the canvas up. The boat was coming in under oars—they could catch the ripple and the flash. But the delight died off their faces, replaced by puzzled doubt, as the boat came nearer.

They could pick up figures in the boat now—and they made out five. In the Grimslade boat there should have been four—Jim Dainty, Ginger Rawlinson, Fritz Splitz, and Friday, the monkey. Here there were five; and not one of them was a monkey. Four were pulling, and one was steering.

"I—I say," stammered Streaky at last. "That—that's not our boat! They—they're men in that!"

It was a crushing blow to their high hopes. In that solitary spot, lost in the wide wastes of the Atlantic, it had seemed certain, to them, that the coming craft must be the Grimslade boat returning. They were glad enough, certainly, to see any craft, and human faces. But they had hoped to see Jim and Ginger, Fatty Fritz and Friday. And it was plain now that it was not their lost friends that came.

The boat seemed to crawl. Even with four men pulling it made little way. As it drew slowly nearer to the view, the juniors could guess the cause. The five men in the boat were bearded, shaggy, wild-looking, haggard. Hunger and thirst had told bitterly upon them. Wild, fierce eyes gleamed from lean, sun-

bitten, haggard faces; and eager as they were to reach the land, they pulled feebly at the oars with failing muscles.

"Shipwrecked men—starving!" said Dick Dawson in a low voice. "They look like skeletons—or spectres! They seem hardly able to get the boat along. If we could help them—" It was a bitter blow not to see his chum, after the raising of his hopes. But he was thinking of the sufferings of that haggard, famished crew. "Look here, let's get food and water ready for them—that's what Sammy would say if he were here."

"Let's!" said Streaky briefly.

They could see that the oarsmen were making efforts, but they could see, too, that every now and then one or another of them sagged over in his seat as if barely able to keep going. It was clear that the boat's crew were at the end of their tether, hardly able to reach the land, near as it now was.

Leaving the beach, the Grimslade Castaways hurried up to the hut to find stores for the famished crew. Dawson opened a can of bully beef; Streaky filled a bag with bananas and plantains and coconuts; Sandy fetched a large can of water from the rippling stream by the palm grove. They carried the supplies down to the margin of the sea and waved their hands to the men in the approaching boat.

The steersman was watching them now, and the rowers twisted every now and then to stare round at them. The boat's crew seemed surprised to see human beings, and whites, on the lonely island; and it seemed to the juniors that there was something like alarm and suspicion in their looks, as if they were not sure of a friendly reception. But if they had any fear of that kind it was overcome by the torture of hunger and thirst. And now they could see that the castaways had food and drink ready for them, the instant they made their landing, and that sight seemed to give their weary, enfeebled arms new vigour, and they pulled harder and faster.

With compassionate eyes the three juniors watched them as they came. Now that they were close it could be seen that they were not English—but whatever they were the castaways were ready to welcome them and give them what they so sorely needed. Lower and lower sank the setting sun; and far in the east came a silvery gleam of the rising moon.

The creak of the oars in the rusty rowlocks came to the juniors' ears now as the dingy, leaky old boat came surging in. Desperately the exhausted crew pulled, and the boat thudded on the sand at last. The five men leaped from her into the shallow water and scrambled on the beach, leaping like wild beasts to the spot where the three juniors stood.

"Here you are!" Dick Dawson held out a wooden platter on which he had sliced the bully-beef, Streaky held up the big can of water, and Sandy a bunch of tin mugs for drinking.

The first to reach the spot, a lithe, supple fellow with black beard and hair, tore the can from Streaky so savagely and violently that the junior stumbled over and fell. Putting the can to his lips, he drank savagely, greedily, desperately. But the next of the crew snatched fiercely at it and tore it from him before he had taken more than two or three gulps. The black-haired man, with a howl of rage, snatched a knife from his belt and sprang at him.

Sandy Bean put out a foot just in time, and the man with the knife stumbled over it and fell, or there would have been murder done on the beach in another moment. The man leaped up again, with a furious yell, and turned on Sandy like a tiger, striking with the knife. A swift backward leap saved Sandy from the savage slash.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "Look out, you fellows."

The man with the can of water was drinking, heedless of the danger from his associate. But the other three were on the spot now, and they snatched at the can together and tore it from him. The three juniors backed away, but the gang did not heed them—they struggled savagely for the water, and the can crashed on the sand, spilling its contents.

Knives were flashing on all sides; but one of the ruffians sighted the gleam of the rippling stream at a little distance and started for it at a desperate run; and the rest followed him as fast as they could go. Dawson and Sandy and Streaky stood in a dismayed group staring after them.

"My hat!" breathed Streaky. "What sort of a crew—"

The juniors realised that it was no crew of shipwrecked sailors who had reached Castaway Island. Famished and parched as they evidently were, that did not account for their wild-beast-like ferocity. They reached the stream and threw themselves headlong into the rippling water, drinking, drinking, drinking, as if their torturing thirst could never be quenched.

"Get into the hut!" muttered Sandy. "Goodness knows who they are and what they are, but they're not safe! My hat, I wish Sammy was back!"

"Quick!" muttered Dawson.

The three juniors ran for the hut, while the boat's crew were still wallowing in the stream. They hurried inside, closed the door and the window shutter, and jammed in the bars. A sound of scuffling, running feet came to their ears. The crew had quenched at last their savage thirst, and were running back to the beach for the food.

From a slit in the door of the hut the juniors watched them breathlessly, wondering what was going to happen after this. They saw the gang snatch at the food and throw themselves on the sand, tearing at it like wild animals. The bully beef, the bananas, and plantains vanished as if by magic, ample as the supply had been.

Satisfied at last, the ruffians sprawled on the sand, but one of the gang—the lithe, black-haired fellow who had handled the knife—stared round him curiously, spotted the hut, and came tramping up the path to it.

Streaky and Sandy and Dick exchanged glances, and their hearts beat. They were glad that a strong, thick door and massive bars were between them and the desperado. The black-haired man groped over the door and found it fast; then he called out:

"Ouvrez—open!"

"No jolly fear!" said Streaky. "You're not coming in here!"

A laugh from the black-haired man was the answer—a low laugh, bloodcurdling in its

ferocity and mockery. But he said no more; turning away from the hut, he walked back to his companions on the beach. Evidently he had no doubt that the boys were at the mercy of the gang as soon as they chose to break into the hut.

"Who—what are they?" muttered Dick. "They're French," said Sandy Bean. "Goodness knows what else! By gum, I wish Sammy was back!" He set his lips. "We can't let Sammy run into that gang; they look as if they'd knife him as soon as look at him. Lucky old Sammy fixed up a signal!"

Sandy Bean stooped over the sea chest in the hut and sorted out a revolver. He placed the muzzle to the slit in the door and fired twice into the sand. The juniors saw the five men on the beach start and raise their heads and stare round at the sound of the shots. They did not know that the double shot was a signal—but Dr. Samuel Sparshott, tramping homeward through the jungle paths, knew.

#### Sammy Takes Control.

**S**AMMY SPARSHOTT started. Faintly from afar, but ringing clearly to his ears, came the sound of the signal shots.

The headmaster of Grimslade, as he tramped homeward under the sunset, was not looking his accustomed cheery self. He was thinking of Jim Dainty and Ginger and Fritz, blown away to sea in the boat, lost on the boundless Atlantic. The lost juniors were seldom out of his thoughts. He hoped and tried to believe that somehow they had escaped with their lives, but the hope was faint and growing fainter.

But as he heard the warning shots from the hut Sammy dismissed other matters from his mind and was instantly on the alert. That signal meant danger. Cartridges were too valuable on the lonely island for the firearms to be used for any other reason. For a moment or two Sammy stopped and listened, then he resumed his way at a rapid run. As he emerged from the jungle paths and came through the palm-grove his eyes were keenly about him.

The sun was deep down in the west over Castaway Island; in the east the moon was rising over the Atlantic. The light was dimming, but Sammy's keen eyes picked up the scene at once. The dingy, leaky old boat beached on the sand; four tattered figures sprawling near it, and a fifth—that of a lithe, supple fellow with black hair and beard—lounging up the sandy path towards the hut. And at the first glimpse of the rough crew Sammy's hand went to the revolver in his belt.

That the five Frenchmen who had landed on Castaway Island were a crew of escaped convicts from the French penal settlement on the coast of Guiana Sammy could not know. The "Ile du Diable," or Devil's Island, was too far away for that thought to come into his mind at the moment.

But a glance told him that he had to deal with a ruffianly and desperate gang, whoever and whatever they were. And he was glad that he never neglected the precaution of going armed ever since the visit of Slim Stack in his aeroplane. Lonely and deserted as the island was, danger might come at any moment, and Sammy was always ready for it. The revolver was in his hand, his finger on the trigger, as he strode on towards the hut.

The black-haired man reached the door and struck on it with a clenched fist; the other four, still sprawling in the sand, were watching him. Inside the hut Streaky and Sandy and Dick Dawson were on the alert when they saw the black-haired man returning.

"Open!" came the sharp voice of the black-haired man, reaching Sammy's ears as well as those in the hut.

"Go and eat coke!" came Streaky's answer from within.

"You will open one door!" said the black-haired man. "You understand me, mes enfants? Who you are I know not and care not; but give us the hut, and you shall be allowed to run free. Diable! Keep me to wait and I will slit your necks like pigs—on the word of Louis Lautrec!"

The juniors in the hut exchanged glances. Evidently the gang had consulted together and determined to take possession of the hut for

the night. But Streaky & Co. had not the slightest intention of handing it over.

"Alors! Open the door!" exclaimed Lautrec impatiently. "You hear me to speak—is it not?"

"Buzz off!" answered Streaky. "I've got a popgun here, and if you touch the door again I shall pull trigger."

For answer the black-haired ruffian picked up a heavy boulder, stepped to the door, and crashed the rock on the timber. The rest of the gang rose from the sand at the crash and came towards him. Their knives were in their hands now.

Bang!

Streaky was as good as his word. From the slit in the door came the stream of smoke from the revolver within, and the bullet grazed the arm of the black-haired rascal. Lautrec gave a startled yell and sprang away.

There was a rapid patter of footsteps. The gang swung round at the sound and stared at the tall figure of Dr. Samuel Sparshott coming up at a run, revolver in hand. There was a shout in the hut:

"Here comes Sammy!"

"Diable!" Lautrec, taken by surprise by Dr. Sparshott's sudden appearance, gripped his knife. Like wild animals the gang from Devil's Island eyed the headmaster; like wild animals they would have leaped at him, but the levelled revolver, with Sammy's cool, clear eyes gleaming over it, held them back.

"Drop those knives!" Sammy's voice came clear and sharp. The revolver in his hand seemed to single out each of the scowling, savage desperadoes in turn. There was a second of hesitation, and then the knives clanged on the ground, Lautrec's last. The black-haired man seemed to be the leader of the gang, and it was easy to read in his dark, desperate face that he was eager to lead a fierce rush at the schoolmaster. But the revolver held him in check, and the knife followed the rest.

"Who are you?" rapped Sammy.

"A shipwrecked crew, monsieur," answered Lautrec, with a mocking glitter in his black eyes. "We are French; I alone speak English. And you?"

Sammy Sparshott scanned them. That the savage crew had been through bitter hardships he could see easily enough, though food and drink had revived them now. Bearded, shaggy, dirty, ferocious, they looked like a crew of human wolves—as, indeed, they were. And his keen eye detected on the leg of more than one of them a circle of rusty iron and a fragment of a chain that had been filed through. That gave him a clue.

"Convicts!" said Dr. Sparshott tersely.

"Vrai!" assented Lautrec with cool impudence. "You guess we are from the Ile du Diable, monsieur? There were more of us when we got away from Devil's Island, but the others—" He shrugged his shoulders expressively. "By chance, monsieur, we have reached your island, and here we stay! Ciel! We have had enough of to starve and to thirst in the boat."

The others listened with knitted brows and glinting, savage eyes to the talk they did not understand, as if trying to understand the strange language.

The door of the hut opened. Streaky and Sandy and Dick stepped out—the two former with revolvers in their grasp, Dawson with an axe. The juniors were ready to back up their headmaster if it came to a tussle. The black-haired man glanced round at them with glittering eyes. Dr. Sparshott's eyes rested grimly and thoughtfully on the Devil's Island gang.

It was sheer ill-luck for the Grimslade castaways that chance had led the escaping crew of convicts to their island. To keep five desperate ruffians prisoners was impossible; to shoot them down was hardly to be thought of—and the only other resource was to get rid of them without delay. Sammy was the man for rapid decisions.

"Get back to your boat!" he rapped.

"You do not offer us the hospitality of your hut, monsieur?" said Lautrec, in his tone of mocking impudence.

"I would as soon trust a pack of wolves!" said Dr. Sparshott tersely. "Listen to me!

Your escape from Devil's Island is no business of mine. But you cannot remain on this island. You shall be provided with food and water—as much as your boat can carry. Then you will go your way."

"You send us back to the sea, monsieur?" "Exactly. And if you approach this island again, I shall fire on you," said Dr. Sparshott icily. "I warn you of that, and I warn you also that I never miss. Go back to your boat."

The convicts drew together, muttering in French. Their fierce eyes lingered on the knives. Sammy Sparshott watched them like a cat. Only too well he knew that his life and the lives of the boys hung on a thread.

"Allons!" said Lautree at last, and he started down the path to the beach, followed by his comrades. At a sign from Sammy, Dick gathered up the knives and carried them into the hut. The desperate gang were not to be allowed to go armed. Slowly, unwillingly, with fierce looks, they went; and under Sammy's eye and Sammy's revolver they pushed off the crazy old boat and clambered into it.

Dr. Sparshott stood on the edge of the sand, still covering them with the revolver, while, at his orders, the juniors brought down supplies from the hut. The headmaster of Grimslade was only too willing to supply their necessities from motives of humanity and with the hope that in a well-provisioned boat they would seek some other refuge.

"Now go," he said at last, "and a good voyage to you! I warn you once more that if you set foot on this island again I shall shoot! Go!"

The Devil's Island gang exchanged fierce looks. Lautree's eyes were burning. He grasped an oar, bent as if to drop it into the rowlock, and then, with a sudden movement, thrust it at the tall figure on the water's edge. Sammy Sparshott leaped aside from the thrust, and his revolver cracked at the same moment. There was a fearful yell from the black-haired man, and he staggered in the boat, his hand going to his ear. There was a spurt of red on his dark fingers.

"Is that warning enough?" asked Sammy coolly. "The next bullet will go through your head."

The bullet had clipped the convict's ear. It was warning enough—and, with a face convulsed with fury, Lautree snarled to his comrades to push off. Sammy Sparshott and the three juniors stood and watched them go. The sun had disappeared behind the island hill; in the silvery moonlight the boat pulled out of East Bay and vanished into the dusk of the sea.

"Gone!" said Streaky, with a deep breath. "For good?" said Sandy Bean.

But that question could not be answered yet.

**Fallen Among Foes!**

"HOME again!" said Jim Dainty. "My giddy goloshes!" said Ginger Rawlinson. "It's good to be back!" "Ach! I was ferry sleepy mit meinsel!" mumbled Fritz Splitz. "Vy for

ve not sleep in te poat, and walk back in te morning after?"

"Stick in the boat if you like!" grinned Ginger. "We're going."

"Peast and prute! I sticks not here mit meinsel alone!" grunted Fatty Fritz.

"Come on, Friday!" called Jim Dainty, and the monkey hopped out of the boat.

It was midnight on Castaway Island. High over the wooded hill hung the white round moon, shedding silvery light on wood and jungle, glistening beach and rugged rock.

On the south side of the island, where the tide gurgled and splashed in the channels among the reefs, Jim Dainty and Ginger Rawlinson had made their landing. After the fight with the convict boat's crew, far out on the Atlantic, they had waited for the wind, which came with sunset, and made a wide sweep to the southward, to avoid another possible meeting with the Devil's Island gang.

Now, at long last, they had reached Castaway Island once more, run the boat into a well-known channel among the reefs, and landed on the island that was home to them. They were more than a mile from the hut on East Bay.

While Ginger secured the painter, Jim Dainty climbed to the top of a tall rock and scanned the shore in the glistening moonlight. He believed that the convicts' boat had headed for Castaway Island, and, if so, it was likely that it had pulled into the bay many hours since. If there had been trouble between the convicts and the castaways, it had already happened.

But there was no sign of life on the moonlit shore.

"Can't see anything of that gang, Ginger!" said Jim.

"They'd land in the bay, if they came at all," answered Ginger. "Thank goodness we kept clear of them getting here. Keep your eyes open, old bean, and let's get going."

Tramping over rock and reef, leaving the boat at its moorings in the channel, the juniors reached the shore and turned along it to the east. Jim and Ginger walked briskly, Friday scuttling along gaily, evidently merry and bright at getting on dry land again, Fatty Fritz rolling along in the rear, grunting.

Once past the big, rocky headland which the castaways had named South Point, they had a view of the wide bay on the east side of the island.

"My giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Ginger Rawlinson suddenly. He halted, caught Jim by the arm with one hand, and with the other pointed to a dark object that lay among the rocks of the headland.

"A boat!" breathed Jim.

It was a boat—beached above reach of the sea. That it was the convicts' boat they could hardly doubt; but it was empty—there was no sign of the tattered crew. Jim and Ginger were, of course, unaware that the Devil's Island gang had landed in the bay and been driven off under Sammy's revolver. But from the

fact that the boat had been beached among the rocks of the headland, they could guess that the crew had some reason for not landing on the open beach in sight of the hut.

Lautree and his crew had put out to sea at Sammy's order, backed up by his gun, but they had returned by stealth. Of that Jim and Ginger knew nothing, but they knew now that the Devil's Island gang must be on shore.

"If they're between us and the hut—" muttered Ginger.

There was a sudden startled squeal from Friday, who had gone scuttling on ahead and disappeared under a cluster of palms near the shore. The monkey came leaping and scrambling back.

Then there was an outbreak of voices, a rush of shadowy forms under the palms, and five tattered figures came leaping into the moonlight.

Savage hands grasped the juniors. Jim and Ginger resisted desperately. But for the fact that Sammy Sparshott had disarmed the convicts, their lives would have been worth little at that moment. But Lautree was shouting to his comrades to take them, and the capture was easy enough, in spite of their resistance.

Friday, squealing, disappeared into the trees, unheeded by the convicts; but Jim and Ginger and Fatty Fritz were grasped and held—panting in the midst of a circle of fierce, bearded, desperate faces. It was evident that the convicts knew them again, and the Grimsladers expected instant death.

"In the boat at sea you beat us off—mais oui!" The black-haired man grinned at Jim Dainty. "Here it is another tale, n'est-ce pas? You walk into our hands. You belong—yes—you belong here—you are some of the rest, yes? The tall man—he with the gun—you know him, isn't it? Yes!"

Jim and Ginger knew that he must be referring to Sammy Sparshott.

"Yes," gasped Jim. "Dr. Sparshott will shoot every scoundrel of you if you harm us."

The black-haired man laughed softly. "With your lives in our hands, the tall one, he will not shoot—non! I think not!"

He snapped an order to the crew. One of the ruffians scrambled over the rocks to the boat, and brought back a rope. A minute more, and Jim Dainty and Ginger and Fatty Fritz were bound together in a helpless bunch. Their faces were white in the gleam of the moon.

The storm and the ocean had spared them; they had found their way back to Castaway Island—for this!

"You will tap on the door of the hut with your foot—yes! That Sparshott—he will open the door, and then we rush!"

Helpless in the hands of the desperate convicts, Jim Dainty received his orders. He was to be made to betray Dr. Sparshott—and if he didn't Ginger and Fritz would be killed!

*What does Jim Dainty do? You'll know when you read next week's thrill-packed story of the Grimslade Crusoes. Don't miss it, buddies.*

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