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SPECS IS A FINE VENTRILOQUIST!

PLUCK

GRAND TALE OF SCHOOL LIFE.

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THRILLING ADVENTURE STORY



LARRY HAS A WONDERFUL KNACK OF MAKING FRIENDS.

NO. 196. NEW SERIES.

The Secret of St. Winifred's



A Splendid New School Story,

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Author of the tales of Tom Merry, appearing every week in the "GEM" Library.

READ THIS FIRST.

Clive Lawrence, a new boy at St. Winifred's, is put into the Fourth Form, which is at daggers drawn with the Fifth. The leaders of the Fourth are Fisher and Locke, Clive's study-mates, and those of the Fifth are Kendal and Keene. Courtney, a bully, takes Clive for "fag," and sends him on an errand to the Jolly Seaman, a public-house in the village. Clive arrives at his destination, and is shown into a back room to wait for a Mr. Napper. He overhears a plot between Napper and a German, whom he afterwards recognises as Herr Stessel, the German master at St. Winifred's. Clive returns to the school, and the next day quarrels with Fisher. The two agree to meet in a glove fight, and Clive knocks Fisher out. Soon after the fight Carter tells Clive that he is wanted by Courtney. (Now go on with the story.)

Fag-Master and Bully.

Clive Lawrence left Study No. 7 not in the best of humours. He felt that it was unreasonable that he should be called upon at any odd moment by Courtney, and that a good-natured senior would have made things easier for his fag. But sturdy and independent as Clive Lawrence was by nature, even he did not feel inclined—just then, at any rate—to rebel against a system that was as old as St. Winifred's itself. He took his way towards the Sixth Form corridor, and found Courtney at the door of his study. Carter's description of the senior was quite correct. Courtney was in a towering rage.

He uttered a sharp, angry exclamation at the sight of the junior.

"Didn't you hear me calling?" he exclaimed.

"No," said Clive. "Carter told me."

"You ought to have come before."

"How could I, when I didn't know you wanted me?"

"Don't answer me back, you young whelp! I expect you're lying," said Courtney harshly. "I suppose you were guzzling in your study, as a matter of fact."

"I was having my tea."

"If I were Head of St. Winifred's, I would put a stop to that feasting in the studies!" growled Courtney.

"But you're not, are you?" asked Clive.

Courtney glared at him.

"None of your cheek, unless you want a hiding! Look here, you took a note down to the Jolly Seaman for me the other night—"

"I know I did."

"And made a bungle of the affair, as I might have expected. However, that doesn't matter now. I want you to go there again this evening."

Clive's face set hard.

"You want me to go to the Jolly Seaman?"

"Yes."

"It is out of bounds."

"Is it?" sneered Courtney. "You seem to have learned a great deal during twenty-four hours or so at St. Winifred's, you young monkey!"

"I have learned that that public-house is out of bounds."

"And haven't you learned, too, that a prefect can give a pass to any junior to go out of bounds if he pleases?" said the senior.

"I suppose he can."

"Well, I am going to give you a pass, and you are going to the Jolly Seaman for me."

Clive Lawrence was silent. Whether to refuse or not, was a question. He did not like the task, but Courtney was

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certainly right in saying that a prefect had a right to give a junior a pass out of bounds.

"It isn't a letter to Mr. Napper this time," said Courtney, watching his face. "I want you to bring something to me that Mr. Beatty, the proprietor of the Jolly Seaman, will give you. You understand?"

"I am to bring something from the Jolly Seaman to the school," said Clive slowly.

"Yes—a packet."

"I understand."

"Of course, you understand, too, that you are not to make a parade of it," Courtney went on harshly. "You are to get it in after dark, and keep it under your coat until you get it into my study."

Clive set his lips.

"And what will be in the packet?"

"That is my affair."

"Mine, too, if I am to take the risk of bringing it into the school," said Clive firmly.

"There is no risk, if you take care."

"I may as well speak plainly, Courtney. I know very well that what you want me to fetch from the Jolly Seaman is something that is not allowed in the school."

"Mind your own business!"

"I suppose it is spirits, or tobacco, or something of that sort," said Clive, with a flash in his eyes, "and if a master

discovered me bringing them into the school, I should be flogged or expelled."

"I should, of course, speak up for you."

"I'm not quite assured on that point."

"You young hound! Do you doubt my word?"

"I can't rely on the word of a fellow who smuggles drink and tobacco into his study, and sends a junior to a place like the Jolly Seaman," said Clive quietly.

"Do you mean to say—"

"I mean to say that I can't go," said Clive.

"You can't! You mean you won't!"

"Well, you can put it like that if you like. I can't go to that place. I won't go there! I won't help you to break the rules of the school. I'm not going to be a party to any dirty, black-guardly business, and that's flat."

Courtney, of the Sixth, seemed about to choke as he listened to the cool, determined words of the junior. He glared at Clive savagely, his lips moving, but no word coming from them.

Clive's heart was beating rather hard. It was no light matter for a junior in the Fourth Form to set himself to oppose a Sixth Form prefect, even when the latter was in the wrong.

(To be continued.)

Your Editor's Corner

All letters should be addressed, "The Editor, The Boys' Friend, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London."

"LYNCROFT'S VENTRILOQUISM."

In response to your request, I have just taken of Specs, the Ventriloquist, last week.

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The second long story will tell of the thrilling tale of pearl-seekers among the Carnival



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