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Tom and Matt;

OR, THE

ADVENTURES OF TWO BOYS.

BY A WRITER OF CHESTERTOWN.

CHAPTER I.

"Well, Tom, what do you say to taking a sail? The boat is down to the anchorage and there's a stiff breeze blowing; we might run down to Barrington and see some of the boys before they go back to school."

The speaker was Matt Marlsman, and the one he addressed was Tom Orsoff They were both young college men who had graduated at the last term of school. They went through together and had become inseparable companions.

"Well, I don't care, Matt; we might as well enjoy the day some way." So off they went. The boat was a good sailer and they soon arrived at Barrington. They hooked their boat and proceeded up town. When they had gone about a square they noticed a man on the opposite side of the street who seemed to be watching them. Tom said to Matt, "I don't like that fellow's actions. This makes the third time I have noticed him watching me in the last two weeks. The first time I noticed him was when we were playing ball at Crownfoot Bar; he was then in the company of Frank Herzogg, and you know he is my sworn enemy. He hates me for the time I knocked him down for insulting Flossie Fordyce."

"Yes, I know, Tom, that he's your sworn enemy and has threatened to do you up the first chance he gets, and if this fellow was with him I wouldn't be at all surprised if he has hired him to help him."

"Well, Matt, we'll keep our eyes open and if he gets us he'll be smart."

The boys had now reached the residence of their friends, and entering the house they lost sight of the man.

CHAPTER II.

The stranger, after seeing the two boys enter the house, proceeded uptown until he came to the cemetery, when he turned to the right and walked leisurely along the road. He had not gone far when a man joined him; he was of medium build and would have been handsome if it had not been for the dark scowl that now and then crossed his features.

"Well, Mike," he queried, "did you see them?"

"Oh, yes, Frankie, I seen them. They have gone into 'Squire Middleton's place and I guess it will be some time before they come out."

"Well, Mike, how did they come up?" This was Frank Herzogg, and he was now scheming against Tom and Matt.

"They come up in a boat, and she's hooked down at Barney Flynn's place."

"That's good. I have a plan by which we can get rid of them," said Herzogg, "and they won't bother me any more."

"But, boss, you said there was to be no murder done."

"I know, but that's the only way to get rid of them, and if you'll stick by me I'll give you another thousand, and I'll give you five hundred now."

"It's a go, boss; I'm your man for money."

Herzogg gave him the money and they then went down to the place where Tom and Matt had hooked their boat. Barney was at home, and he was a shady character Herzogg didn't have much trouble to persuade him to become one of his pals. Telling Barney to keep watch, he and Mike entered the boat house.

They soon emerged, it not taking them long to accomplish their purpose. Frank paid Barney, and then he and Mike entered a copse of wood to watch further proceedings.

CHAPTER III.

When Tom and Matt entered 'Squire Middleton's they found Flossie Fordyce and several other girls there, and among them was Effie Shyrock, to whom Matt had been paying a good deal of attention. Of course they had a good time and did not notice how late it was until the mill whistles began to scream the hour of six. They then bid their friends good-bye and started for home. They paid Flynn for keeping their boat for them and then got under way. As they drew near the centre of the lake a heavy breeze sprang up from the south. Tom was at the helm, and he told Matt to trim his main sheet aft as he was going about. Matt did so, but Tom found he could not turn the rudder. He looked over the stern and there he saw the cause of the trouble. Four or five 20-penny nails were driven through it into the boat; to make matters worse, she had now commenced to leak. It ran through his mind at once that the man they had seen on the street had something to do with this. Looking about the boat he found two auger holes just around the mast.

"We're done for, Matt. We're driving right down upon those reefs, and the only thing to save us is to sink before we reach them. Haul down the sail and lay-to on the bow oars, and I'll see if I can't put her about with an oar." Matt did as he was directed, but it was of no use, for she kept straight on towards the rocks.

"It's of no use, Tom," said Matt. "Herzogg will have his revenge this time, for we're doomed."

They both held on to the boat now for all they were worth, expecting every minute for her to go to pieces.

"Good-bye, Tom," said Matt, and they clasped hands just as the boat struck.

But imagine their surprise when, instead of being thrown upon the rocks and beat to death by the waves that were now running very high, the rocks gave way and the boat ran on through the opening, beaching herself not far from the entrance without so much as hurting either one of them.

CHAPTER IV.

Tom and Matt looked around themselves dazed. They didn't know what to make of it, but finally they regained their scattered senses and proceeded to investigate. They found in a room back of the entrance a complete set of mint tools; this, of course, gave them to understand that this was a counterfeiter's den. They spent some time in exploring the cave. and then came to the conclusion that it would be best to quit it; but before they could carry out their intentions they were interrupted by the appearance of a man whom it seems must have been guarding the cave. As soon as he discovered the boys he commenced to shoot, and one bullet knocked Tom's hat off.

"Go for him, Mat," he cried; "we can't stand here and let him shoot us down like dogs." and he made a dash for the would-be murderer.

Matt grabbed up an oar as he went, and on reaching the counterfeiter he brought it down on his head with such force as to knock him unconscious.

"Well done, Matt," said Tom. "Now the best thing for us to do is to get out of here and notify the sheriff."

They searched around and finally found a passage leading up to the open air. They followed it and soon came out on the outskirts of the town. They lost no time in notifying the sheriff, who soon got together a posse and went down to the cave, taking Tom and Matt along with them to show the way. On arriving at the cave they found things just as they had left them, the man being still unconscious.

The sheriff disposed of his men so as to catch the rest when they came in. It was a tedious job of waiting, but the man whom Matt had hit with the oar came to in the meantime, and they had something to do while they waited in the shape of questioning him.

He promised to turn State's evidence, so the sheriff unbound him while he made a confession. He gave all away but one, and he said he didn't know him, as he always wore a mask.

It was nearing midnight now, and as the man said that was the time of meeting they all took their places. This time they didn't have long to wait, for on the stroke of twelve a tramping was heard in the passage and in a few minutes the whole band of counterfeiters came into sight. The sheriff's posse stepped into view and ordered them to throw up their hands.

"Betrayed!" they gasped and began to fire. At the first shot one of the sheriff's men fell, and then ensued a struggle for the mastery never before witnessed; but it could not go on long with such odds against the bogus money men, as was soon apparent, for soon they were all handcuffed, except the masked captain, and he fought like a demon, getting clear of them all except Tom Orzoff. When he came to him he drew a knife and made a lunge at him, hissing between his teeth, "Take that, Tom Orzoff, for your interference!" But he reckoned without his host, for Tom was an athlete, and, springing nimbly aside, struck the masked captain under the ear such a crack that it completely knocked him out.

They put the handcuffs on him and removed his mask, when it was found to be Frank Herzogg. The sheriff took them all to jail, and the next day they were tried and found guilty.

Tom and Matt told how they came to find the cave, and in the trial it came out that Herzogg, Flynn and Mike had fixed the boat.

They all got life sentences, but Herzogg escaped. Tom married Flossie and Matt married Effie, and still live by the lake where they had such thrilling adventures. FREE PRESS.

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