

COMET

No. 107
(New Series)
Aug. 5, 1950

EVERY THURSDAY
4 HAPPY FAMILY COMIC 2nd

OUR CAR-SPOTTER'S PICTURE GUIDE



Scamp's holiday beside the sea
Is full of fun as it can be!



And best of all, for Scamp's money,
Is going for a romp with Sonny!



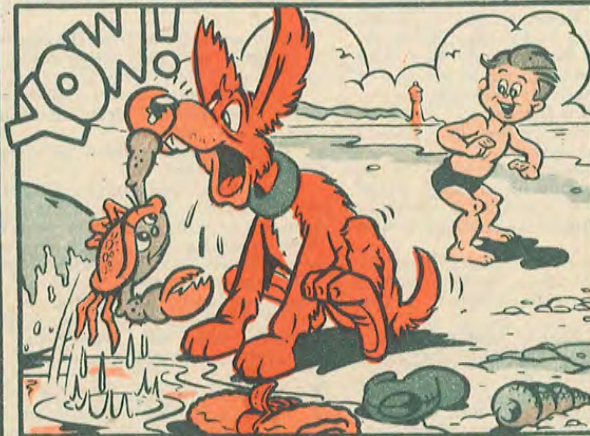
So Scamp did just as he was told
When given Sonny's clothes to hold.



But on the way towards the briny,
He saw a crab all hard and shiny!



And so old Scamp paused a jiff,
To have a look, and one small sniff.



Now all the crabs around these shores,
Are fitted with two large, sharp claws!



But Sonny came to save the day,
And take that nipsome crab away!



Scamp sat by, looking all disdainful,
Because his nose was feeling painful.



But when young Sonny took a swim,
Scamp thought he ought to follow him.



So picking up his roll of stuff,
He plunged in with a joyous "Wuff!"



Poor Scamp is feeling puzzled yet
At fuss caused when the clothes got wet!





Mr. "Bunter" Quelch

"EXTRA at three!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Rotten!" said Harry Wharton. "Putrid!" said Frank Nugent. "Rough luck!" said Johnny Bull. Bob Cherry's ruddy face, on a half-holiday, was generally as bright as the sun at noonday. Now it was sadly overcast. Bob looked dismal and his four friends looked deeply sympathetic.

Bob was booked for "Extra." The Famous Five were—or had been—going over to Cliff House that afternoon for tennis and tea with Marjorie and Co. Now only four members of the Co. were going. One had to remain behind at Greyfriars in the French master's class room, with the detention class, in extra school. It was, as Johnny Bull declared, rough luck.

Certainly Bob ought not to have knocked off Coker's hat in the Quad that morning. Still more certainly, he wouldn't have knocked off Coker's hat had he been aware that Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye was on him from his study window!

Really there was no great harm in knocking a hat off the head of Coker of the Fifth. It was only a spot of playfulness. But Quelch called it horse-play in the quadrangle and gave Bob extra for the afternoon.

Hence the unusual pessimism in Bob's usually cheery countenance. He did not want to miss tennis and tea at Cliff House School. Still more he did not want to miss seeing Marjorie. For once he was quite disgruntled.

From the window of the Rag, the chums of the Remove could see the clock tower. The clock indicated five minutes to three. It was more than time for the party to start but Bob's friends were keeping him company till he went in to extra.

"I've a jolly good mind to cut!" grunted Bob. "What does it matter if a fellow knocks Coker's hat off—or his head, too, for that matter? But—"

Four heads were shaken. Cutting extra meant a report from Monsieur Charpentier to Mr. Quelch and a "row" to follow.

"Better stick it, old chap," said Harry Wharton. "It's rough luck, but—"

"I say, you fellows!" A fat voice interrupted the discussion as Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag. The Owl of the Remove blinked at the Famous Five through his big spectacles and came across to the group.

"Oh, blow away, Bunter," said Bob crossly.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Fade out, fathead," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, you fellows, it's extra at three," said Bunter.

"Think we don't know that, ass?" growled Bob.

"Well, I'm in extra," said Bunter, "and I'm jolly well getting out, see? That beast

BUNTER BECOMES QUELCHY

A Rollicking Yarn of Billy Bunter and the Chums of Greyfriars

BY FRANK RICHARDS

Quelch gave me extra for cribbing. At least he made out that I cribbed. But look here, I know how to get out of extra without Quelch knowing, and if you like I'll get you out too, Bob, old chap."

"What do you mean, you fat ass?" asked Bob. "If we cut, Mossoo will report us to Quelch—"

"I know how to work it!" grinned Bunter. "You see, Quelch has gone out—"

"What difference does that make, ass?"

"I mean, he won't be on the spot, being gone out," explained Bunter. "Well, suppose, when we're in extra, Quelch called in to Mossoo that he wanted us."

"Eh?"

"I can wangle it," chuckled Bunter. "You know what a wonderful ventriloquist I am. What about a spot of ventriloquism?"

"Bosh!"

"Rubbish!"

"Oh, really, you fellows. You know that I can imitate old Quelch's bark a treat and I can make his voice call in at Mossoo's class-room door—"

"Give us a rest, fathead!" grunted Johnny Bull.

But Bob Cherry's clouded face brightened. It was a fact that Bill Bunter could ventriloquise—that is, make his voice sound just like somebody else's. True his ventriloquial tricks were not very popular in the Remove, and generally earned him more kicks than ha'pence. Still, it was a fact that he could do it. And Bob was very keen indeed to get out of detention that afternoon and walk over to Cliff House with his friends.

"By gum! I wonder if that fat ass could work it!" he exclaimed.

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter can play silly tricks, but he couldn't make anybody believe it was Quelch speaking when he wasn't. Bunter's a fooling ass and a silly fathead."

"Bull!" It was a sharp voice from the open doorway of the Rag. "Bull! How dare you use such expressions! What do you mean, Bull?"

"Oh!" gasped Johnny, spinning round towards the doorway. "I—I—I didn't know you were there, sir, I—I—"

As Bunter had stated that Mr. Quelch had gone out nobody would have expected to hear his voice at the doorway of the Rag. But there was no mistaking those sharp staccato tones.

"Follow me to my study, Bull!"

"Oh!" gasped Johnny. "Yes, sir."

He tramped across to the doorway, with a lugubrious face.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "I say, Bull, Quelch ain't there! It was only my wonderful ventriloquism. He, he, he!"

"What?" gasped Bob.

Not one of the Famous Five had doubted that it was Quelch's voice at the door.

Johnny Bull, unheeding him, tramped out into the passage.

But there he stopped. Nobody was in the passage. Johnny stared blankly. Quelch, if he had been there, certainly could not have got out of sight in the time. It was borne in upon Johnny's mind that Quelch hadn't been there at all and that the fat ventriloquist had pulled his leg.

He came tramping back into the Rag with a grim expression on his face. Bunter, as he caught that expression, promptly dodged behind Bob Cherry.

"Look here, you keep off, you beast," squeaked the fat Owl. "You jolly well said I couldn't do it—and I've jolly well shown

you that I jolly well could—"

"And now I'm jolly well going to boot you!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Hold on!" interposed Bob, and he pushed Johnny back. Bob's face was quite merry and bright now. "Look here, Bunter took us all in—"

"The fat fooler!"

"And he could take in Mossoo, too. We're jolly well going to get out of extra," exclaimed Bob.

"Rot!" said Johnny. "This door happened to be open. Mossoo's class-room door will be shut. Think Mossoo's going to believe that Quelch would call through a door without opening it? Or perhaps Bunter can ventriloquise a door open!"

added Johnny sarcastically.

"You're rather dense, old chap," said Bunter. "One of these fellows will come along and tap at the door and open it. Then I shall ventriloquise Quelch's voice. It will go like clockwork."

"Oh!" said Johnny. Evidently the fat Owl had thought it out.

"It's a go!" said Bob. "By gum, if you pull it off, Bunter, I'll stand you a jam tart at the tuck shop."

"Oh, really, Cherry! I'm coming over to Cliff House with you fellows, if we get out of extra," said the fat Owl. "They stand a jolly good tea there—I mean, I want to see my sister, Bessie—I wasn't thinking of the tea—"

There was a chime from the clock tower.

"Three!" said Bob. "I've got to go in. Come on, Bunter."

"Am I coming over to Cliff House if I get you out of extra?" demanded Bunter.

"Oh! Yes! All right."

"Trust Bunter to think of a reward," remarked Nugent.

"Yah! You come along at a quarter past three, Wharton, and tap at the door and open it. Leave the rest to me," said Bunter.

"Safe as houses, with Quelch gone out and my wonderful ventriloquism, you know—"

"Come on, fathead," said Bob.

He tramped out of the Rag and the fat Owl rolled after him. The other four fellows were left wondering rather dubiously how it would turn out.

IT was not a happy gathering in No. 10 class-room. There were more than a dozen juniors in extra: Bob Cherry and Bunter, Skinner and Snoop of the Remove; Temple, Dabney, Fry and Wilkinson, of the Fourth; Tubb and Paget of the Third; Hobson and two or three more of the Shell. Nobody liked extra on a half-holiday and Monsieur Charpentier probably liked it as little as his detention class. Not a fellow in the class-room was interested in the beautiful language of Mossoo's native land; and their only consolation was to drop books or bang desk lids, or whizz ink balls, mildly ragging poor Mossoo into a state of explosive excitement. There were two hours of it; and by the time a quarter of the first hour had elapsed, Monsieur Charpentier was feeling the strain.

"Skinnair! Zat is ze second time zat you fall zat lid of ze desk!"

"An accident, sir," drawled Skinner.

"Zat zere be no more of zat, Skinnair. Hobson, vy for you drop zat book on ze floor?"

"It just dropped, sir," said Hobson.

"Buntair!"

"Ci! Yes, sir."

"I ask you, Buntair, ze imperfect indicative of flatter in ze first person."

"Je flatte," said Bunter.

"Head of a pudding, zat is ze present

indicative. Je vous demande—I ask you ze imperfect, Buntair," hooted Monsieur Charpentier. "Sherry!"

"Oh! Yes, sir," said Bob.

"Zat you tell Buntair ze imperfect indicative of flatter."

"Oh! Je flatterai," said Bob.

"Zat is ze future," hooted Mossoo.

"Ciell! Vat a class! You are one stupid boy. You understand nozzings. I zink—"

Tap!

A tap at the class-room door interrupted Mossoo. He glanced round at the door as it opened a few inches.

All the fellows in the detention class looked at the door. Any interruption of extra was welcome. Billy Bunter gave Bob Cherry a fat wink. It was time for the Remove ventriloquist to get to work.

"Go it," whispered Bob.

Bunter gave a fat little cough, his usual preliminary to ventriloquism. The next moment a sharp staccato voice came, or at least appeared to come, from the partly-opened doorway.

"Monsieur Charpentier!"

"Oui, Mistair Quelch," answered Monsieur Charpentier. Not for a moment did he doubt that those well-known and unmistakable tones belonged to the Remove master. Neither did any fellow in the class, with two exceptions; and even Bob Cherry could hardly believe that it was Bunter's ventriloquism. The detention class and the detention master expected the door to open wider and Mr. Quelch to walk in.

But the Remove master—if it was he!—apparently preferred to call in from the passage!

"Monsieur Charpentier, kindly send Bunter and Cherry to my study! They are excused from extra school."

"Veree well, sair."

Footsteps were heard receding down the passage. Certainly Monsieur Charpentier never dreamed that they came from Harry Wharton!

"Buntair! Sherry! Zat you go to Mistair Quelch's study," rapped the French master. "You vill go at vunce."

"Yes, sir."

Not the remotest suspicion was in Monsieur Charpentier's mind. Quelch, no doubt, was in a hurry, as he had simply called into the class-room without looking in! Mossoo attached no importance whatever to that detail. Quite possibly he was relieved to have done with those two members of his class who certainly did not shine in French.

Envious glances from the rest of the class followed Bob Cherry and Billy Bunter as they left their places and went to the door. It seemed that Quelch, for some reason best known to himself, was letting off those two from extra school while yet an hour and three-quarters stretched before the rest.

The door closed on Bob and Bunter and Monsieur Charpentier resumed the somewhat uphill task of driving French into reluctant heads.

In the passage Billy Bunter chuckled. Bob stared round him, almost expecting to see his form master. All he saw was Harry Wharton at the end of the passage.

"Oh, gum!" breathed Bob. "Was—was it really you, Bunter?"

"He, he, he! Am I a wonderful ventriloquist or not?" chuckled the fat Owl.

"My dear chap, I can do these things! You can't! You haven't the brains, old fellow. It needs brains, you know."

"All serene?" asked Harry Wharton as Bob joined him at the end of the passage, and Bob nodded and grinned.

"Right as rain! Mossoo hadn't a suspish! We're let off—by order of Quelch—Quelch's voice, at any rate—"

"Good egg!"

"Come on," said Bob. "The sooner we're out the better. Quelch might come in, you know. Here, Johnny, Franky, Inky, get a move on. Buck up, Bunter, if

(continued on page 7)

CHUCKLE CORNER

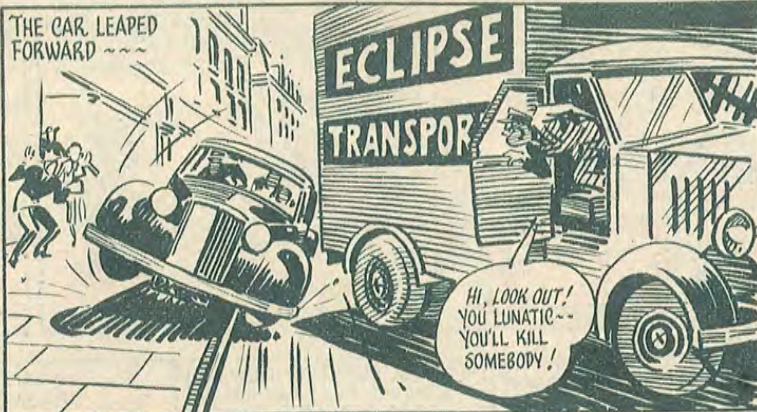


SPLASH PAGE - AND - THE MISSING PRINCE.



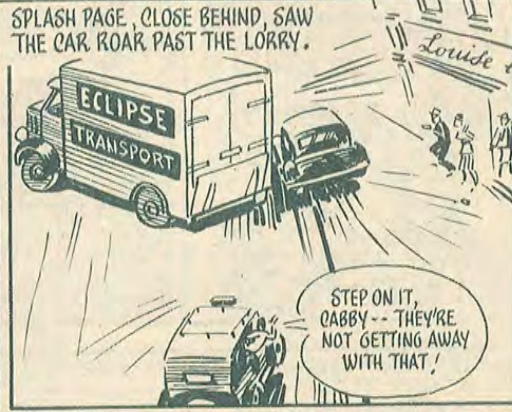
Splash Page, of the Daily World, and his assistant, Jill Brent, saw a little boy kidnapped in a London street. Chasing the kidnappers' car in a taxi, they were held up by a reversing lorry—

THE CAR LEAPED FORWARD ~~~



HI, LOOK OUT! YOU LUNATIC-- YOU'LL KILL SOMEBODY!

SPLASH PAGE, CLOSE BEHIND, SAW THE CAR ROAR PAST THE LORRY.



STEP ON IT, CABBY-- THEY'RE NOT GETTING AWAY WITH THAT!

THE GAP WIDENED AS THE LORRY DROVE FORWARD.



NICE WORK! WE'VE A CHANCE TO CATCH THOSE KIDNAPPERS NOW!



THAT POOR LITTLE BOY! THE NURSEMAID SAID HE'S A PRINCE. WE MUST SAVE HIM, SPLASH!

WE WILL! AND THINK OF THE STORY WE'LL GET!

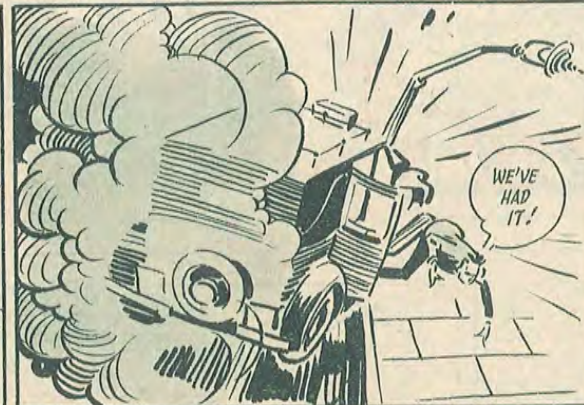


THEY'RE GAINING! WE MUST SHAKE THEM OFF! GIVE THEM ANOTHER SURPRISE PACKET!

AS THE CAR SWUNG WITH SQUEALING TYRES ROUND A CORNER ~~~



LOOK OUT! ANOTHER SMOKE BOMB!



WE'VE HAD IT!

IN THE ESCAPING CAR, ~~~



THAT STOPPED THEM, NIKOLAI! WE MUST GET OUT OF LONDON WITH ALL SPEED AND CHANGE OUR NUMBER PLATE AT A QUIET SPOT TO FOOL THE POLICE!

SPLASH PICKED HIMSELF UP AS THE KIDNAPPERS RACED AWAY ~~~



THE SMOKE BLINDED ME. COULDN'T SEE A THING, GUV'NOR!

OUCH-- I'VE COLLECTED A LOVELY BRUISE! JILL, ARE YOU O.K.? JILL!



I'M ALL RIGHT, SPLASH. JUST KNOCKED ME SILLY!

THE CAR'S A WRECK-- AND WE'VE LOST THOSE KIDNAPPERS. NOT A CLUE-- EXCEPT THEIR CAR NUMBER!



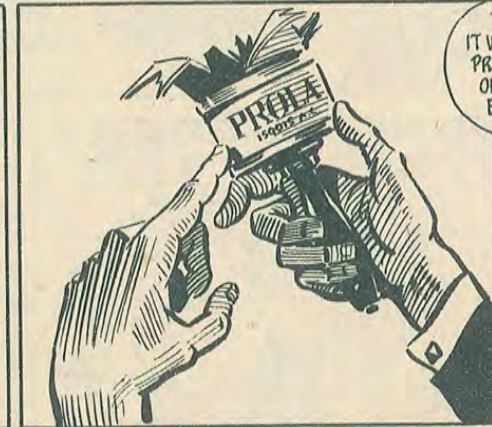
MY OWN CAB, TOO!

NEVER MIND. THE DAILY WORLD WILL PAY FOR THE REPAIRS. THIS IS A BIG STORY, AND YOU DID WELL!



LOOK! THE REMAINS OF THE BOMB-- AND A CLUE!

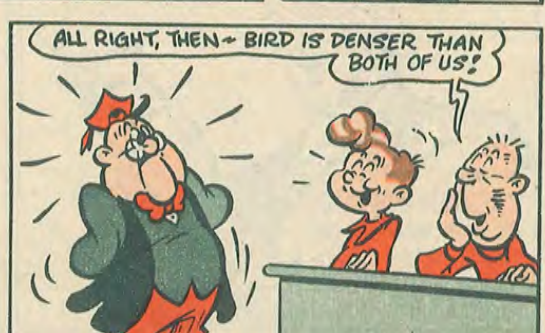
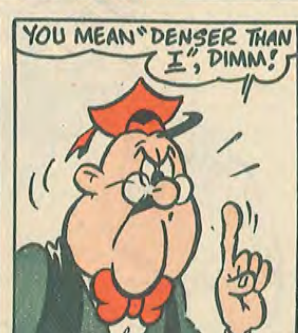
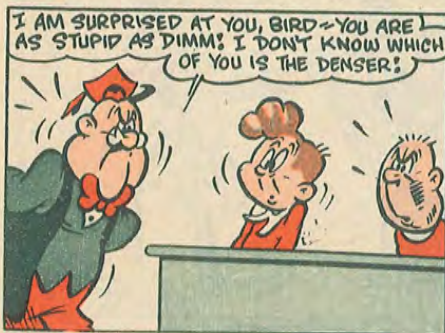
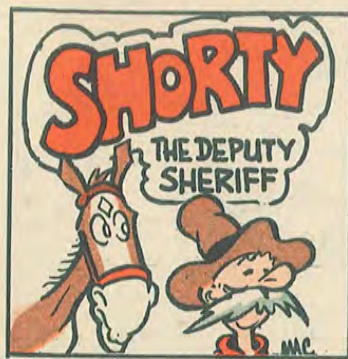
IDLY SPLASH PAGE PICKED UP THE REMAINS OF THE SMOKE BOMB-- AND A SUDDEN SHOUT MADE JILL HURRY TO HIM ~~~



THE CITY WHERE IT WAS MANUFACTURED-- PROLA, CAPITAL OF HENTZIA, IN EASTERN EUROPE!



THEN LET'S TRY THE HENTZIAN EMBASSY! THEY MIGHT GIVE US A LEAD ON THE CASE!





THE WILD GIRL OF THE HILLS.

HETTY, THE WILD GIRL OF THE HILLS, WAS FRAMED ON A ROBBERY CHARGE BUT BUCK JONES PROVES HER INNOCENCE. . . . SHE AGREES TO HELP HIM ROPE IN JAKE BROWN AND DAKERS, THE CROOK RANCHER. . .



OF COURSE, I'LL HELP YOU, BUCK. I RECKON THEY'LL MAKE FOR THEIR HIDEOUT NEAR THE BORDER, FIRST, TO COLLECT THE GOLD THEY'VE HIDDEN THERE.



I KNOW THEIR HIDEOUT IS SOMEWHERE NEAR YELLOW VALLEY BUT I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE.

THEN YOU RIDE TO THE WESTWARD END AND I'LL GO TO THE EAST. IF YOU RUN INTO TROUBLE, HETTY, THREE SHOTS WILL BRING ME RIDING FAST! SABE?



BUT BUCK LATER CHANGES HIS MIND AND FOLLOWS HETTY. IF THE CROOKS ARE HIDING AND SEE HETTY THEY WILL COME OUT TO GET HER-- AND THAT WILL BE BUCK'S CHANCE TO GET THEM!



I SURE DON'T LIKE USING HER AS A DECOY, BUT IT'S THE BEST WAY.

BROWN AND DAKERS REACH THEIR HIDEOUT IN YELLOW VALLEY. . .



WE'RE OKAY, SO FAR. WE'LL TAKE AS MUCH AS WE CAN CARRY AND SLIP OVER THE BORDER BEFORE BUCK JONES CAN HIT OUR TRAIL.



BUT A HORSE WHINNIES!



HECK! THERE'S SOMEBODY AROUND! I'LL TAKE A LOOK--SEE.



IT'S HETTY! HOW DID SHE ESCAPE FROM THE FIRE?

WHAT DOES THAT MATTER! WE'VE GOT TO GET HER FOR GOOD, THIS TIME. WHEN SHE COMES NEARER--

THE FIRST SHOT!



LET ME GO!

THE SECOND SHOT!



HOLD HER, JAKE!

THE THIRD SHOT!



YOU'RE HURTING ME!

INTO THE CAVE WITH HER, JAKE. SHE'S GOT TO TELL US WHERE BUCK JONES IS BEFORE WE FINISH HER!

BANG

BUT BUCK IS CLOSE HANDY AND HAS HEARD THREE SHOTS. . . .



THREE SHOTS-- HETTY IN TROUBLE! AND THERE SHE IS! GUESS I'VE GOT TO GET DOWN THERE BY THE SHORTEST ROUTE!



PITY ABOUT THAT STONE-- BUT IT CAN'T BE HELPED!



THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING OUT HERE--



BUCK JONES! GET AWAY, JAKE! I'LL FIX HIM!



OKAY, BUCK! THAT GETS BOTH OF 'EM, I GUESS!

THE NEXT DAY.



THAT'S DAKERS GANG ALL CORRALLED, HETTY. THANKS TO YOU. AND YOU'RE NO LONGER AN OUTLAW. WHAT'S THE NEXT MOVE?

I'M GOING NORTH TO DENVER-- TO LIVE WITH AN AUNT. BUT I'LL NEVER FORGET ALKALI CITY-- NOR YOU, BUCK! MAYBE I'LL COME BACK, ONE DAY-- TO SEE YOU!

Just to Remind You

JACK DEAN, being penniless, is on his way to Fox Cleave to ask help of his uncle, Squire Dean, his only living relative. The Squire is a lonely, bitter old man, whose only son is a ne'er-do-well, and has long since been sent packing. Jack is warned not to travel by night because there is a strange highwayman abroad—a man with the head of a white fox—who rides a black horse and terrorises the district. But Jack goes on, just the same, and hears the wild crazy laughter of the Fox! He sees a girl on a pony that, scared by the Fox, is bolting towards the cliff-top. Jack saves her! But later they actually see the Fox, and again that wild, mocking laughter rings in their ears!

THE BARGAIN

JACK DEAN stood motionless, his eyes upon the moonlit hollow down which the flying horse and its spectral rider had vanished.

His hair still seemed to be standing on end and a cold trickle to be running down his spine; but he strove to keep calm because of the girl beside him who was clinging to his arm.

"What was it?" Jack managed to ask at last.

"Something that isn't human," she whispered. "That is what they say here on the moor. It is 'The Fox' come back."

"What fox?" Jack asked her curtly.

She told him then about the old legend, current in those parts—the tale of a rascally Barnstaple butcher, named Fox, who had turned highwayman and cut-throat, some hundred years ago. Because of his savagery, so the tale went, the man had been turned to stone by a Welsh witch from across the Channel; hence the great stone boulder on the cliff with the fox's head. But, according to the old wives' tale, he would be released from his stone prison one day, and would then resume his wild career of crime.

"Now he has come back!" the girl whispered again.

Jack looked down into her white face, grinning wryly.

"The horse was real enough," he declared, "even if its rider wasn't. Where do you live?"

"Down to the village yonder. My father is Tom Benoke, the smith. He is a widower and I am his daughter, Ruth." Her eyes were turned from his shyly. "Who—who are you?" she faltered.

"I am on my way to the manor. I am Squire Dean's nephew."

"His nephew?" She looked up in surprise. "I did not know Squire had a nephew."

"I don't think he knows himself—not yet," Jack smiled again crookedly. "My father and he were brothers and they quarrelled and parted many years ago. What like of man is the squire, Ruth?"

They were walking back to where Ruth's pony was tethered and for a moment she did not answer. Then she said:

"A strange man, rather. A lonely man. Some people say he is hard and a miser, but my father does not think so. He and Squire are friends."

"I'm glad," Jack said cheerfully. "Perhaps you and I will be friends, too."

They untied the shaggy Exmoor pony and walked on together, Ruth telling him how her father had been hurt by the kick of a horse and how, that evening, unknown to him, she had ridden over to a nearby farm for some white oils as an embrocation.

"In some ways I am glad father's leg is in a splint," she said. "If it were not he would be away, like as not, hunting down this 'Fox,' whatever it be. He is a man who fears nothing."

They came presently to the gateway of a bleak stone house which Ruth told him was Fox Cleave Manor and his destination. But Jack insisted on escorting her as far as the little cluster of cottages which was Cleave village. From the quaint, gabled window in the thatched roof of the old wayside forge the glow of a candle shone.

"It's father," she whispered. "He lies awake sometimes with the pain of his leg. I must not let him hear me."

Jack nodded understanding. With a creature like "The Fox" about, doubtless the Cleave blacksmith did not consider the moor a fit place for a young girl after dark. Yet it seemed odd no steps were being taken to lay "The Fox" by the heels!

"I would have thought there'd be a hue and cry," he muttered. "Is nothing being done, Ruth?"

"Oh yes. Squire has appealed to the Lord Lieutenant and people are saying the Bow Street Runners are already come to Taunton. Yesterday this came." Ruth pointed to a large notice nailed to the door

THE WHITE FOX

A Stirring Mystery of Bygone Days

By LEWIS JACKSON



From where he crouched, Jack could see a man in uniform

moonlight.

"500 CROWNS REWARD," he read—and it went on to say this sum would be paid to any citizen delivering up to justice the murderous villain known as "The Fox"—dead or alive!

Jack thought of the few coppers in his pocket, all he had.

"Five hundred crowns!" he muttered. "And it might have been ours if we could have laid low 'The Fox' tonight. Five hundred silver crowns, Ruth!"

"But how could we have laid it low? If it isn't natural, Master Jack—I mean, if it is not a thing of flesh and blood—"

"It is," he cried defiantly. "What else can it be? I don't believe these silly stories. Look, Ruth!" He took her arm and gripped it excitedly. "If Uncle Ensor does not turn me away—if he lets me stay for a while at the Manor, will you join with me in hunting down 'The Fox'? Dare you, Ruth, or would you be afraid?"

Ruth's cheeks had turned paler but she met his eyes boldly.

"I should be afraid," she confessed, "but I don't think I would stay afraid. Not—not if you were with me."

"Let's call it a bargain, then," Jack whispered, his eyes bright. "A secret bargain. When can I see you again?"

"Soon!" she whispered—and the next moment he had gone and all she saw was a shadow hurrying away towards the Manor.

THE BLACK HORSE!

IN a big, four-poster bed in a bleak bedroom of Fox Cleave Manor, Jack Dean lay staring up into the darkness.

The reception his uncle had given him on that thrilling night of his arrival had not been very cordial, yet it was not unkind.

"There was no love lost between me and your father, boy," Squire Dean had grunted, "but we won't harp on that. Blood's thicker than water, maybe. You can bide here with me for a bit."

That was two days ago and because he

found it difficult to get away from the house Jack had seen nothing more of Ruth. He lay wondering how he could see and talk to her again without arousing curiosity. It would have to be after dark, he decided, and for that reason he had smuggled up to his bedroom a coil of rope he had found in the Manor stables.

He lay there listening to the muffled roar of the sea beating against the rocks at the foot of Fox Cleave. Then, suddenly, there came a thud of hoofs on the drive below, followed by a heavy knocking on the door.

"Open, in the name of the King!" a man's voice bellowed.

Jack was curious! Who was this midnight messenger, he wondered, demanding to see the Squire of Fox Cleave? He sprang from the bed and dressed, stealing down the stairs. From where he crouched below the balusters Jack could see a man in uniform standing on the threshold. The squire had opened the door. The visitor was a beetle-browed bully of a man with a carbine slung over his shoulder and a pistol in his belt.

It was a Bow Street Runner, Jack knew that instantly, one of those minions of the law, half soldier and half policeman, who were sent out to trail miscreants and bring them to book. The squire took him into the library and they stood there talking together.

"The King's justices don't believe in ghosts, Squire Dean," Jack heard the man rasp. "Neither do I. It's my opinion this ruffian they call 'The Fox' is a local man who knows the moor like the palm of his own hand. What like of a fellow is this village smith of yours?"

"Tom Benoke, sergeant?" replied the squire in surprise. "Why, a big, black-bearded man and honest as daylight. You're not—" he paused and his voice changed noticeably. "You're not telling me you suspect Benoke, man."

"The law suspects everybody," growled the Runner.

"But that's absurd, sergeant. Benoke's a

fine fellow. What's more, he's been kicked by a horse and for a week or more has been too much of a cripple to hobble around his forge."

The sergeant grinned unpleasantly. "I've seen cripples hang from the end of a rope afore now," he retorted, "and at a cross-roads. We're baiting a trap for the ruffian, anyway, whoever he may be, and if I know ought of foxes, this one, Squire, is going to lose his brush."

Squire Dean laughed. As a local Justice of the Peace it was his duty to see this menace removed from the moor and the sooner the better.

"It'll need to be well baited, sergeant," he declared. "What sort of trap do you propose to set?"

"One with so rich a bait as to tempt your foxy friend," chuckled the sergeant. "A live duchess, if you want to know, Squire, and a lady as well decked out with jewels as any highwayman could wish for."

The man had lowered his voice to impart this item of information and now, in the interests of caution, he strode to the heavy oak door and closed it with a snap.

"The Duchess of Bideford," Jack heard him say. "She will be riding through from Taunton after the Hunt Ball and—"

The voice of the Bow Street Runner tailed away as the door closed and Jack heard no more. But he had heard enough. He fled back up the stairs, his thoughts were of Tom Benoke and the suspicions in the sergeant's mind. They were unfair—and dangerous.

"I must see Ruth. I must warn her," Jack said to himself. "These Bow Street Runners would trump up a case against her father as soon as look at him. We must put the blacksmith on his guard."

It was a matter of moments in the bedroom above for Jack to slip on shoes and jacket, opening the window cautiously before he made one end of the rope fast and dropped it over the sill.

Less than a minute later he had shinned down it swiftly and was speeding down to the village. It was already after midnight and the little garden behind the thatched smithy was as dark and silent as the forge itself. Jack picked up a small stone and threw it with a sharp rap against the gable window above.

He had not long to wait. A few minutes and Ruth stood with him in the shadow of the forge-house, her eyes bright and excited. He told her about the Runner and what the man had said. She almost laughed.

"But it is absurd, Jack. For a week now Father has been too lame to walk without a crutch, let alone ride a horse."

"I know, Ruth. That is what Uncle told me. But these men can be treacherous. I have heard lots of people say so. You must warn your father, Ruth, without delay."

Ruth nodded reassuringly. "I will tell him in the morning," she whispered. "I will not disturb him now he is asleep. I may bring on the ache in his leg again." She looked up eagerly. "What was this you said about the trap for 'The Fox'?"

Jack told her what he had heard.

"If it is true, Ruth," he said, his voice low with excitement, "it may be the chance we are seeking."

"But how, Jack? If this sergeant and his men are already on the trail of 'The Fox.'"

"We may be able to waylay him first and claim the reward. How far is the road from here?"

"Some miles across the moor."

"Have you a horse that would carry us both?"

"There is Tony, my pony. He is strong enough. But—"

"And I can get a pistol and ammunition. There is one hanging in the stable at the Manor. It may be our only chance, Ruth, don't let us miss it, I—"

"Listen," she whispered sharply. "What's that?"

They stood motionless, holding their breath. They could hear a horse approaching, a horse whose feet were so heavily muffled as to sound soft and spectral.

"It's 'The Fox'," she whispered, gripping his arm.

"It can't be. He would not dare enter the village. It's the Runner maybe. Perhaps he is coming here."

They stood rigid, watching, neither daring to stir. They could see the horse clearly now and its rider. He was a big, broad-shouldered man with a black beard, and Jack Dean turned cold all over. It was as if he had been turned to ice.

The man was Ruth's own father, Tom Benoke, the smith!

Can Ruth's father really be "The Fox"? Don't miss the thrills in next week's long

DO YOU WANT A PEN PAL?

If so, DO NOT SEND YOUR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, but write direct to one of the readers whose name and address appears in the list below. If you would like your name and address to appear, then cut out the coupon below and send it to The Editor, the "COMET," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, together with your age and a few facts about yourself. And don't forget, at the same time, to say what you like best in the "COMET."

CHOOSE YOUR PEN PAL

MARY KEARON, 35 Holly Road, Fainwater, Cardiff. Mary is fourteen years of age, and is fond of reading and writing. She would like a pen pal of her own age.

THOMAS HASSOCK, 57 Cossington Road, Sileby, Nr. Loughborough, Leicester. Thomas is fifteen years of age and would like to have a pen pal in Australia or America. He is keen on running, cycling, and reading.

SHEILA HILLMAN, 5 Bk. 28 Stour Street, Ladywood, Birmingham. Sheila is anxious for a pen pal. She is fourteen years old and is interested in arithmetic, English, needlework, and knitting.

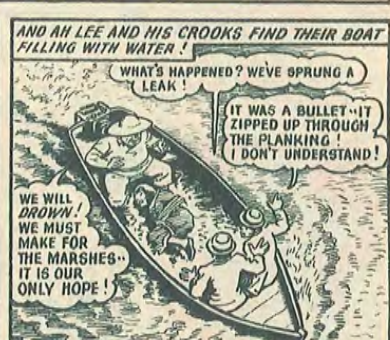
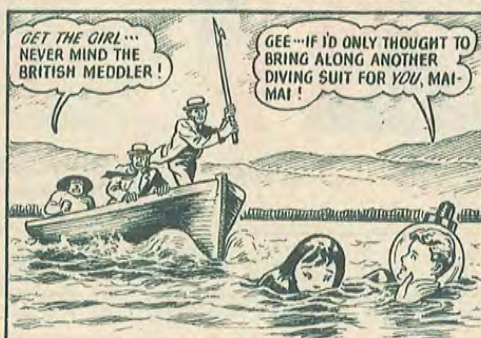
MORE NAMES AND ADDRESSES IN NEXT WEEK'S "COMET"

PEN PALS COUPON

"Comet" August 5th, 1950

Don Deeds

Don Deeds gets Mai-Mai away from Ah Lee's island stronghold by using a bamboo as a sort of catapult, so that it hurtles them through the air towards the river.



CAN DON DEEDS RESCUE MAI-MAI? More thrills next week!

Bunter Becomes Quelch

(continued from page 2)

you're coming."

Six fellows walked out of the House in cheery spirits. There was going to be tennis and tea at Cliff House after all for Bob as well as his friends, and there was going to be tea, if not tennis, for Billy Bunter. The fattest face at Greyfriars was the brightest of the half-dozen as Bunter rolled out with the Famous Five. Bunter had no doubt that there was going to be a cake for tea at Cliff House, and still less doubt about what was going to happen to that cake. Other fellows might be keen to see Marjorie, Bunter's keenness was concentrated on the cake. It was quite a happy party that walked down to the gates.

"CHERRY!"

"Oh!"

"Bunter!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"What does this mean?"

"Oh!"

Quelch had gone out that afternoon. Bunter had seen him go out. So there was, on that point, not a shadow of doubt, not a possible probable shadow of doubt, not a possible doubt whatever! It was sheer ill luck that Quelch had only gone for a little walk before settling down to work in his study. Coming in at the school gates after that little walk it was quite a surprise to Quelch to meet the party of juniors face to face. His gimlet eye glinted at two members of the party. His brows contracted. Two juniors, scheduled for extra school, were actually walking out of the gates under his very nose!

"Cherry! Bunter! You are going out!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word! Am I to understand that you have not gone into extra school? Cherry! What does this mean? Bunter, what does this mean?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"Upon my word!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Cherry! Bunter! Follow me."

"Oh, scissors!"

"Oh, lor!"

Mr. Quelch, grim as a Gorgon, marched on to the House. Bob Cherry gave his

friends an eloquent look and followed him. Billy Bunter gave a dismal groan and followed on.

A few minutes later a familiar sound floated from the open window of Mr. Quelch's study to the ears of Bob's sorrowing friends. It was the old familiar sound of a cane contacting trousers!

There was no other sound. "That's Bob—taking it like a man," said Harry Wharton sadly.

Then came Mr. Quelch's voice, grim as doom.

"Bunter!"

"Ow! No, please, sir! Please, Mr. Quelch! It was all a mistake—"

"Bunter!"

"Help! I haven't done anything!"

"Bunter, kindly bend down!"

Thwack!

"Yaroooooo!"

Thwack!

"Grooo! Ow, you're hurting!"

"Hark at that fat ass blubbing," said Frank Nugent disgustedly.

The four chums walked sadly away.

"That's that," said Johnny Bull.

That undoubtedly was that. Bob Cherry and Billy Bunter would not be sitting down to tea with Marjorie and Co. that afternoon.

ONLY four members of the party arrived at Cliff House that afternoon. There was no tennis or tea for Bob Cherry, neither was there cake for Bunter. Extra School claimed them once more; and they sat in extra very uncomfortably. Quelch had given them only a couple each, but Quelch had a deft hand with a cane; and they sat in extra as if on pins, till at length five o'clock chimed out and they were done with Mossos and French verbs.

In the passage Billy Bunter grabbed Bob's sleeve when they came out.

"I say, Bob, what about that jam tart at the tuck shop, old chap? You remember you said—Yaroooh! Whoop! Wharrer you kicking me for, you beast? Wow! Ow! Oh, crikey! You kick me again, you swob, and I'll—yaroooooo!"

Which was the only reward Billy Bunter received for his spot of ventriloquism!

More laughs with Bunter and the chums of Greyfriars next week! Don't miss them!

SMITHY





THE "COMET" GALLERY OF STARS



JEAN KENT
(Rank Organisation)



JOHN WAYNE
(R.K.O.)



JEAN SIMMONS
(Rank Organisation)



FRED MacMURRAY
(Universal International)

BUFFALO BILL

WHILE BUFFALO BILL WAS A PRISONER OF PUMA, THE BANDIT, HE HEARS PLANS BEING MADE TO ATTACK A WAGGON TRAIN. HE ESCAPES AND RIDES TO GIVE THE ALARM.



WHEN BUFFALO BILL HAD
BEEN ABANDONED IN THE
DESERT BY HIS ENEMY,
GREY SNAKE, HE HAD BEEN
FORCED TO LEAVE HIS FRIENDS,
BEAR CLAW AND BIG JIM,
IN THE HANDS OF THE PIUTES.
NOW, HE WAS ANXIOUS TO
GO BACK AND RESCUE THEM,
BUT HE HAD TO HELP THE
SETTLERS FIRST.



BUT IT
WAS NOT PUMA'S
CROWD
HE SAW
WHEN HE
REACHED
THE
FOOTHILLS



DOES THIS MEAN MORE DANGER FOR BUFFALO BILL? DON'T MISS THE THRILLS NEXT WEEK.
(BUFFALO BILL ALSO APPEARS IN THE "KNOCKOUT" COMIC)