

**JERRY TODD
AND THE
WHISPERING
MUMMY**



BY LEO EDWARDS

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EXPRESS



Bert Sals

HE WAS POLISHING FOUR STAR-SHAPED BADGES.—([Page 14](#))

**JERRY TODD
AND THE
WHISPERING MUMMY**

BY
LEO EDWARDS
AUTHOR OF
THE JERRY TODD BOOKS, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY
BERT SALG

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JERRY TODD SAYS:

When I had this story all wrote down on paper I gave it to Scoop Ellery and said: “You take it home and read it and see if I’ve left out anything.” Scoop, who is my pal and shared in the adventure, read the story and said: “No, Jerry, I don’t think you’ve left out a thing. I like the way you tell the story, too. That part where the mummy whispers is spooky and shivery; and there’s a lot of fun and oodles of mystery. Yes,” he added, wanting to hand me a little praise for the work I had done, “it’s a pretty slick story and I bet you that boys who like to get hold of a good book will eat it up.”

I hope Scoop is right. I hope you’ll like this book, which tells how we solved the mystery of the whispering mummy. I am going to write a number of these fun-mystery books and this is the first one. If you like this story, as I hope you will, you’ll next want to read my second book, **JERRY TODD AND THE ROSE-COLORED CAT**. This is an awfully funny story. You’ll just about giggle your head off. Like **JERRY TODD AND THE WHISPERING MUMMY**, it is a story of Scoop and me and Red and Peg. We get into an awful scrape when we start a cat rest farm. There is mystery, too—a regular old brain-twister of a mystery. Yes, you’ll surely want to read **JERRY TODD AND THE ROSE-COLORED CAT**. My third book has the title, **JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE**. If you like stories of buried treasure

and mystery and fun you'll surely enjoy my third book. Like I say, there is to be a number of these books. I can't give you all the titles here. When you see a new JERRY TODD book on sale I hope you'll get a copy and read it and enjoy it.

Your friend,

JERRY TODD.

OUR CHATTER-BOX

Did you ever hear of a man living for years in a house that had no roof? He learned, though, after erecting his barn and other buildings, that roofs were a good thing. So, years after his house had been built, he gave it a roof.

I'm doing much the same thing here. This book was written years ago. In its original form it had no "Chatter-Box." Not until I had written fifteen books (this is Leo Edwards speaking) did I start messing around with "Chatter-Boxes." The first "Chatter-Box" appeared in *Poppy Ott and the Tittering Totem*. Since the publication of this book in 1929 I have included "Chatter-Boxes" in all of my books. For the young readers of these books quickly took to the idea. So, at my publisher's dictation, I am now preparing "Chatter-Boxes" for all of my earlier books.

"Our Chatter-Box," a department open to all readers, is composed mainly of letters, poems and miscellaneous contributions that I receive from boys and girls. Many

thousands of young “fans” write to me yearly. If *you* have written to me, you may find your letter in one of our many “Chatter-Boxes.” So read them all. Writers of accepted poems receive a free autographed copy of the book in which their poem appears. You will find some fine poems in the “Chatter-Boxes” in the new Trigger Berg books; also in *Andy Blake and the Pot of Gold* and *Jerry Todd, Editor-in-Grief*. Read the complete “Chatter-Boxes” in these books to better understand what the “Chatter-Box” idea is all about.

LETTERS

As I say, I receive many thousands of letters yearly from my loyal young readers. These letters are a great inspiration to me. How I enjoy them! And how I enjoy picking out the most interesting letters for publication. I’m sure I’d feel that something very necessary to the success of my work had passed out of my life if the boys and girls who read my books quit writing to me. So keep up the good work, gang. Maybe *your* particular letter will be the inspiration for a Jerry Todd book that will bring millions of laughs into the lives of America’s youth.

“I have read all of the Very Hard (Jerry Todd) and Peppy Ett (Poppy Ott) series, part of Bigger Lindbergh (Trigger Berg) and some of the Handy Cake (Andy Blake) series,” writes Harry Williams of Richmond Hill, N. Y. “I like them all. I’ve said to my father: ‘If I see Afterwards (Edwards) on a new book I know it’s good.’”

Thanks for the compliment, Harry. Certainly I'll always try hard to put good stuff into my books. Often I could save time by making my books shorter. But I always try to give boys as much as I can for their money.

"I am a baseball fan," writes Freckled Goldfish (No. 4782) William Dvoracek of Chicago, Ill., "and would like very much to have you write a Todd or Ott book about baseball. You could have a mystery in the book. Start the story by telling how Jerry's gang attended a baseball game, thus getting interested. They organize a nine of their own and later challenge the 'Zulutown Rats,' a team of Bid Strickers, the game to be played on Oak Island. . . . I am building a rack for my Ott and Todd books, hoping some day to have in that rack every book you have written."

Other boys have asked me to put Jerry and his gang into athletics. But my publisher wants me to continue the present type of story, figuring rightly that there are many other authors who can write better athletic stories than I.

"Though fourteen years old," writes Freckled Goldfish Victor de Gennaro of Brooklyn, N. Y., "I like all of your books. I never read a Jerry Todd book till one day a friend of mine named Stanley Bacci loaned me the *Whispering Mummy*. I liked it so much I then read all of the Todd books. Later I read the Poppy Otts, then the Andy Blakes, and now I'm reading the new Trigger Bergs. Gee! I wish you had 71,493,681,906 hands so you could keep writing books and I could keep right on reading them all day long. In the 'Chatter-Box' in the second Trigger Berg book you asked the readers to let you know if they liked long 'Chatter-Boxes.' My answer is, the

longer the better. I wish I could live in a small town, like Jerry Todd, and go barefooted. I'm a Boy Scout and thus enjoyed reading about Red and Rory trying to make a totem pole. When I get rich I'm going to visit you. Give my regards to Beanie and tell him I said he has a wonderful dad."

"As Exalted Fantail of our Freckled Goldfish lodge," writes William F. Dwenny of West Philadelphia, Pa., "you may be able to get away with a lot, but when you say that the Trigger Berg books are for boys from seven to ten you are slightly damp. Boy, I've read the first two Trigger Bergs and I've never laughed so much in all my life. Tail Light sure is funny with his trick hair cuts and the Fourth of July peanuts. And did I ever laugh when the boys' fathers got caught in the Grotto of Blood. I thought I'd die, it was so funny."

I wish I had space for more general letters. But I have been told to confine these added "Chatter-Boxes" to about eighteen hundred words. But we're going to have some dandy big "Chatter-Boxes" in all of my new books. So I'll probably have room for your letter (the one I hope you'll write to me soon!) if it is interesting.

FRECKLED GOLDFISH

Out of my book, *Poppy Ott and the Freckled Goldfish*, has grown our great Freckled Goldfish lodge, membership in which is open to all boys and girls who are interested in my

books. Thousands of readers have joined the club. We have slick membership cards (designed by Bert Salg, the popular illustrator of my books) and fancy buttons. Also for members who want to organize branch clubs (hundreds are in successful operation, providing boys and girls with added fun) we have rituals.

To join (and to be a loyal Jerry Todd fan I think you ought to join), please observe these simple rules:

- (1) Write (or print) your name plainly.
- (2) Supply your complete printed address.
- (3) Give your age.
- (4) Enclose two two-cent postage stamps (for card and button).
- (5) Address your letter to

Leo Edwards,
Cambridge,
Wisconsin.

LOCAL CHAPTERS

To help boys and girls organize local chapters of our Freckled Goldfish lodge, we have produced a printed ritual, which any member who wants to start a Freckled Goldfish club in his

own neighborhood can't afford to be without. This booklet tells how to organize the club, how to conduct the meetings, how to transact all club business, and, probably most important of all, how to initiate candidates.

The complete initiation is given, word for word.

Naturally, these booklets are more or less secret. So, if you send for one, please do not show it to anyone who isn't a Freckled Goldfish. Three chief officers will be required to put on the initiation, which can be given in any member's home, so, unless each officer is provided with a booklet, much memorizing will have to be done. The best plan is to have three booklets to a chapter. These may be secured (at cost) at six cents each (three two-cent stamps) or three for sixteen cents (eight two-cent stamps). Address all orders to Leo Edwards, Cambridge, Wisconsin.

CLUB NEWS

“To raise money for our club,” reports Leader Jack Herb of Pittsburgh, Pa., “we gave a moving picture show, which was attended by thirty-two boys and girls. A sister of one of our members made candy, which we sold, and in all we cleared \$1.75. Now that we have this money in the club treasury, what are we to do with it? Our club is getting along fine. My dad calls us the Sink or Swim Goldfish.”

Don't be impatient, Jack, to spend the money in your treasury. Some clubs buy books, thus starting a private library. Other

clubs buy athletic goods, which are the property of the club. Recently I had a report from a Milwaukee club in which the members, using club money, attended a “movie” in a body. In nice weather, buy some “eats” to cook over a fire and take a hike. And refreshments, such as ice cream and candy, are always in order at club meetings.

“At our club meeting,” reports Leader Betty Henszey of Oconomowoc, Wis., “we give reports on Jerry Todd and Poppy Ott books, discuss our club business and at present (in May) we are running off a track meet with your books as prizes. We have twelve members and our password is ——.

Here is our official anthem (Sing to tune of ‘On Wisconsin!’):

Leo Edwards, Leo Edwards,
write on for your fame,
Jerry Todd and Poppy Ott
have won for you a name,
Rah! Rah! Rah!
Leo Edwards, Leo Edwards,
we kids are for you.
Write, Leo, write! write! write!
three cheers for you.

“We have the clubroom, or pool, in our attic, where we have a big cutout of a goldfish at one end of the room. The walls are decorated with the colored jackets of your books. Usually our meetings are orderly, but one time Art Stemmons found some bitter-sweet berries and then there was some lively pegging back and forth. I have a new dog whose full name is Commander-in-Chief Jerry Todd Poppy Ott Leo Edwards Henszey—but we call him Jerry for short. The kids

around our neighborhood have named their bicycles the *Galloping Snail*, the *Bob-Tailed Elephant*, and so on.”

“You ought to have cloth emblems made exactly like our pins so the members of the Freckled Goldfish club can wear them on their swimming suits and sweaters,” suggests Goldfish Charles F. Spiro of Yonkers, N. Y. He adds: “I have just read *Trigger Berg and the Treasure Tree*. Oh, boy, is it ever swell! That phantom smoke and the skeleton! Wow! Did I ever have the shivers! When the boys saw the skeleton the steam in our radiator made a noise and I nearly hit the ceiling.”

Charles’ suggestion is a good one. And it isn’t improbable that we will get out something in the way of an emblem. But we’ll need a lot of letters urging the thing along before results can be obtained. So if *you* would like to have a Goldfish emblem for your sweater or bathing suit, get busy and write to me.

“I would like to see Jerry’s whole gang on a bicycle tour,” suggests Herbert Bourdeau of Johnston, R. I. “They could go miles from home, sleeping nights in pup tents, or they could take hammocks and swing them from trees.”

Very well, Herb, I’ll try and put Jerry’s gang on wheels in a future book.

Also Herb sends in this contribution:

Song of the Freckled Goldfish

One for all and all for one,
Our club was made for good clean fun.

We try to act like brothers—
We want good boys—no others
One for all and all for one,
We'll be friends till life is done,
And though we may be poor or rich
We are just Freckled Goldfish.

LEO'S PICTURE

And now, gang, I have some news for you. An autographed picture of Leo Edwards—in person—may be obtained by writing to Leo Edwards' secretary, Grosset Dunlap, 1140 Broadway, New York, N. Y., and enclosing ten cents in stamps to cover cost of handling. Modesty prevents me from telling you, fellows, that this is a rare bargain. Only ten cents for such a wonderful picture! Ahem!

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Here is a complete list of Leo Edwards' published books:

THE JERRY TODD SERIES

JERRY TODD AND THE WHISPERING MUMMY
JERRY TODD AND THE ROSE-COLORED CAT
JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE
JERRY TODD AND THE WALTZING HEN
JERRY TODD AND THE TALKING FROG
JERRY TODD AND THE PURRING EGG
JERRY TODD IN THE WHISPERING CAVE
JERRY TODD, PIRATE
JERRY TODD AND THE BOB-TAILED ELEPHANT
JERRY TODD, EDITOR-IN-GRIEF
JERRY TODD, CAVEMAN
JERRY TODD AND THE FLYING FLAPDOODLE

THE POPPY OTT SERIES

POPPY OTT AND THE STUTTERING PARROT
POPPY OTT'S SEVEN-LEAGUE STILTS
POPPY OTT AND THE GALLOPING SNAIL
POPPY OTT'S PEDIGREED PICKLES
POPPY OTT AND THE FRECKLED GOLDFISH
POPPY OTT AND THE TITTERING TOTEM
POPPY OTT AND THE PRANCING PANCAKE
POPPY OTT HITS THE TRAIL

THE TUFFY BEAN SERIES

TUFFY BEAN'S PUPPY DAYS
TUFFY BEAN'S ONE-RING CIRCUS
TUFFY BEAN AT FUNNY-BONE FARM

TUFFY BEAN AND THE LOST FORTUNE
TUFFY BEAN'S HUNTING DAYS

THE TRIGGER BERG SERIES

TRIGGER BERG AND THE TREASURE TREE
TRIGGER BERG AND HIS 700 MOUSE TRAPS
TRIGGER BERG AND THE SACRED PIG
TRIGGER BERG AND THE COCKEYED GHOST

THE ANDY BLAKE SERIES

ANDY BLAKE
ANDY BLAKE'S COMET COASTER
ANDY BLAKE'S SECRET SERVICE
ANDY BLAKE AND THE POT OF GOLD

JERRY TODD AND THE WHISPERING MUMMY

CHAPTER I STOP, LOOK AND LOOSEN!

When we appeared in Main Street Saturday morning our outfit attracted quite a bit of attention, especially our sign. Scoop Ellery pushed the two-wheeled cart containing the ice-cream freezer and made the sandwiches, cutting the ice cream bricks into slices with one of his pa's cheese knives. We let him have the most important job because selling the ice cream sandwiches was his idea. Red Meyers rang the old dinner bell we found under Peg Shaw's hen house. I did the shouting and made change. Peg carried the sign.

It was a lot of fun. And what got us all excited was the prospect of making two or three dollars clear profit. Scoop had it all figured out how we could put our profit back into more ice cream and wafers and pretty soon we'd be

driving around in Packard automobiles. Like the man who started out with ten hens. The second year each hen raised ten more, which made an even hundred. The third year there was a thousand hens, and so on.

“Right this way to get a great big ice cream sandwich for only five cents,” I yelled, as we continued down the street.

Some kids playing near the curb came running. Their eyes were big and round and they almost let their tongues hang out, they were so hungry for some of our ice cream.

“Got that big freezer clean full of ice cream?” one of them wanted to know, eyeing the freezer hungrily.

“Sure,” said Scoop in a businesslike way. “Wanta sandwich? Only five cents. First come first served.”

“I ain’t got five cents,” said the kid. “But maybe I kin git some money from ma. Just you wait here a second.”

“Here’s where we make our first sale,” Scoop said happily, when the kid came back on the run.

Shortly after that we made another sale. Scoop’s scheme was working out fine. By ten o’clock quite a bit of the ice cream was sold and I had eighty-five cents in my pocket.

It was a hot day for September. We had just finished our first week of school following the summer vacation. Tutter College was to open up in a day or two and the students were coming into town on every train. We were close by the depot when the Chicago-Peoria accommodation

whistled beyond the Carey sand pit. Thinking we might be able to sell a few sandwiches we scooted over, arriving at the depot just as the train rumbled in, the brakes jangling and the engine blowing off steam.

It was then we noticed the Stricker gang. They were chasing around the platform tripping each other up. We hate the Stricker cousins. They're always up to mean tricks. Jimmy Stricker is the worst, though Bid isn't very far behind him. They live in a part of Tutter called Zulutown. Wherever you see Jimmy or Bid you'll generally find a gang of Zulutown kids at their heels.

"Lookit the circus parade," jeered Bid, when we appeared on the platform with our cart and sign.

"Beat it," growled Peg, giving Bid a shove with his elbow. Bid didn't dast shove back. He knows Peg can lick him. Peg is big and strong for his age and a scrapper, I'll tell the world.

"They got a baboon in the parade," yelled Jimmy, pointing at Red. "Lookit, gang, the trained baboon is ringing a dinner bell. What do you know about that?"

I didn't blame Red for getting hot. It isn't very nice to be called a baboon just because you have a red face and freckles. I knew how he felt. He wanted to fight right there on the depot platform but Scoop and Peg talked him down.

"This isn't our fighting day," said Scoop.

"Nix," said Peg, "we're here to make money."

“Hold your temper,” said Scoop. “Some other day we’ll even scores with the Strickers.”

More than a dozen students got off the train. We hadn’t seen any of the college students around town since last spring, but the summer vacation hadn’t changed them any. They were just as gabby and noisy and smart-acting as ever, wearing little yellow caps that made them look like a lot of ninnies. One of them got his eyes on Spider Phelps, who was resting against his rickety bus waiting for possible passengers. Dropping his grips in a heap he rushed across pell-mell and grabbed Spider’s hand.

“Well, well, if it ain’t my old pard Spider, the faithful custodian of the village taxi,” he said noisily, pumping Spider’s arm up and down; and the way he said it made you think he and Spider had chummed together all their lives.

Spider scowled.

“Beat it,” he growled, jerking his hand away and putting it in his pocket for safe-keeping. “You can’t bum a ride up th’ hill to College Park that easy. I may be green but I ain’t dumb. An’ I ain’t furgot about that thirty-five cents you short-changed me out of last April, nuther.”

“But, my dear fellow——”

“Git,” said Spider.

The student stepped back and slowly shook his head, regarding Spider sorrowfully. Of course we knew he was putting on. Spider knew it, too. That’s the way with a number

of the students who come to the Tutter college: they like to show off. Some, of course, come to study and learn sensible things out of books; but others, it would seem, just come to play football and have a good time.

“To think,” said the student, “that my old friend—my bosom pal——”

“Cash in advance a-fore you git in or you walk,” cut in Spider, grimly, blocking the door of the bus.

On the instant the student’s mood changed.

“I’ll match you for it,” he suggested lightly, jingling some coins in his trousers pocket.

Spider’s eyes were narrowed.

“I’ve seen that two-headed nickel of you’n before,” he said. “Nothin’ doin’,” he added. “If you smart geezers wanta ride to College Park you gotta pay in advance—c-a-s-h, meanin’ cash money. Git me?”

At this the students noisily closed in on the bus, all jabbering at once. It was an awful hubbub. At a word from the leader every fellow in the gang bent over and joined in a yell that ended with:

Spider, rah! Spider, rah!
Rah, rah, Spider!

“Ain’t they the poor nuts?” said Scoop with a disgusted scowl. Then as the students began paying Spider money and

piling their grips and tennis rackets and ukulele cases into the bus, we let loose, feeling it was high time to flag their attention.

“I-ice cre-eam san-ndwiches,” we yipped in chorus, with Red bearing down hard on the old dinner bell. “Ni-ice i-ice cre-eam san-ndwiches. Vanil-l-la. Choc’la-ate. Only fi-ive cents each.”

I guess we made pretty nearly as much noise as they did with their yell. For just an instant they seemed startled at the competition; then the leader sauntered across with his hands thrust into his pants pockets and his cap pushed back on his head. He squinted at our sign and a big grin rippled over his face, dancing in rings around his snappy black eyes. I liked his looks, and when he turned the grin in my direction I grinned back.

“Lookit, gang!” he called out. “Get this; it’s good.”

STOP!

LOOK!

LOOSEN!

Ice cream sandwiches only
5 cents each.

Buy early and avoid
the rush.

“Who’ll be the first young gentleman in a yellow cap to step up and buy a ni-ice i-ice cream sandwich?” called out Scoop, putting emphasis on the word “gentleman.” This was good business on his part and shows how he takes after his father, who runs a grocery store.

“How much for the outfit?” inquired the student, looking into Scoop’s face.

Scoop wasn’t expecting this.

“What do you mean?” he returned a bit uncertainly.

“Ice cream, cart, sign, bell, everything. How much for the complete outfit?”

“Aw, quit your kiddin’,” said Scoop with a scowl.

“I’m serious—very serious. I would fain attach myself to your lucrative two-wheeled enterprise with its vanilla environment and chocolate background. Possibly a silver dollar would induce you——”

“Huh! I guess not,” Scoop cut in stiffly, giving the student a contemptuous up-and-down look.

“Of course, two dollars would be a high price——”

“Nope,” Scoop said flatly.

“Three dollars, surely——”

By this time Red and Peg and I were grouped about Scoop and the ice-cream freezer looking sort of dumb. It was plain

that the students were actually wanting to buy us out. In a way that didn't surprise us, though it was a bit unexpected. For them to buy our ice cream business and start peddling ice cream around town wasn't any crazier than some of the things they had done in the past.

“Five dollars cash and she's yours,” said Scoop in a take-it-or-leave-it tone.

“My dear Captain Kidd——”

“Don't try to 'Kidd' me,” bristled Scoop. “I'm no pirate. Five dollars is the price. Put up or shut up.”

“That's telling you, Thirsty,” another of the students laughed, patting the leader on the shoulders. “He's calling your bluff, old timer.”

“Let's make a pot of it,” some one in the group suggested; and in the twinkling of an eye dimes and quarters and half dollars were rolling upon the platform. We were kept on the jump picking them up.

Scoop counted the money and announced:

“Five dollars and twenty-five cents including a lead dime and two plugged nickels. She's yours.” With a happy grin he stepped back and turned the cart and ice-cream freezer over to the students. He whispered to me: “Jerry, this is soft! Five dollars and twenty-five cents for seventy-five cents worth of ice cream.”

“How about your cart?” I pointed out. “That’s worth three or four dollars.”

He put a finger to his lips.

“S-h-h-h! To-night before it gets dark we’ll slip up the hill to College Park and get it. Like as not they’ll dump it on a rubbish pile when they get through with it. A four-dollar cart isn’t anything in their gay young lives with pa sending ’em plenty of checks.”

The students paid Spider for hauling their grips up the hill to College Park; then they got out their ukuleles and formed a noisy procession, Thirsty stepping it off at the head, carrying our stop-look-loosen sign and jingling the bell. The last we saw of them they were zigzagging down the middle of Hill Street in the direction of Main, singing at the top of their voices:

Hail! Hail! The gang’s all here!
Stop and look and loos-en,
Stop and look and loos-en.
Hail! Hail! The gang’s all here!
Stop and look and loos-en now.

We were still talking about it being our lucky day and what would we do with the money when Red gave a cry and pounced upon a fancy pin in the cinders at the edge of the depot platform. The pin was made of gold and shaped to represent a mummy with a sphinx head. Funny lettering was engraved on the mummy, like you see on the doors of the college fraternity houses.

“I bet one of the students dropped it,” said Peg, taking the pin and examining it. “Don’t you remember, fellows?—there was a whole column in the *Daily Globe* last fall about a crazy initiation at a fraternity house called the Golden Sphinx. They’ve got a swell club-house out in Oakcrest, just beyond College Park and near the city cemetery. Pa did some decorating for them and he says they’re a noisy bunch. Um—I wonder what the funny lettering means.”

“Probably something written in Egyptian,” said Scoop, squinting at the pin in Peg’s hand.

“I bet I know,” Red spoke up quickly, his eyes sparkling. When he gets an idea his eyes always act up that way. “It’s the mummy’s name,” he said.

“Shucks! Mummies don’t have names,” scoffed Peg. “A mummy is just a mummy.”

“Is that so!” flared Red, the sparkle going out of his eyes and a scowl clouding his freckled face. “That’s all you know about it. There’s a mummy in the college museum on the hill what’s got a name. I know because I was up there and saw it.”

“Saw its name! Haw! haw! haw!” laughed Peg in a tantalizing, superior way.

Red’s face got purple. I could see he was good and mad.

“Yes, I *saw* its name,” he repeated. “It was printed on a card and it was R-a-m something.”

“Ramses,” supplied Scoop, coming into the conversation. “Red’s right,” he added, turning to Peg. “I’ve seen the mummy myself. It’s in a glass-covered case, the homeliest and most dried-up thing you ever set eyes on. The man in charge of the museum says it is the embalmed body of an Egyptian king, the one who made slaves of the Hebrews, like it tells about in the Bible. The name is Ramses, just as Red says, and the mummy is thousands of years old.”

Peg knows how to be stubborn.

“Aw,” he scoffed, “you can’t fool me. I don’t believe it.”

“All right, Mister Know-it-all,” said Scoop. “If you don’t want to believe it—don’t. But the first time we happen to be passing the museum and it’s open we’ll take you in and *show* you. Won’t we, Red?”

“You bet your sweet life,” Red said hotly, pocketing the pin.

I could have supplied some information about the mummy but I decided not to butt in as to do so would likely start a scrap between Red and Peg. Red is hot-headed; and it’s hard to budge Peg when he gets his mind set on a thing.

Scoop and Red were right, though, about the mummy in the college museum. I had overheard Dad and Mr. Dixon White, the man who donated the mummy to the college, talking about it. He and Dad are on the water power committee which has something to do with the river dam that supplies power for his paper mill. Sometimes when business takes Dad to the paper mill I invite myself to go along. It is a lot of fun to see the big waterwheels churning away, black and

powerful and mysterious. I like to see the pulp swirling in the enameled mixing vats and watch the steam drier take the pulp and convert it into paper. Mr. Dixon White is a very wealthy man. He is always giving money and things to our college. The mummy cost him two thousand dollars.

CHAPTER II

FOUR JUPITER DETECTIVES

As we turned to leave the depot our attention was attracted to a strange man seated on the platform a short distance from us. His clothes seemed to bag at the elbows and knees, as though they were very old, like their owner. Wiry gray hair bushed out from beneath the brim of a slouch hat. He didn't seem to notice us; at least he didn't glance our way. He was busy polishing, with a soiled handkerchief, four star-shaped policeman badges. The badges were pinned to his trousers, sort of in his lap as it were, which enabled him to work on them without holding them. He would rub first one, inspect it critically with one eye squinting, then give his attention to the next one.

“Now I wonder what he's up to,” mused Scoop, edging closer to where the old man sat. The latter went ahead with his work, softly singing to himself:

There were an old soldier,
An' he had a wooden leg;
An' he had no terbaccy,
Nor terbaccy could he beg.

All of a sudden he quit singing and glanced up sideways at Scoop.

“Howdy, Sonny,” said he. We could see now that his eyes were a deep, friendly blue, like the sky in summer vacation. They seemed to twinkle. We liked him right off and forgot about his shabby clothes.

“Howdy,” returned Scoop. “Where did you get all the policeman stars?”

At this direct question the old gentleman appeared a bit uneasy. He cautiously squinted about to see if any bystanders had overheard Scoop’s question. Putting his finger to his lips he shook his head mysteriously, his eyes big and round, and said in a low voice:

“S-h-h-h! Not so loud, Sonny. Them’s detective badges.”

“Are you a detective?” Scoop inquired quickly.

The old man drew back his stooped shoulders. On the instant he seemed very dignified and very businesslike, just like the man in the bank who takes your money and writes down in your bank book how much the bank owes you. Only the old gentleman didn’t seem cold and distant like the man in the bank. He was fully as businesslike, but in a warm, friendly way. He felt about in the pocket of his baggy coat and produced a calling card. It was wrinkled and dirty but we easily made out:

JUPITER DETECTIVE AGENCY

All kinds of detecting done at lowest rates. Murders and robberies a specialty. If you have a mystery we can solve

it.

ANSON ARNOLDSMITH, *President.*

“I,” said the man with quiet pride, “am Mr. Arnoldsmitth.”

Gee-miny! A thrill chased itself up and down my backbone, just like the time the President steamed into Tutter in his private car with the Grange Band playing “Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean,” and us kids all lined up beside the railroad track in our Sunday clothes, waving nine-cent flags. I had read about detectives and how they disguise themselves and solve mysteries, but this was the first real one I ever had seen. I figured he must be a very good detective, and a very prominent man, because he was president of the company.

While we stood there regarding the old gentleman admiringly, without knowing just what to say, he turned and gave his whole attention to Scoop, looking him over from the brass button on his cap to the spot on his shoe where a foot got mixed up with the paint brush when we were working on our ice cream sign. When he completed his inspection of Scoop he turned to Red, then to Peg, then to me. A disappointed look came into his wrinkled face and he slowly shook his head.

“No,” he mused, in answer to his unspoken thoughts.

“No what?” Scoop inquired eagerly, leaning over and looking into the old man’s face.

“Reckon as how you fellers ain’t quite husky enough.”

“For what?” Scoop followed up.

“Fur membership in my detective agency,” explained the man. “Mebby as how I ain’t told you ’bout me tourin’ the United States and Canady app’intin’ Juvenile Jupiter Detectives in the cities and towns what I stop off in. Thought at first you boys might be able to qualify and become detectives in my company, with sole and exclusive rights to do detectin’ in Tutter. But I reckon you’re a bit too young fur such a great responsibility. Then—too, you might not be able to pay the ’nitial membership fee, which fur one week only is reduced to a dollar and a quarter and you git a star and membership card and a book tellin’ how to disguise yourselves and how to do detectin’. All fur only a dollar and a quarter, which is a big bargain. But when I see four smart, wide-awake young fellers like you be I ain’t carin’ if I lose a little money if I kin git you into my company. I like to see smart boys like you be take a leadin’ part in the affairs of your community; and every community the size of this ought to have four Jupiter Detectives. Of course if you could afford to pay the membership fee, which, as I say, is reduced to only a dollar and a quarter fur one week only, I might consider your applications fur membership in my celebrated and famous company, even though you’re a bit young. But I guess—I guess——”

The old man seemed to run down. His voice trailed off into space and the sorrowful look returned to his wrinkled face. I felt pretty guilty to think we were disappointing him that way and making him feel sad when he wanted to do so much for us and permit us to join his company and become detectives. It was plain he didn’t know

about our five dollars. I looked at Scoop to see how he felt about it and I guess he was thinking the same as I was.

The old man slowly unfastened the badges, gently wrapped them in his soiled handkerchief and placed them in his coat pocket. Then he got onto his feet and walked away, a bit stooped and unsteady like all old people.

Right away a great big feeling of disappointment and unhappiness swelled up inside of me. I knew what was the matter. I wanted to be a Jupiter Detective and wear one of those dandy star badges. There wasn't anything in the world I wanted more than that. As the badges disappeared into the old gentleman's coat pocket I felt as though Opportunity had knocked on my front door and then passed on down the street looking for a boy who had brains enough to say: "Come in and have a seat and take off your wraps and stay awhile."

Clutching Scoop's arm, I cried excitedly:

"Say, I want my dollar and a quarter out of that five dollars."

"Me, too," said Red, tugging at Scoop's other arm.

"And me," said Peg, taking Scoop by his coat collar.

Scoop shook us off and ran down the platform after the old gentleman.

"Say, Mr. Arnoldsmith," he said breathlessly, "we'd like to buy those four stars and join your detective company and be detectives like you said." He took from his pants pocket the handful of dimes and quarters and half dollars that the

students had paid to us. “See,” he added, “we’ve got plenty of money.”

The old gentleman beamed on us in a wonderfully kindly way.

“Now, this makes me plumb awful happy to be able to help such fine smart boys git started in a useful occupation,” he said feelingly, as he pocketed our five dollars. His hands trembled a bit as he took the badges from his coat pocket and pinned them on our coats. “Now you are full-fledged Juvenile Jupiter Detectives,” he said, “and no one else in my company has a right to do detectin’ in Tutter but you. When I git back to my office soot in New York City I’ll have my chief sec’etary send you membership cards which I’m out of jest now. Here is your book tellin’ how to do detectin’.”

I think that was one of the proudest moments of my life. And I was a bit sober as the thought came to me of how Providence was watching over me and guiding my destiny and helping me to become famous, just like the preacher said the Sunday the mouse jumped out of the organ and old Mrs. Higgins fainted right in church.

With a great contentment I pictured the envy of the other kids in Tutter when they learned of my membership in the detective agency. Take the Stricker gang. They’d have about seventeen jealous fits when they heard the news. It would be all over town pretty quick. Things like that travel fast in small towns. And shortly when I appeared in the streets the people would nudge each other and say: “Yes; that’s him!” and look at me in that appreciative, respectful way like they did at the sleight-of-hand performer who gave a show in the opera

house last winter and picked crackers out of the ears of the girl who waits on the table at the hotel.

The detective book was interesting, though it seemed to be written for men instead of boys. It told how to “shadow” a suspect without being observed and how to disguise ourselves in many different ways. We pinned our badges on our shirts under our coats when Scoop read that we should keep our professional identity a secret and not let people in general know that we were detectives. That was a disappointment, but we felt it was best to do as the book said.

After a bit Red spoke up:

“Now that we got the stars, how soon do we start doing detecting?”

“Right away,” said Scoop.

“What are we going to start on?” Red followed up. “It seems to me we can’t do much in the detecting line if some one isn’t robbed or there isn’t a mystery of some sort.”

On the instant Scoop looked dumb. That was a thing we hadn’t taken into consideration. It is a fact that Tutter is an awfully small, poky town and about the most exciting thing that happens is when Mrs. Maloney’s goat gets loose on wash-day or the students mess each other up in a cane-rush. A long time ago, before I had my front tooth knocked out, the post office was robbed of seven dollars’ worth of two-cent postage stamps, but that wasn’t likely to happen again with a new lock on the back door.

I guess if we had known what was *going* to happen we would have been all excited instead of downcast. We didn't know, though. As Scoop said afterwards we just walked into the mystery with our eyes shut.

CHAPTER III

THE WHISPERING MUMMY

It was the right thing to do, I thought, to let Mother and Dad know about me being a Juvenile Jupiter Detective, so that evening I wore my star in plain sight when I sat down at the supper table. Dad saw it first. He stopped eating and his fork clattered to his plate.

“What’s the idea of all the nickel-plated regalia?” said he, regarding me quizzically. “Been appointed official dog catcher?”

“It isn’t nickel-plated; it’s silver,” I said, touching the star proudly and letting my chest on the side where the star was pinned kind of swell out. Then I added: “I’m a Jupiter Detective. Scoop’s one, too, and so is Red and Peg. And we’ve bought the sole and exclusive rights to do detecting in Tutter.”

Mother gave a laugh.

“Jerry,” said she, “you’re talking nonsense.”

“It isn’t nonsense,” I defended. “Guess I paid a dollar and a quarter for it.”

“A—dollar—and—a——” Mother didn’t seem able to get any further than that. She quit laughing and stared at me, a teacup half way to her mouth. She acted as though I had dropped into something she couldn’t pull me out of. Dad choked and hid his face in his napkin. After a moment Mother said:

“Maybe, Jerry, you won’t mind telling your pa and me who stung you for the dollar and a quarter.”

I didn’t like to have her talk that way about me being stung when any one could see I had gotten a bargain. Why, the old gentleman even admitted it was a bargain, and he ought to know, being president of the company! I tried to explain to Mother what an honor it was to have a Juvenile Jupiter Detective right in the family and how I wouldn’t have had the chance to join Mr. Arnoldsmit’s famous company if he hadn’t been observing and noticed how smart and wide-awake I was. I didn’t make much headway. She just couldn’t get my serious view of things at all. After I got all through she laughed and said:

“You do detecting! Jerry, that’s funny. What kind of detecting can you do?”

“We specialize in murders and robberies,” I said, remembering what was printed on Mr. Arnoldsmit’s calling card. “If you’ve got a mystery we can solve it,” I added.

Dad choked again and disappeared into the kitchen with a napkin thrust into his mouth. I felt uncomfortable. I suspected he was laughing about me being a Juvenile Jupiter Detective.

After a bit he came back to the table looking pretty well pleased with himself and said something about it being nice to have a police celebrity in the family.

“I hope,” he concluded, “that the old folks will be able to live up to the honor.”

“Sit down and quit acting the dunce,” said Mother.

After a bit Dad looked across at me and said:

“Jerry, as I have a fatherly interest in your new detective career, may I butt in with a bit of advice?”

“Yes, sir,” I said.

“If you ever get as far as Chicago and a prosperous-looking individual in a checkered vest comes sauntering up and offers to sell you the Masonic Temple for fifteen dollars, don’t you fall for his skin game and pay him any money without protecting yourself by getting a receipt.”

“I’ll remember,” I promised, wondering just what did he mean. Dad’s always saying funny things like that. It keeps me guessing. He says one thing and means something else. But he doesn’t do it just to make me feel green. It’s his way of being friendly. Dad’s a good pal, like Mother, and just as quick as she is to help me out when I get in a scrape. Yes, sir, I bet I got the best pa and ma in the whole state of Illinois.

When I went outside Scoop and Red and Peg were on the lawn waiting for me.

“We’re going up the hill to College Park to get my cart,” said Scoop.

“And I’m going to deliver the mummy pin at the fraternity house over by the cemetery,” put in Red. “Like as not I’ll get a tip from the owner. If I do we’ll all go to the picture show.”

We went down Hill Street talking and laughing, past the Rock Island depot and up the hill which gives the street its name. Pretty soon we came to College Park, which is at the top of the hill at the north edge of town and in the same direction from town as the city cemetery. The college buildings front on a wide campus across which a concrete sidewalk winds from the south-east corner to the north-west corner. At the foot of the hill the sidewalk joins with the regular Hill Street sidewalk coming into town; and going the other way the sidewalk skirts the cemetery beyond the college grounds and ends in Oakcrest.

There is a big stone rostrum in the campus and we hardly ever cross the college grounds without climbing onto the rostrum and jumping off just for fun. It is here that the captain of the football eleven usually makes a speech when the Tutter aggregation wins an important game. Lots of times I’ve seen great piles of boxes and fence posts burned on the campus with the students circling about like wild Indians. Sometimes they don’t just stop at boxes and fence posts, like the time they snatched our back gate and Kennedy’s barber pole. When they get to doing things like that Bill Hadley, the Tutter cop, gets after them and makes them come to time.

From the Oakcrest ridge where we were headed for there is a dandy view across Happy Hollow, with the creek down in the

hollow winding this way and that way as though it liked best to loaf where the willows were thickest and greenest. Here the Treebury pike circles toward town, bridging the creek in many places and for the most part running parallel with the railroad siding that stretches up the hollow to the upper sand bank.

The sun, all big and red like a giant apple coated with sugar dip, was settling into the trees on the opposite hill when we turned into the drive leading to the Golden Sphinx fraternity house. We went around in back and sure enough there was Scoop's cart on the rubbish pile. On the front porch Thirsty and several of his pals were lolling about in reed chairs. Within the building some one was pumping a player piano and singing "Bubbles." Placing the cart out of sight behind a barberry bush we went with Red to deliver the mummy pin.

"Well, well, here comes Captain Kidd and his trusty gang of money-grabbers," laughed Thirsty, as we stepped onto the porch, feeling a bit awkward and out of place. The fraternity house is a pretty swell joint.

"How's business?" grinned Scoop.

"Not very rushin'," said Thirsty. "The ice cream got soft and we had to eat it."

Here Red stepped forward with the pin in his hand.

"One of you fellows lose this?" he inquired.

Thirsty gave a happy cry and jumped to his feet.

“Hey, Limber! Let that ‘bubble’ burst and come out here a second. The kid’s got your frat pin.”

The piano music within the building died with a rumbling crash and a long-legged student opened the screen door and hurried onto the porch.

“It sure is my pin,” he declared, pointing to a mark of identification.

“I found it near the depot platform,” explained Red.

“Maybe you won’t object if I give you two bits for returning it,” said Limber, handing Red a coin.

Red grinned happily.

“No objection here,” he said, pocketing the quarter.

“You look like honest, trustworthy kids,” said Limber, sizing us up with a critical eye.

“We admit it,” grinned Scoop.

“Drop around this way now and then,” continued Limber, “if you want to earn a little jack. We may have a job for you, like mowing the grass or washing dishes when we have a spread.”

A sudden thought came to him and he turned to his companions. “How about next Tuesday night?” he said.

“Won’t we need some extra help in the kitchen? You know how the chef growls when we don’t furnish an extra hand to help clean up.”

“We’ll need some one to help Charley if we have a spread after the initiation,” said Thirsty.

“Of course we’ll have a spread,” said Limber. He gave us his attention again and instructed: “Two of you kids drop around next Tuesday night right after supper—say about seven o’clock.”

“What do we get out of it?” was Scoop’s businesslike inquiry.

“All you can eat and fifty cents apiece,” laughed Limber.

“Oh, boy!” cried Scoop, rubbing his stomach. “Maybe you’d like to have us come *before* supper.”

“No; I figure you’ll eat enough on us if you come *after* supper,” said Limber.

“Just mark down on your almanac that we’ll be here Johnny-on-the-spot,” promised Scoop.

We got the cart from behind the barberry bush and started back to town, following the sidewalk past the cemetery and across the campus. By this time dusk was settling in and squares of light appeared in the walls of the dormitory that fronts on the campus from the north. Through the open windows we could hear the students laughing and talking. They seemed glad to get back to Tutter. The fellows who stay in the dormitory usually are the workers. They don’t have a lot of spending money like the most of the fellows in the club-houses. Just now a few of the students were grouped in a companionable way on the dormitory porch, sitting on the steps and on the porch railing with their legs swinging.

We passed closed to the college museum, which stood silent and grim in the gathering shadows, the oak trees towering on all four sides like moody, watchful giants. It isn't a large building because the Tutter college is not a large institution. It is one story high and built of yellow brick, with high stained-glass windows like a church and a big door in front with statues on the sides. There was no light within the building, but when we came even with the entrance we noticed that the door was open. On the instant Scoop stopped dead still and said:

“You know, Red, what we said to-day at the depot.”

“What?” said Red.

“About showing Peg the mummy. Now's our chance. See; the museum's open. Let's take him in and prove what we said.”

Red began to look scared.

“Ain't it kind of dark?” he hesitated, squinting uneasily toward the well of blackness beyond the yawning door.

“Shucks! We'll turn on the electric lights,” said Scoop. “We'll probably find a switch just inside the door.”

“Yes, and have some purfessor come bouncing in and bawl us out for trespassing.”

“I don't see no 'keep out' signs,” said Scoop. “Come on, fellows.”

He left his cart where the shadows from the over-hanging trees lay on an Indian mound and walked into the museum as big as cuffy. That's Scoop for you. He's got nerve. Pretty soon the lights flared up, momentarily blinding us. As we gingerly followed him into the building we observed statues standing around, looking kind of cold and embarrassed-like without any too many clothes on, and glass cases containing queer pottery and Indian relics and stuffed birds and a lot more things one usually finds in a museum.

"Here's old Ramses," called Scoop, drawing our attention to a glass-covered case leaning against the wall. Under the glass cover we could see the mummy that Mr. White had presented to the college. In the glare of the bright electric lights it seemed awfully grim and hideous and dried-up. Its eyes were just sunken spots. Its cheeks were sunken, too, below the cheek bones. From top to bottom it had a shrunken, leathery appearance. It didn't look like two thousand dollars' worth of anything to me.

"See, here is the name—Ramses II," said Scoop, pointing to a card in an upper corner of the glass cover. "It says his other name is—is—S-e-s-o-s-t-r-i-s—if you know how to pronounce it. He reigned in the XIX Dynasty."

"Must have been during the big flood," I spoke up. "They had lots of rain then."

"He looks as though he ought to stand out in the rain and get washed off to improve his complexion," put in Red.

"He's a beaut all right," said Scoop. "Well, Peg, what have you got to say now?"

Peg is a good sport. Yes, sir-e! That is why we like him so well. He just grinned in his defeat, his big mouth stretching from ear to ear. With his head cocked on one side and his eyes squinting at the mummy he said:

“Sorta resembles Red, doesn’t he? All he needs is a few of Red’s pretty freckles and a brick-colored topknot and you couldn’t tell ’em apart. If anything Ramses is a shade the best looking.”

Red’s retort trailed off into space when suddenly the whole atmosphere of the museum was charged with a low, throaty, rattling groan. It made our hair stand on end. Scoop gave a screech.

“It’s the mummy, fellows! See; its jaws are *moving*! It is coming to life. Oh, let’s get out of here!”

He started pell-mell for the door, the rest of us tumbling along at his heels. I don’t mind saying that I was scared all the way through and back again. That awful spooky groan was enough to scare anybody. It wasn’t a human groan, like some one in pain. It didn’t come from any one place in particular. It just came out of the air, seemingly from above us and beneath us and all about us.

A fellow thinks fast in a moment like that. My thoughts traveled like a six-cylinder racing car on the down grade. I thought how awful it would be to have the mummy come walking out of its case and start after us. I pictured it creeping around town in the shadows, scaring people into cat fits and everybody, as a result, keeping their doors and windows

locked. Then something sensible inside of me argued: “The mummy is *dead*. It can’t move or chase you.”

But *was* it dead? Scoop said its jaws moved, though I hadn’t noticed that. It looked dead enough surely, but——

I looked back over my shoulder. My heart gave a joyful loop-the-loop when I observed that the mummy was not in the aisle behind me. Plainly it was still in its case. This gave me courage and I slowed up. I was about to say something when a hollow whispering voice came from the mummy case and I all but collapsed.

“*I am not dead; I am sleeping!*” is what the strange, whispering voice said, each word coming slowly and distinctly.

I figured there was just one thing for me to do after that and that was to get away from the museum and get away quick. I ran like I never ran before. I ran with a speed that brought me ahead of the other fellows and gasping and panting I fell face downward in the grass at the foot of the hill where the campus sidewalk joins the Hill Street sidewalk. Scoop and Red and Peg fell over me and we huddled there peering into the shadows to where the museum stood grim and silent at the crown of the hill. The lights were still on. We had forgotten to switch them off. Scoop’s cart was forgotten, too, in our rush to get safely away.

For several minutes we lay there panting and staring, our hearts skipping along on high gear. And suddenly the museum lights went out and we knew some one or *something* had switched them off.

“Here’s where I beat it for down town,” said Red, scrambling to his feet. His voice was hollow, like the bottom had dropped out of it.

“You and me both,” said Peg.

I got up, too, and so did Scoop, and we ran down the sidewalk and across the railroad track and past the depot lickety-cut.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAN IN THE MUSEUM

I tell you we were glad to see the bright lights of Main Street loom up ahead of us. And we were glad to have people near us, on the sidewalks and porches. Their easy laughter coming to us on the soft night air drove away our fright, though just what we were afraid of was now a bit vague in our minds. Certainly the mummy was not to be credited with the groans and whispering we heard. Our common sense winning out over our fright decided that for us.

“I’d be willing to bet a cookie it’s a trick of the students,” said Peg, when we sat down on the curb under a street light to get our wind and talk the matter over. “They’re always up to things like that.”

“You think some of the students were hiding in the building to scare us?” Scoop said slowly, as though he were trying to put a picture puzzle together in his head and the pieces didn’t fit very well.

“Like as not. Why, anybody with common sense knows a mummy can’t whisper and groan. What we heard wasn’t no mummy, though we were scared stiff at the moment and thought so. It was some smart geezer putting up a joke on us.”

“I thought sure I saw the mummy’s jaws move,” said Scoop.

“Your imagination,” declared Peg. “Just like a magic trick: The hand deceives the eye and the eye starts the mind to imagining things. You just *imagined* the mummy’s jaws moved.”

Scoop let his thoughts carry him away for a few moments, then said grimly:

“I’d like to get even with the guy who pulled that trick on us, if it *was* a trick. Somehow, though, the thought keeps crowding into my head that the students may not be at the bottom of this thing. Fellows, doesn’t it strike you that this is just the chance we’ve been hoping for?”

We stared.

“What do you mean?” said Peg.

“Didn’t we say this morning we hoped something mysterious would happen so we could do some real detecting? And isn’t this an honest-to-John mystery? I’ll say it is. Why was the museum door left open when it should have been locked? Who was concealed in the building? Who did the ‘whispering’? And in case it wasn’t a trick, like Peg says, what was the object? Then, at the tail end, what happened after we ran away and the lights went out?”

“I hope you ain’t thinking of going back to find out,” put in Red. He peered uneasily down the street to where the shadows grouped themselves beneath the giant elms at the corner of Hill and Main Streets. Peg was watching him. He

likes to tease Red. Grinning, he rolled a pebble onto the sidewalk back of us. Red gave a screech and almost jumped out of his freckled skin.

“Why not?” said Scoop in answer to Red’s question. “We can’t be afraid of things like this if we’re going to do detecting. We’d be great detectives we would if a mystery bobbed up in front of us and we just ran away from it like a lot of scaredy-calves instead of solving it.”

“Huh!” sputtered Red. “You talk awful brave; but I guess you were just as scared as the rest of us when we tumbled out of the museum and down the hill. *You* were the first one to run; and if any one made faster time than you I didn’t happen to notice it.”

“That was because things happened so quick and unexpected-like I never once thought about being a detective,” said Scoop. “Now that I have the thought before me I won’t lose my grit so easy.”

I didn’t speak up like Red did, but in a way I shared his uneasiness about returning to the museum. It looked pretty hazardous and risky to me, even though we were satisfied that the mummy had nothing to do with the groaning and whispering. It would be quite as bad for us to be chased by students as to be scared by the mummy. Like Peg, I felt the students *were* at the bottom of the matter. Scoop didn’t see it that way, but he hadn’t convinced us that he was right. And if it *was* a joke of the students I knew they wouldn’t handle us any too easy if we came butting in and they got their mitts on us. One time they tied four town fellows to some willow trees in Happy Hollow and left them there all night. It was a cinch I

didn't want to spend a whole night tied to a willow tree or any other kind of a tree.

But Scoop made it plain to us that he was determined to go back to the museum, so I didn't back down. I wasn't going to be a coward. And once I had my mind made up the uneasiness that had gripped me seemed to fade away. I was glad of that.

"Anybody here got a flashlight?" inquired Scoop. No one spoke up, so he continued: "I'll get one at pa's store. And we'll drop in at the town hall and ask Bill Hadley to lend us a pair of handcuffs. He's got two or three pairs all rusted from not being used."

"Who are you going to handcuff?" inquired Peg.

"Maybe no one; I can't tell," said Scoop. "But we'll go prepared, like detectives should. We'll get at the bottom of this mystery if it takes us till four o'clock to-morrow morning."

Peg squirmed uneasily.

"I wouldn't want to say what pa would do to me if I stayed out that late," he said.

"Here, too," I put in.

"Reckon it won't take us that long," Scoop said confidently.

Here we got up and went down the street to the town hall, the back of which is fitted with iron-barred cells. Bill Hadley, the

Tutter cop, has a desk and revolving chair in the front part of the building. We were lucky to catch him in his office, it being Saturday evening. Usually he's in the street when a crowd is out.

"Howdy, pards," said he, looking us over in a friendly way when we tumbled in. Everybody likes Bill, even if he is kind of homely. "Where's your stars?" he added, a good-natured grin wrinkling around the wart on his big nose.

"How'd you know about our stars?" Scoop inquired sharply.

"Oh, Jerry's pa mentioned it when he passed me down the street on the way to the picture show."

"We aren't supposed to let everybody know we're detectives," Scoop said pointedly.

On the instant Bill became very serious.

"I won't tell a soul," he promised. "Not even my wife when I git married next Tuesday. No, sir-e! I'll keep it a plumb secret. And when I need any important detectin' done I'm goin' to call on you fellers to help me out."

"We'll do it," Scoop assured earnestly. "And maybe you won't mind helping us out."

"How so?" said Bill.

"Maybe you won't care if we borrow a pair of handcuffs for a few hours."

Bill's eyes got big and startled.

“What are you kids up to?” he demanded, regarding us closely, his gold tooth showing.

Scoop told him about our scare at the museum and how we planned to return and solve the mystery of the whispering mummy.

“Haw! haw! haw!” roared Bill, taking it all as a joke. He patted Scoop on the head. “Sure thing you can have a pair of handcuffs; and I only hope you'll git a chance to hook together a couple of them smart-actin' students. You'll probably find the ‘whispering mummy’ is a trick of their'n. That's the easiest thing they can do. The durn scalawags! My troubles begin when college opens.”

Just as we were leaving with the handcuffs the telephone jingled. Dropping into his desk chair Bill took down the receiver and barked: “Police station; whadda-ya-want?” He listened for a moment, then got stiff all over, like a swimmer does when he gets a cramp, and demanded: “What's that? At the college museum? A man hurt? What hurt him? Say, who are you—— Say——” He furiously jiggled the receiver hook till Central responded. “Who sent in that call?” he roared into the mouthpiece.

A moment later he slammed the receiver onto its hook and grimly turned to where we stood. Our faces I guess showed him how dumbfounded we felt inside over this new turn of affairs. Certainly we hadn't expected anything like this. And bobbing up and down in my head was the thought that maybe Scoop was right after all. What had looked to us

like a joke of the students' was fast developing into a sure-enough mystery.

“Boys, there’s a dum sight more to this ‘whispering mummy’ business than I reckoned on,” said Bill, his voice all tense and serious. “I’ve just had a call to go to the relief of an injured man in the museum where your mummy is. Now if you fellers want to be real detectives here’s your chance. Red, prop up your under jaw like you got some grit and beat it across-lots to the depot and see if you can git a clew as to who sent in the call from the pay station there. Find out all you can and come back here and wait for me. Peg, you hustle down to the emergency rooms and tell Doc Leland to cut out his checker game and chase his nose up the hill to the college museum as fast as that old bus of his’n’ll carry him. Jerry, I’m goin’ to take you and Scoop with me to the museum; and if you go runnin’ away just when I need you I’ll put you both in the calaboose and feed you on bread and water.”

“We won’t run,” Scoop said grimly. I knew he meant it. Bill knew it, too.

Gee-miny! Maybe you think we weren’t right on our toes! And we were all excited over the part we were to take in solving the mystery that was closing in about us. To have the mummy mixed up in the mystery gave it a spookish turn. We had wanted a mystery or robbery to happen. It isn’t any fun being a detective if you don’t have a chance to do real detecting. We were getting that chance now.

A strange new courage came to me on the moment, just like the stomach ache comes all of a sudden after you’ve been filling up on green apples. I suppose all heroes who do brave

deeds feel that way. They may not be very brave at the start, but when they come to realize that the safety of other folks hinges on their efforts they get to feeling brave and trustworthy, just as I felt as I hurriedly piled into Bill's flivver and bumped my shins on the running-board.

In a jiffy we were rattling down Main Street with the people jumping out of our way at the crossings and wondering, I suppose, where Bill was going in such a hurry. I felt pretty important sitting there beside Bill. I sort of let my chest swell out until we hit a bump and Scoop, who was riding on my lap, gave me an awful jab in the slats with his elbow.

It was a short ride to College Park. The flivver rattled up the hill with the throttle wide open, the headlights cutting the darkness, and soon we turned to the left at the top of the hill and circled the Indian mounds, heading for the museum on the south side of the campus.

When the car came to a jerking pause Bill stumbled out and took a big gun from his hip pocket. I was hoping he knew how to use it. He ran up the museum steps, Scoop and I at his heels. The door was ajar, just as we had left it. Bill squinted into the darkened building, listened intently for a moment with his hand to his ear, then said huskily:

“Either of you kids know where the 'lectric light switch is?”

“I do,” said Scoop, stepping forward.

As the lights flared up Bill hopped into the museum crying out: “Hands up!” and trying to point the big gun in a dozen different directions. There was no response. When the echo of

his voice rumbled away it was that silent in the museum you could have heard a cat washing its tail.

A moment later Bill gave a cry and ran to where a man lay on his back on the floor directly in front of the mummy case. There was a big bruise on his forehead. Bill felt for a heartbeat and said shortly: “He ain’t dead; just unconscious.” To get a better look at the man he brushed back long strands of iron gray hair.

“Why, it—it’s Mr. Arnoldsmit!” I gasped, recognizing the president of our detective agency. I was so startled that for a moment I couldn’t move—I just stood there with my lower jaw sagging and stared. It was just like finding some member of the family in great distress, only if it had been Dad or Mother instead of Mr. Arnoldsmit I’d have felt a lot worse, of course. But I felt bad enough as it was. So did Scoop. I could see it in his face. Mr. Arnoldsmit was a nice old gentleman. He had been kind to us and we were sorry some one had beaned him.

“Who is he?” said Bill, looking up at us.

“The president of our detective agency,” I explained slowly.

“You mean the old geezer who sold you the stars?”

I nodded.

“What’s he doin’ here in the museum?” Bill followed up.

I couldn’t answer that. It was hard to understand what had attracted the old gentleman to the museum. Of all the places

in Tutter the college museum was the very last place where you'd expect to find *any one*. It was possible that Mr. Arnoldsmitth had just wandered into the building. It seemed more likely, though, that he had a *reason* for being there. What that reason was I couldn't guess.

In the excitement and surprise of finding Mr. Arnoldsmitth in the museum Scoop and I quite forgot about the mummy. When I did glance that way I got a shock that just about caused my heart to flop clean over.

“Look!” I cried, clutching Scoop's arm. “Ramses is gone!”

Bill straightened up, sucking in his breath till it sounded like a hiss.

“You know this fellow Ramses?” he demanded sharply.

“Ramses is the mummy,” I explained falteringly, pointing to the empty mummy case.

A dazed expression settled over Bill's face.

“This is gittin' too gol-durned deep for me,” he muttered, shaking his head. “Ramses is the name of the feller who sent in that call from the depot. Of course it couldn't be your ‘whispering mummy’ what telephoned, but——”

“—but it was some one,” supplied Scoop, “who *knew* the mummy's name and *knew* about it being stolen and *knew* about Mr. Arnoldsmitth being hit on the head.”

“Correct,” Bill said grimly.

CHAPTER V

HUNTING FOR CLEWS

We did what we could to take care of the injured man by pillowing his head on Scoop's coat and binding a moistened handkerchief over the bruise on his forehead. The spot was all purple and blue and looked as though it might start bleeding any minute, though there was no cut.

While waiting for Doc Leland to show up Scoop and I and Bill hurriedly searched the museum. We hardly expected to find anybody concealed in the building but were hopeful that we'd run across a clew that would give us an idea who had struck down Mr. Arnoldsmitth and taken the mummy. In detective stories the criminal generally leaves a cuff link or something behind which serves as a clew. There were no cuff links on the museum floor that we could see. The only thing we had in the way of a clew was a wooden statuette about six inches high. It lay on the floor beside the mummy case. Scoop picked it up and examined it carefully. Then he went to a table that stood near by. There was quite a bit of dust on the table and a clean spot showed where the statuette had been standing.

"This," said Scoop, holding up the wooden statuette for my inspection, "is what Mr. Arnoldsmitth got beamed with. Whoever hit him must have stood right here in the aisle,

grabbed the statuette in an excited moment, and soaked him. You see what that indicates, don't you, Jerry?"

I didn't. Somehow my brain was pretty much of a muddle. It was plain that Scoop was thinking things out in an orderly manner. I was too much worked up to do that.

"It indicates that whoever struck Mr. Arnolds Smith was taken by surprise and grabbed the statuette as the first handy weapon," went on Scoop, moving about slowly and looking very thoughtful. "The old man must have been hiding and came into sight suddenly." He paused and scratched his head. The mummy case now held his attention. He moved about it, softly whistling "The Star-Spangled Banner." He always does that when he has a big problem on his mind. After a moment he snapped his fingers and said:

"Jerry, I want you to help me."

"Yes," I said.

"I'll stand here before the mummy case and you see if there's space in back to hide without me noticing you."

Right away I knew what he was thinking—even if I was a bit muddled. He was of the opinion that Mr. Arnolds Smith had been hiding behind the mummy box—was there, possibly, when the four of us stood looking at the mummy. Somehow I didn't find a way to believe that it was Mr. Arnolds Smith who did the whispering that scared us away. He was so dignified and serious; I just couldn't bring myself to picture him doing a thing like that.

I followed Scoop's instructions and slipped under the rope that stretches along the wall side of the aisle to keep visitors back from the statues and things. The mummy case was quite large. It leaned against the wall at an angle that left considerable space beneath it. It was shadowy here and I trembled a bit as I slipped under the case and crouched on the floor. The case had a queer, pungent smell. On the instant strange Oriental pictures danced through my brain—caravans of gold-laden camels in charge of black-whiskered Arabs and vast deserts and pyramids and mystery. These thoughts were quickly driven away when Bill sneezed somewhere at the back of the museum and I was made to understand that I was in America and not in Egypt. I was about to call out and ask Scoop if he could see me when my hand, as it rested on the floor, touched something.

“Look what I've found,” I cried, coming out into the light. What I held in my hand proved to be a handkerchief with the four corners tied together. We untied the knots and there in the handkerchief was a swell gold watch, a gold-backed hair brush and a fancy comb with gold trimmings.

Bill came running to see what I had found. He plainly was puzzled because the watch was ticking and that indicated it had not been back of the mummy case very long. Scoop and I were puzzled, too. The articles were of considerable value. Why had they been concealed under the mummy case with hundreds of other good hiding places throughout the museum? Who had placed them there? Did they have a bearing on the missing mummy mystery? If so, what could it be?

“Look, Jerry!” cried Scoop, and there was a tense note in his voice. He pointed to an engraved design on the back of the hair brush. I noticed then that the same design was engraved on the watch. There was a sphinx-headed mummy and the same queer lettering we had noticed on the fraternity pin Red found at the depot.

“I’d give a three-dollar bill to know where this stuff came from,” Bill said earnestly.

“I can tell you that,” said Scoop. “It all came from the Golden Sphinx fraternity house,” and he explained to Bill about the fraternity pin and about the engraved design on the hair brush and watch.

Bill jumped to conclusions like he usually does and began to sputter.

“Just as I thought all along. It’s them durn students! By cracky, I ain’t a-goin’ to stand for this monkey-work. No, sir, by John Godfrey Hamilton! College or no college I ain’t a-goin’ to have people banged over the head this way. Goin’ to college don’t give nobody a right to do that. It’s my job to enforce the law and such carryin’ on is ag’in’ the law. I’m goin’ to take this matter up with Barton, the college president, and tell him what’s what. As for the missing mummy I guess if we find out who owns this watch and hair brush we’ll know pretty much where the mummy went to.”

“You think the fellows from the Golden Sphinx fraternity house took it?” inquired Scoop.

“I ain’t a-doubtin’ that a speck,” Bill returned confidently.

“I am,” said Scoop, sort of biting off the word.

“What’s that?” said Bill.

“It doesn’t look to me,” continued Scoop, “as though the students would take the mummy and leave their watch and things behind. That doesn’t seem reasonable.”

I shared Scoop’s opinion; and on the instant there came to me a picture of the students we had seen that morning at the depot. They were a lively, happy lot, ready to jump in on any kind of fun, but they were the kind of fellows who wouldn’t be interested in anything that wasn’t *clean* fun. I felt positive they had no part in hitting Mr. Arnoldsmitth on the head. Bill insisted that whoever took the mummy hit the old man with the statuette. But it wasn’t Thirsty and Limber and their crowd. Maybe there was some joke connected with the disappearance of the mummy; but Thirsty and Limber and the others had no part in that joke where it carried along to the point of killing an old man—and that *might* have happened had Mr. Arnoldsmitth been hit a trifle harder.

Besides, another thought was growing up in my mind and this gave the mystery a new angle. I was pretty sure I recognized the handkerchief. It was soiled and wrinkled. I took it and looked it over but there was no mark of identification, like initials. All the same I felt sure it was the handkerchief Mr. Arnoldsmitth had used in polishing the detective badges. I made up my mind to tell Scoop about this. And I put the handkerchief into my coat pocket.

Bill took possession of the watch and other things. He walked to the door of the museum when an automobile appeared on the campus, its lights cutting a path through the darkness. From the way the engine was knocking I was pretty certain it was Doc Leland's old bus. I was right. Pretty soon Doc waddled into the museum with his medicine case, pulling a bit like all fat people. He was closely followed by Peg, whose eyes got big and round when he saw who it was on the floor.

Doc gave a grunt as he leaned over Mr. Arnoldsmitth and removed the handkerchief we had bound about the man's forehead.

"How'd it happen?" he inquired shortly of Bill.

"I ain't sayin' for certain," returned Bill, "but I suspicion it's some more would-be funny work of the students. Is he hurt serious, Doc?"

"It isn't cut any but he got an awful wallop," said Doc, taking a closer squint at the bruise from under his spectacles. He washed the spot with a transparent liquid taken from a bottle in his medicine grip, then added: "Stranger, isn't he?"

"Never saw him before in my life," said Bill. "These boys, though, say they met him at the depot this forenoon. According to their story he's a detective; but I've got my own ideas about *that*."

"We better move him to the emergency rooms and make certain the skull isn't fractured," puffed Doc, straightening up and pulling down his vest. Then he wriggled his nose till his

spectacles settled into their proper place. Under his directions we all took a hand to lifting and carrying Mr. Arnoldsmitth. As gently as we could we took him from the museum and placed him in the back of Doc's automobile. I shivered a bit as I looked into the still, gray-like face. It was just like carrying a dead man!

"You get in here on the seat and hold his head in your lap," Doc instructed Peg. I could see Peg didn't like that idea at all. He wanted to remain at the museum with Scoop and me where there was likely to be more excitement than at the emergency rooms. He did as Doc directed, though. A few minutes later the automobile disappeared across the campus and shortly we heard Doc honking his squeaky horn for the railroad crossing at the foot of the hill.

Bill returned to the museum, took a last look around the room, and switched off the lights. When the door was locked he pocketed the key.

"I'll just keep it for a spell," he stated. "We might want to come back to-morrow when it's daylight and see if we overlooked anything."

"You mean clews?" said Scoop.

Bill nodded.

"Clews is what we're after," he said, "though I reckon everything will be cleared up when the old man comes to his senses and begins to talk."

The darkness hung low on the campus like a heavy, black blanket. A few lights gleamed feebly along the stretch of sidewalk but these lights seemed to be mere yellow specks and failed entirely to drive back the night shadows to any great distance. Through the sentinel-like oak trees we could see the yellow dormitory porch light, but where earlier in the evening many squares of light had checkered the dormitory walls was now total blackness. The students were asleep; and it came to me on the instant that it must be getting pretty late. I kept close to Scoop as we moved about. I wasn't exactly scared but there was no telling what lay out there in the darkness watching us. I was glad Bill had a gun.

"I'm goin' to skip over and see Barton," said Bill after a moment, naming the college president. "He lives just across the campus on College Avenue. I figure he ought to know what's goin' on around this dump to-night. You fellers wait here in the flivver. I won't be more'n a minute or two."

The time dragged while Bill was away. With so many things to feed our thoughts Scoop and I didn't do much talking. We just sat there in the front seat of the flivver *thinking* and *listening*; and every time a sound came from out of the blackness I clutched Scoop's hand. At length, to drive back the shadows, we cranked the engine and switched on all the lights. It wasn't so spooky and lonesome after that.

As I sat there snuggled up beside Scoop with the museum statues peering at me grimly in the glare of the headlights and the carburetor gagging every second or two I tried as best I could to straighten things out in my head.

It was plain to me first of all that the mystery had taken on a number of definite angles. There was the whispering we had heard. Who did that? Was it Mr. Arnolds Smith or some one else? Why was the old gentleman in the museum? Who struck him with the statuette? Why was he struck? Who took the mummy? And who sent in the telephone call from the depot giving the name of Ramses?

These were some of the puzzling thoughts that kept bobbing around in my head; and I struggled to arrange them in a way that would make one part of the mystery fit in with another part. It was hard. I could see where Mr. Arnolds Smith *might* have done the whispering; but it seemed more logical to me to think that after we ran out of the museum the old man wandered into the building and the same trick was played on him. Instead of running away as we did he probably started an investigation, which supplied a motive for him being hit on the head.

But Scoop said whoever struck the blow was taken by surprise. That upset my theory a bit.

My thoughts were still tumbling along when Scoop spoke up:

“Jerry, have you noticed how some one back of this thing is trying to make us think the mummy is *alive*?”

“You mean the man at the depot giving the name of Ramses?” I returned.

“Yes; and the whispering: ‘*I am not dead; I am sleeping!*’ Don’t you see?—that was said with a *purpose*; and the purpose was to make us think that the mummy was likely to

come to life at any moment. Then it disappeared from its case and after that came the telephone call from the depot. The whole thing has been worked up to give the impression that the *mummy has come to life* and disappeared of its own accord.”

“It couldn’t do that,” I said.

“Of course not,” Scoop agreed quickly. “But wait and see how the Tutter people act when they hear about the whispering and the telephone call. Some superstitious people will believe that the mummy is actually alive and running around the country. They’ll say it was the mummy who beamed Mr. Arnoldsmitth—unless he has an entirely different story to tell when he comes to his senses.”

There was a brief silence.

“But the mummy,” continued Scoop, “never walked out of the museum. We know that. It was carried out. And as it must have been pretty hefty and awkward to carry I shouldn’t wonder if three or four pairs of hands were needed to get it away. Maybe, though, it was dragged out by just one person and taken away in an auto or cart.”

“A cart!” I cried, and right away I thought of Scoop’s cart. We had left it on one of the Indian mounds before going into the museum.

“Gee!” exploded Scoop, reading my thoughts.

We shifted the position of the car till the lights were directed at the spot where we had left the cart, then we piled out and

ran to the Indian mound. The cart wasn't there. We knew now that the mummy had been taken away in Scoop's cart. And, as he pointed out, this proved that the mummy hadn't been taken any great distance.

“One minute I think it isn't the students; the next minute something bobs up to make me think it is,” Scoop said slowly. He stood perfectly still, looking into the blackness as though he were seeing things that I couldn't see.

Again a shiver chased itself up and down my backbone. I followed the direction of his eyes, trying to pierce the darkness. What lay out there in the black shadows beyond the range of the headlights and the yellow campus lights? Was the cart there?—the cart and the mummy? And was there a mysterious *some one* crouching beside the cart, watching us with hot, eagle eyes as we moved about in the glare of the headlights?

Sometimes in the summer months we camp at a small lake near Tutter. Often I sit on the shore and wish. It's fun just to wish. And one of the things I like to wish is that I had the power to lift all the water from the lake so that I could walk down into the hollow where the lake *used to be* and see the strange fish and all the mysterious things that live deep in the water. Now I wished I could work the same kind of magic and lift the darkness that shrouded the campus. I wanted to bring in the bright light of day—and I felt if I could do that I could solve the missing mummy mystery in short order.

With my mind filled full of conflicting, wandering thoughts and my nerves standing at attention I gave a jump when the clock in the chapel tower donged the first of eleven strokes.

When I had counted the last stroke and the metallic voice of the big clock had died away, an uneasiness settled over me. I wasn't supposed to stay out so late. I knew Dad and Mother would expect an explanation. And maybe the explanation I had to offer might not satisfy them.

A few moments later Bill came back. We told him about the missing cart but he didn't seem to pay much attention to us. He seemed unusually quiet and thoughtful and grim. When we all piled into the flivver he spoke up:

"Barton has upset my calc'lations a bit. That stuff you kids found under the mummy case was stolen to-night from the Golden Sphinx fraternity house while the students were at supper. They had reported the loss to Barton and he was trying to get me on the 'phone when I called him to the door."

Here was more mystery. Who had stolen the watch and other things from the fraternity house and concealed them in the museum? I was glad now I hadn't spoken right out about the handkerchief. Bill is quick to jump to conclusions. I could see where he likely would suspicion Mr. Arnoldsmit. I knew better. Mr. Arnoldsmit wouldn't do a thing like that. It is easy to tell the kind of people some folks are just by looking them over and listening to them talk. Some people have quality and class and character and show it and act it. Some others try to make you think they have it by saying things and acting things intended to keep you thinking that way, and all the time you know they're bluffing. Mr. Arnoldsmit wasn't the bluffing kind. No, sir-e! He was a kindly, honest man. I could tell it just by looking into his deep blue eyes and listening to his warm, friendly voice.

“It ain’t no use weepin’ over what might have been,” Bill spoke up, “but I sure wish you kids hadn’t been scared away like you was. As I see it you skinned out just as the big act was comin’ on. If you’d stuck around here you’d have seen where the mummy went to and who took it. Barton turned a yellowish green when I told him his two-thousand-dollar mummy had went blooey. He says to post a reward of two hundred dollars for information leadin’ to its recovery.”

Scoop’s fingers closed tightly over my knee and I heard him draw in his breath sharply.

“Two hundred dollars will buy a lot of things I’ve been wanting,” he said.

“Ain’t it a fact,” said Bill. He laughed and ruffled up Scoop’s hair by pushing the latter’s cap down over his nose. “I’ve been needin’ a new front tire for this old bus and that two hundred dollars’ll come in pretty handy. I’ll feel a lot safer goin’ away on my honeymoon next Tuesday if I got good tires.”

“If you figure on doing your honeymooning on that two hundred dollars you better think again,” Scoop said kind of dreamily. “With four Jupiter Detectives working against you, you don’t get more than a look-in.”

Again Bill laughed. He opened the throttle and pressed on the low-speed pedal. The flivver shivered and started forward with a grinding of gears.

Everybody in Tutter knew about Bill’s wedding plans. He had been shining around Miss Lulu Skinner, our school teacher,

for two years and now the wedding invitations were out and he and Miss Skinner were to be married in the Methodist church the following Tuesday morning at eleven o'clock.

“Tell you what,” Scoop said thoughtfully, as the flivver rattled down the hill and across the railroad tracks, “if *we* get the two hundred dollars we’ll buy you a new tire. That’ll be our wedding present.”

“You durn, good-hearted little cuss,” said Bill, and there came into his gruff voice a warmness that I liked. “You make me feel stingy after what I said. I calc’late now I’ll have to divvy up with you kids if *I* get the two hundred.”

As the flivver skidded around the corner of Hill and Main Streets Scoop came sliding against me and something hard pressed into my leg. When I reached down to feel what it was I touched the handcuffs. They were in his hip pocket and made a big bump.

Somehow those handcuffs gave me a sure-enough detective feeling; and a confidence came to me that *we* and not Bill would solve the mystery of the missing mummy and receive the two-hundred-dollar reward.

Then I thought of Mr. Arnoldsmitth. Very likely his story would throw light on the mystery. I was anxious to get to the emergency rooms to talk with Peg and learn how things stood.

CHAPTER VI

AT THE EMERGENCY ROOMS

Not more than five minutes after we left the campus Bill stopped his flivver in front of the emergency rooms. These rooms adjoin Doc Leland's office and home and it is here people are taken who meet with accidents, like the time I fell out of a hickory tree in Demming's woods and landed on my shoulder, cracking something inside up close to my neck that Dad had to pay twenty-five dollars to get fixed up. Tutter is too small to have a regular hospital, though the emergency rooms are intended to serve as a hospital. Two rooms are fitted up with white beds and there is a smaller room where the doctors perform emergency operations.

Lights were burning in the building but in the houses up and down the street everything was wrapped in darkness. As we tumbled out of the flivver I saw Doc Leland pass in front of one of the windows facing on the street. Bill opened the door and went inside just as though he had a right to be there. We followed, feeling that we couldn't any more than get ordered out.

In the hallway we found Peg. He was looking sober, as though his mind was full of unhappy thoughts.

“They can’t make him come to,” he explained, referring, of course, to Mr. Arnoldsmith.

Again I shivered as I thought of the old gentleman so limp and white and dead-like. Maybe he never would come to. Maybe he would die and go to heaven and get the reward due him for all the good deeds he had done in the way of helping boys like he had helped us. A hot mist stung my eyes as I thought of Mr. Arnoldsmith going to heaven. Of course he was kind of old and would have to go there anyway, but it made me unhappy to think that he had to go with a big blue bump on his forehead.

Doc waddled into the hall with his sleeves rolled up and a bottle of queer-smelling stuff in his hands. He was too busy to more than scowl at us for being there.



MR. ARNOLDSMITH AT THE EMERGENCY ROOMS.

“It’s a queer case,” he said to Bill, puckering up his forehead like he does when he gets cornered in a checker game or some one he’s doctoring seems likely to die. “He isn’t hurt serious and ought to have his senses by now. I don’t understand it unless a piece of the skull is pressin’ on the brain.”

“Maybe he’ll come to pretty quick,” surmised Bill. He started for the front door. “I’ll be at the town hall for a couple of hours, Doc. When the old man comes to his senses just telephone me and I’ll be right over. Come along, gang,” this last to Scoop and Peg and me.

As we drew up in front of the town hall Red came running to meet us. He took on a good bit of importance when Bill began firing questions at him, but this importance dwindled away when it became evident that he had very little to tell.

He had found no one at the depot except the night operator. The call had been sent in from the pay telephone in the waiting room; but the operator denied any knowledge of the matter.

“If you were to ask me I’d say he’d just been asleep,” opinioned Red. “He looked sleepy; and whoever ’phoned must have slipped in and used the telephone while he was dozing.”

“I know four other fellers what look sleepy, too,” Bill said pointedly. He squinted at his watch. “It’s eleven-thirty. You-all run home now and go to bed. I don’t reckon you’ll be

needed before mornin'. If I do need you I guess I can rout you out."

When we were in the street Scoop said:

"I don't want Bill to know it but I plan to put in the night at the emergency rooms. When Mr. Arnoldsmitth comes to his senses I want to be right there to get his story first-handed. You bet I'm not going to run the chance of Bill sliding in ahead of me and beating me to the two hundred dollars."

"You'll catch it from your folks if you stay out all night," said Peg.

"I'm in luck," said Scoop. "Pa and ma aren't home. They drove over to Ashton this afternoon to a funeral and won't be back till to-morrow. No one's at home but my two sisters. I'll just run over to the house and fix it with them."

I linked arms with Scoop as we hurried down Main Street.

"We'll stop at my house," I said. "Maybe if I coax hard enough Mother will let me stay at the emergency rooms with you."

"Fine," said Scoop.

When we were separating at the corner of Main and Grove Streets Scoop told Red and Peg to be on hand the first thing in the morning.

"Go to the emergency rooms first," he instructed. "If I'm not there go to the house. If I'm not at the house

look for a note in the mail box.”

“I’ll be on hand as early as five o’clock,” promised Peg.

“Me, too, if I can wake up,” said Red.

When Scoop and I reached the house we found Mother and Dad waiting up for me. Dad was yawning over a book and Mother was crocheting. Before they had a chance to say anything I jumped into an exciting account of the whispering mummy mystery, explaining how we were going to get the two-hundred-dollar reward.

“And maybe I’ll have to stay at the emergency rooms all night,” I added, kind of feeling my way along. “You see, Scoop and I want to be on hand when Mr. Arnoldsmit comes to his senses. It’s awfully necessary,” I concluded convincingly.

But Mother and Dad weren’t convinced like I wanted them to be. Mother stopped jabbing with her needle and spoke up:

“Jerry, I don’t want to be cross, but if you stay out another night till twelve o’clock I’m going to put an end to this detective business.”

“It isn’t twelve yet,” I returned.

“Well, it will be in ten minutes. Now run right up to bed.”

I was pretty miserable; and I stomped good and hard as I went up the stairs. When I looked down Scoop was passing out through the front door. His shoulders were thrown

back just like a man's shoulders, and they seemed to say for him: "*I'm* my own boss and I can stay out all night." It would be nice I thought to be free like that. Never mind! I'd be wearing long pants in another year or two. Then I'd do things more like I wanted to.

"I'll see you the first thing in the morning," I called down to Scoop, as the screen door closed after him.

Before tumbling into bed I set the alarm for five o'clock. I was snuggled down in the pillows and ready to shut my eyes and count a few sheep maybe when Dad came upstairs, whistling like he does just before he turns in. He stopped outside my door and said:

"Have a good day, Jerry?"

"Yes, sir," I said a bit sleepily.

"Lots of fun?"

"Yes, sir," I repeated.

"That's the stuff, ol' man! When you play, play hard because when you're a man you'll have to work hard. I suppose you feel pretty big and grown-up now that you're a Juniper Detective and got a real mystery to work on."

"Jupiter Detective," I corrected.

"I meant to say Jupiter. Is it fun to be a detective, Jerry?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

He stood in the shadow and I couldn't see his face; and for a few moments he didn't say anything. But I could feel him *looking* at me just like he was glad I belonged to him. I tell you I love my pa and ma when they're like that.

Then he said:

“Jerry, ol' pal, if you weren't such a *big* boy I believe I'd kiss you good night. But men don't do those things much, do they, son?”

“No-o, sir,” I said. “But I'm not so awful big,” I added. “I'm only fourteen.”

“That being the case I'll take a chance and we'll make it a secret between us,” said Dad; and he came and sat down on the edge of the bed and I sat up and gave him the hug we used to call “All Arms Around” when I was a little kid and not partly grown up and a Jupiter Detective.

“When you were a little shaver, Jerry, with your yellow head just about even with the top of the library table, I used to like to shut my eyes and think of you as a man; and always I had a great big hope down inside of me that you'd show some pep and snap and initiative as you grew up and not be just one of the crowd. You know, son, in this old world there are *leaders* and *followers*. And I kind of figured it out if your mother and I *believed* in you and let you *do* things and encouraged you to act and think for yourself, you'd become a leader among your boy pals and then, later on, a leader among men. That's why we don't kick when you go jumping into something that strikes your mother as being a bit risky. We don't do it because we're careless about what might happen to

you; we do it because we've got a lot of confidence in you. We just know that when you're out of our sight you'll do only those things that we would want you to do if we were right there with you—things that don't cause you to take foolish risks—things that are manly and clean and on the square.

“That’s the kind of a leader we want you to be, Jerry—clean and true and honest and fair all the way through.”

I was pretty sober. I always get sober when Dad talks to me that way.

“I’m trying to be that kind of a leader,” I said slowly.

“You’re a little brick, Jerry; and your old pa is ready to swear you’re solid gold from stem to gudgeon.” He picked up the alarm clock from the chair where I had placed it. “How early you got it set for?” he inquired.

“Five o’clock,” I said.

“Isn’t that kind of late when you’ve got such important business on? I think you ought to make it four o’clock anyway. Here’s a quarter to get your breakfast down town. Good night, Jerry.”

“Good night,” I said.

He went out of the room and softly closed the door. Downstairs I could hear Mother winding the clock, like she does on Saturday night. Then she put out the cat. Once she must have stepped on it because it gave an unhappy yowl. I went to sleep quick after that, feeling that in a few hours Mr.

Arnoldsmith would be in his right mind and the whispering mummy mystery would be cleared up.

CHAPTER VII

MR. ARNOLDSMITH DISAPPEARS

Ting-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling went the alarm clock. It jerked me out of dreamland in a jiffy and I found myself sitting up in bed. My eyes smarted and my head was kind of thick. I couldn't think quick at all. It was dark in the room and dark outside. I wondered for a moment what made the alarm clock go off in the middle of the night, because it seemed to me as though I had been asleep but an hour or two at the most. Then there came to me a recollection of what had happened the previous night at the museum and I scrambled out of bed and shut off the alarm. I didn't want to wake up Mother and Dad.

I wasn't sleepy any more now that I had before me the knowledge that I was a Juvenile Jupiter Detective and doing real detecting with a possibility of sharing with Scoop and Red and Peg the two-hundred-dollar reward that Mr. Barton, the college president, was offering for the return of the missing mummy.

In a few moments I was in the street, buttoning my shirt as I ran along the sidewalk. Now that I was outside it didn't seem quite so dark. In the east a grayish light was driving back the night shadows to the black spots under the elm trees that lace themselves above Main Street where I live. I knew it wouldn't be very long before the red sun came

peeping beautifully over the tar roof of the slaughter house which stands on Knob Hill just east of town. That would mark the true beginning of a new day. I wondered a bit, as I hurried along the street with my shoe laces flopping, if this new day would find us at the end of our trail, the whispering mummy mystery solved and the reward in our pockets.

It was awfully still in the deserted streets with everybody seemingly in bed and asleep. The shadows under the trees seemed to take on goblin-like shapes and I could imagine invisible hands reaching out to touch me. I was glad when Ed Allen's milk wagon rattled around a corner. As he was headed my way I skipped into the street and hopped on.

He swung his lantern close to my face to make out who I was.

“Howdy, Jerry,” he cried. The milk cans were rattling something fierce and he had to yell to make himself heard. “Up kinda early, ain't you? How's your ma's milk bin keepin' lately since I changed pasture? Goin' to put the cows onto rye this fall. Got three fresh ones comin' in next month. Only milkin' six now. Ain't no money in the milk business.”

Ed's an awful talker. I knew he didn't expect me to reply to everything he said so I just yelled, “Hello!” and sat down in the door of the cart with my feet hanging out and finished lacing my shoes. He kept on talking about his cows and about an old man he almost ran down near the deserted Morgan house on the Treebury pike when he was coming into town. I didn't pay much attention to what he was saying about the old man. Afterwards I wished I had.

When we came opposite the emergency rooms I hopped out. Everything seemed quiet about the place. The lights within the building were turned low. I went up the front steps on tiptoe and gently turned the doorknob. The door swung back. Just inside I found Scoop curled up on a hall settee like a puppy. I gave him a shake and he sat up, rubbing his eyes and staring at me.

“Guess I pretty near dropped off to sleep that time,” he said.

“Guess you pretty near did—the way you were snoring,” I returned.

“For all that’s happened here to-night I might just as well have been home in bed,” he grumbled.

“Hasn’t Mr. Arnoldsmitth——” I began.

“No, he hasn’t,” Scoop cut in crossly. He got up and stretched himself and tightened his belt. “He just lays there like a log,” he added. “Doc was up with him till one o’clock. There’s to be a consultation in the morning. Maybe they’ll have to operate on the skull.”

The public health nurse stays at the emergency rooms. It is her job to take care of the patients who are brought there. While Scoop and I were talking in guarded tones she came along the hall sleepily rubbing her eyes. She frowned at us just as much as to say, “What are you boys doing here?” then passed into the room where Mr. Arnoldsmitth was. She left the door open and I tiptoed across to peek in. Just as I got to the door she gave a scream. I was so startled I almost keeled over backwards. The first thing that popped into my head was the

thought that Mr. Arnoldsmitth was dead. Scoop dashed by me and I followed him into the room. The nurse was running about, wringing her hands, her face the picture of fright and dismay.

“He’s gone!” she wailed, pointing to an empty iron bed against the wall. She clutched Scoop’s arm. “You were in the hall; he must have passed you. Oh, why didn’t you stop him?”

Hysterically, the nurse ran into Doc Leland’s side of the house and awakened him. Then she telephoned to Bill’s boarding house. We could hear Bill exploding words into the mouthpiece when he learned that Mr. Arnoldsmitth had disappeared from the emergency rooms. It wasn’t long after that before his flivver came tearing down the street and stopped in front of the building with a fearful grinding of gears. He came into the hall on the run, his hair tousled and his shirt open at the throat. If he was surprised to find Scoop and me there he didn’t show it. I guess he was too excited to think of anything but the vanished patient.

Under his directions we searched the building from end to end, even squinting into the coal bin and under the back porch where Doc keeps his lawn mower. Not a trace did we find of Mr. Arnoldsmitth. His clothes were missing, showing that he had dressed himself before leaving. Doc said he was probably out of his head.

“It’s a serious situation,” said Doc, waddling about the hall, his fat cheeks flopping. I wondered what made him talk so sputtery-like till I noticed that in the excitement he had forgotten to put in his false teeth. “We’ve got to get him back

spick—I mean quick. No tellin’ what he’s likely to do, bein’ out of his mind. He might even commit murder.”

Red and Peg came tumbling in when the excitement was at its height. Upon learning what had happened they looked dumb. As for me I was both dismayed and disappointed. I had looked forward to our getting from Mr. Arnoldsmitn an account of what had happened in the museum. That would open the door leading to a complete solution of the missing mummy mystery. Now Mr. Arnoldsmitn had disappeared, and with him had vanished our immediate chance at the two hundred dollars.

Truly we weren’t getting to the bottom of the mystery very fast. It seemed to me we were just standing in one spot. We were working our feet but, like a swimmer treading water, we weren’t going forward.

When it became evident that the man was not in the building Bill got mad and began jawing at the nurse. He blamed her for the whole thing and she cried and went into her room and slammed the door.

You can bet your boots Scoop never spoke up about being in the hall! No, sir-e! He didn’t want Bill jawing at him. As a matter of fact, Scoop was sort of taking a back seat. He had lost his pep and some of his self-confidence over the thought that he had let Mr. Arnoldsmitn get by him. He made me think of a starched collar that had been rained on.

Bill lined us up and instructed us to start out in four different directions to see if we could locate the missing man.

“I’ve got an idea he ain’t gone far,” said Bill. “The nurse says he was here at three-thirty. It’s only five-fifteen. We’ve got to git him, fellers. He’s the mainspring in this missing mummy business, I’m thinkin’. When we squeeze out of him what he knows I guess we’ll have a pretty accurate idea where the mummy’s gone to. Gosh all hemlocks! If I’d expected anything like this I’d been on guard. To have the durn old slicker git away from me this easy! Wough!” and just to show how he felt Bill kicked at a wild-eyed cat that poked its face into the hall to see what was going on. He missed the cat and barked his shins on the door casing. Then he *was* mad!

We beat it into the street, realizing that it wasn’t any too safe to be around Bill just then with his shin hurting him. I felt a bit huffy toward him for calling Mr. Arnoldsmitth a slicker and holding the old man responsible for the disappearance of the mummy. I knew he was all wrong about that. Mr. Arnoldsmitth probably knew something about the matter, yet he had nothing directly to do with the theft of the mummy. But as sure as I was of this I decided not to argue the matter with Bill.

It’s funny how I never once recalled what Ed Allen said about seeing an old man on the Treebury pike close by the deserted Morgan house till I noticed a milk bottle on Doc Leland’s side porch. Then it all came to me like a flash. The man Ed almost run down in the dark was Mr. Arnoldsmitth! I gave a gasp and drew the fellows across the street. It wouldn’t do to have Bill overhear what I had to tell.

Scoop was all excited when I finished my story.

“I’ll bet a cookie it *was* Mr. Arnoldsmitth,” he cried, snapping his fingers. “Absolutely. He was probably looking for a hiding place and was heading for the old Morgan house. It’s in a lonely spot on the canal bank and no one ever goes there much.”

“But how would he *know* about the old house being there?” Peg spoke up.

“He seems to know a lot about this locality,” said Scoop. “Look how he was found in the museum. You never would have expected to find him *there*, but he *was* there.”

Peg ran his fingers through his hair.

“Well, if he knows about the old Morgan house and was heading for it when Ed Allen saw him, that proves pretty much that he isn’t crazy in his head like Doc says.”

“You’re right,” Scoop said thoughtfully. “It looks to me like his senses came back to him and he decided to beat it.”

“But why——” Peg began.

Scoop threw up his hands.

“Good night nurse!” he said impatiently. “Don’t ask me *why*. I’m no fortune-teller. We’ve got to *find out* why. That’s what we’re detectives for.”

There was a short, reflective silence.

“If Mr. Arnoldsmitth got his senses back and ran away on the sly,” Scoop continued, “he likely has a good reason for doing it. It has something to do with the missing mummy—I’m sure of that. We’ll find him and do what we can to help him. Something tells me he’s in deep trouble and needs our help.”

Red hitched at his belt.

“And if we do find him,” he inquired, “we won’t do as Bill says and bring him back to town?”

Scoop shook his head.

“If he says not we won’t. At least not right away. If we were to bring him back and Bill got his clutches on him you know what’d happen: Right away Bill would plunk him into jail. We don’t want to put him in jail, do we? Course not. He isn’t a criminal like Bill tries to make out. He’s a good man but unfortunate in getting mixed up in this thing. It’s more manly for us to help an old man like him *out of trouble* than to help him *into jail*. Besides if we keep him out of Bill’s reach for a few days we’ll get his story *first* and that will give us first crack at the two hundred dollars.”

“You’re counting your roosters before they’re hatched,” said Peg. “Maybe he isn’t within ten miles of the old Morgan house.”

“There’s just one way to settle that,” said Scoop, starting briskly down the street.

“Wait a minute,” said Peg, “and let’s plan this.”

Scoop slowed up.

“There’s two ways of getting to the old Morgan house,” continued Peg. “Mr. Arnoldsmith, if he is there, took the longest way. Now, shall we follow the Treebury pike, as he did, and cut across the pasture to the old house?—or shall we go up the canal?”

When it comes to a matter of riding or walking you never have to coax Red Meyers to save his legs.

“Let’s get a skiff,” he suggested, “and row up the canal.”

Scoop looked thoughtful.

“I don’t know,” said he, “but what that’s the best plan. We’ll very likely want to approach the house cautiously, and it’ll be easier to do that on the canal side.”

“Can we get your pa’s boat?” said Peg.

“Easy,” assured Scoop.

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE OLD MORGAN HOUSE

It was now daylight and the red sun was lifting itself into the sky. There was a nice summery feeling to the air that I liked. It gave me pep and made me glad I was alive.

A few automobiles with cane fishing poles strapped to the mudguards whizzed along Main Street. One of these fishing parties stopped at Mugger's all-night restaurant and went noisily in to breakfast. That reminded me of the quarter that Dad had given to me. Right away I got hungry. With the money we had taken in from the ice cream and the quarter Red got at the fraternity house we were pretty well fixed. So we went into the restaurant and bought four cups of coffee and a lot of doughnuts and some cherry pie and ice cream cones.

Breakfast over, we headed for the canal where Mr. Ellery keeps his skiff. But we were out of luck. The boat was padlocked to a tree and the oars were chained with another padlock to the rower's seat.

"Shucks!" sputtered Scoop, jiggling the tie-chain padlock. "I never thought about the boat being locked. And I bet a cookie pa has the keys with him."

“Come on,” said Peg, “and we’ll walk.”

Five minutes later we were hoofing it out of town on the Treebury pike.

Dad says that the old deserted stone house we call the Morgan place was at one time a tavern. Years and years ago, before the railroads came, men hauling grain and driving cattle to market at Chicago used to put up over night at the Morgan tavern. But the road that had led past the door of the tavern in those far-away days has long since disappeared. To-day the old house with its thick stone walls and knocked-out windows and doors stands by itself in a cow pasture owned by Mr. Charley Wilson, the Treebury pike on one side and the canal on the other. The cattle at one time used to roam through the downstairs rooms, switching their tails against the rough-plastered walls and peering into the huge fireplace. But the doors are barred now because one of Mr. Wilson’s cows broke its leg by stepping through a rotten board in the floor.

We have played in the old Morgan house lots of times, hiding in the moldy closets on the second floor and shinning across the age-twisted beams in the big attic. We have been in the cellar, too, which is deep and fearfully dark, more like a dungeon than a cellar. Dad says maybe it *was* somewhat of a dungeon in the days when the house was in its prime because wicked stories were in circulation when he was a boy regarding things that had happened in the old house to travelers who seemingly had more money than friends. After Dad told me that I got the fellows together and we dug up the earthen floor of the cellar in search of buried treasure. All we

ever found was the skeleton of a cat with a short tail and an old monkey-wrench.

We decided to make a circle and approach the house from the canal side as the trees and bushes would screen us from sight. So we kept to the Treebury pike where it winds out of town through Happy Hollow till we came to the third creek bridge. Here we followed a line fence, keeping out of sight in the mustard weeds. We came safely to the canal bank. Off to the right of us we could see the old house, seemingly grim and silent and lonely in the slanting rays of the warm morning sun. Maybe, I thought, it was standing there repenting for unworthy deeds touching on its younger days.

We were walking single file with Scoop in the lead. Suddenly he paused dead still and gripped my arm, pointing to where a faint spiral of whitish smoke gently lifted itself from one of the tumble-down chimneys. That meant to us that a wood fire was burning in the big fireplace, in the same room where a heavy trapdoor opens into the gloomy cellar. We felt pretty certain we knew who was tending that fire.

“I think we better plan things a bit before going further,” Scoop said in a guarded voice. “We don’t want to fumble.”

“Absolutely not,” said Peg, thinking, I guess, that a fumble might cost us two hundred dollars.

Red was squinting toward the stone house.

“It surely must be Mr. Arnoldsmitth,” he said.

I could see he was scared. Red is that way. He's got oceans of grit *after* he gets into a scrap; the getting in is the hard part for him.

"Not much doubt about it being Mr. Arnoldsmith," Scoop said confidently. "What I'm wondering is whether we ought to rush right in and overpower him, explaining things afterwards, or just come up in a friendly way."

"What's the use of getting rough?" said Peg. "He's an old man. We don't want to forget that. Not for one minute. And if we're going to help him out of his troubles it would look queer to rush him right at the start."

"All right," said Scoop. "We'll go walking up on him as though nothing has happened. I don't know what we'll find out; but we can decide what to do by the way things work out. If it comes to a show-down I'll yell 'Thirteen!' That'll be the signal to close in on him. You know, fellows, there's just a chance that he *is* crazy, like Doc says."

Here Scoop took the lead as before and we trailed after him. Our shoes made no sound in the soft earth. Soon we came to the house and circled to the front. At one of the barred windows we paused and squinted in. There was Mr. Arnoldsmith bending over a wood fire that snapped and crackled in the big fireplace. A small tin pail steamed on the coals, giving out the odor of strong coffee; and in a dirty-looking pan that the old man held over the flames sizzled eggs and bacon. He was singing softly to himself:

There were an old soldier,
An' he had a wooden leg;

An' he had no terbaccy,
Nor terbaccy could he beg.

“Good morning, Mr. Arnoldsmitth,” spoke up Scoop.

Gee-miny! I thought the old man was going to throw a fit. He straightened with a cry that was almost a scream. His eyes were wild as he faced us. He trembled all over, like the leaves on the trees when the cold winds come down from the north. In his fright he dropped the frying pan into the fire. In an instant there was a flash as the contents of the pan spilled onto the coals and the grease blazed up.

“Why—— You—you jest about scared the wits out of me,” panted the old man. Then he seemed to get a grip on himself and his trembling and terror faded away. I was glad to see the wild look die out of his eyes. He didn't appear so fierce and dangerous now. I was satisfied he was wholly in his right mind.

With quick nervous steps he came to the door and looked out, letting his eyes sweep over the range of pasture between the old house and the Treebury pike. Maybe he was of the opinion that we were not alone. I heard him give a sigh as though a load had been lifted from his mind. One of the door bars could be pushed up. He showed us how to work it, inviting us to come in.

“You'll find things a bit smudgy as I ain't had time to dust the parlor furniture,” he said, and then cackled nervously over his little joke.

“Do you *live* here?” Scoop said quickly, a note of surprise in his voice.

“I jest bin stayin’ here off and on,” the old man admitted. Then he seemed in a hurry to add: “I was jest hopin’ you boys’d happen along. Now ain’t it funny how a body *thinks* a thing and then purty soon it comes true? But I wish you hadn’t startled me so, boys. Jest see what’s happened to my breakfast.” There was now a doleful touch to his voice that made me unhappy. There we were full of doughnuts and cherry pie and ice cream cones and coffee with cream and sugar in it and he was hungry and we were the cause of his breakfast burning up.

He probably read our thoughts. On the instant he let a happy smile ripple over his wrinkled face and said:

“Now, boys, don’t you worry none ’bout that sp’iled bacon. Reckon I got some more where that come from; and some eggs, too.” He crossed to an old cupboard in a corner of the big room and from a wooden box on one of the dirty cupboard shelves brought out a small square of bacon and two eggs.

We watched him slice the bacon into the hot pan and later break the eggs into the sizzling grease. The eggs sputtered and the bacon kinked itself and got black. After a bit Scoop said:

“I suppose you’re wondering if we followed you here and what we did it for.”

The old man’s hands twitched but he never glanced up.

“I reckon I know purty much what you come here for,” he said quietly. “Mebby you even intended knockin’ me out, like I was knocked out last night, and had an idear of carryin’ me back to town with you. But I ’spect you’ll git such foolish idears out of your heads when I tell you the truth about the mummy and about the important job I got to finish a-fore I kin go back to New York, like I said at the depot. Yes, sir-e! You’re goin’ to be jest awful surprised when you learn the job I’ve got to do; and bein’ loyal Jupiter Detectives I jest know you’re goin’ to help me out.”

I can’t begin to describe how excited we were, though we tried not to show it on the outside. With the old man about to tell us what he knew of the missing mummy I could just see that two-hundred-dollar reward getting closer and closer. I could almost *feel* it in my pocket—maybe not all of it, but my share, which would be fifty dollars.

I thought of Bill Hadley and I wanted to laugh. There he was running all over town trying to locate Doc Leland’s missing patient; and there *we* were, sitting on a bale of Mr. Charley Wilson’s marsh hay, watching the patient eat his breakfast of bacon and eggs and coffee. When it came to a matter of doing real detecting Bill wasn’t in our class at all. He didn’t stand the ghost of a show of getting the reward, that was a cinch. We were too clever for him. My chest swelled out at this thought. A superior, important feeling came to me as I dangled my legs over the edge of the hay bale; and it was nice, I found, to feel that way.

If Mr. Arnoldsmitth noticed our impatience to hear his story he didn’t see fit to be concerned over it. Slowly he ate his

breakfast, holding the bacon in his fingers. The eggs were fried hard and he ate them speared on a fork. The coffee he drank from the pail in which it had been boiled. Not very good table manners, I thought. But, then, he wasn't eating at a table, and that, of course, made a difference.

When he was through he set the frying pan and pail in the cupboard. The fork was cleaned with an old newspaper. By this time the fire was about out but he finished it by scattering the coals with his feet. I could see he was thinking hard. And always he seemed to be listening. Presently he turned to where we sat on the bale of hay and said:

“Of course, boys, if you are goin’ to help me it’s got to be kep’ a secret.”

“We know how to keep a secret if it’s right to keep it,” said Scoop.

The blue eyes went warm.

“I figured as how that were a fact,” the old man said quickly, “else I never would have invited you to join my celebrated company.” There was a brief silence. “All Jupiter Detectives stick up fur one another,” he added.

“Yes, sir,” said Scoop.

“And I reckon when you hear my strange story you’re a-goin’ to stick up fur me and help me and not let anybody in town know ’bout me bein’ here in this old house.”

“No one knows about you being here but us,” said Scoop.

A queer look darted across the old man’s face. It was a relieved look, kind of.

“I never bin fooled on judgin’ a boy yet,” he said impulsively. “And when I first set eyes on you boys I sez to myself, sez I: ‘Anson Arnoldsmit, them are four right smart boys; and jest the kind of smart boys to have in your famous detective company. They be the kind of boys you can depend on.’”

Maybe the old man was putting it on pretty thick, but I liked to have him talk that way. It gave me a happy, contented feeling. A fellow likes to be appreciated. It isn’t much use being clever and smart and wide-awake if no one notices it or remarks about it. A fellow can’t very well go around telling things like that on himself. I told myself that Mr. Arnoldsmit was a pretty shrewd man to notice everything like he did.

“I guess I’ll sot as it’s quite a story,” he said. There was an old wooden water pail standing near and he up-ended it and sat down on it directly in front of us. From this seat he could look out through the door and across Mr. Wilson’s pasture to where a cloud of gray dust marked the course of the Treebury pike.

I held my breath. It was coming! In a few minutes we would know all about the missing mummy and the mystery wouldn’t be a mystery any longer. Then would come the reward. Scoop reached down and took my hand and gripped it tightly. I knew just how he felt. I was feeling the same way; and when he squeezed my hand I squeezed back. I

didn't turn and look at him, though. I kept my eyes fastened on the old gentleman.

Digging a piece of bacon from a hollow tooth he began his story.

CHAPTER IX

THE MUMMY ITCH

“I calc’late as how you boys ain’t never heard tell of the mummy itch,” Mr. Arnoldsmitth began, regarding us intently with his warm blue eyes.

I stared.

“There ain’t very many people know about it,” he added.

“Sime Morrison had the barber’s itch last winter,” said Scoop, “and wore a plaster on his chin. Is the mummy itch like that?”

“Well, now, sonny, it be and it ben’t. As Mister Wallknocker sez——”

“Is *he* a detective, too?” put in Scoop.

“He’s the president and general manager of the American-Egyptian Mummy Importin’ Association. I’ll tell you more about him presently. First, I figure I ought to tell you ’bout this awful disease what is called in Egypt the mummy itch. Accordin’ to what Mister Wallknocker sez it was kind of common fur the Egyptians thousands of years ago to git an itch in the top part of their heads where the hair is; and havin’ no fine-combs in them days the itchers wasn’t got

rid of much. Consequence is a lot of dead Egyptians made up into nice-lookin' mummies was a-carryin' around a prosperous colony of hard-workin' itchers; and all the embalmin' and mummifyin' in the world won't kill them pesky itchers. No, sir-e! They got more lives than any tomcat that ever pestered a rat. They jest keep on livin' year after year and a thousand years to them ain't no more than a day is to you boys. The awful part is that any time they find it dull down under all them layers of mummy cloth and embalmin' gums they kin come a-borin' out jest like them little worms what bore holes in an old wooden bedstead. Science ain't got it all figured out yet but I suspect from what Mister Wallknocker confided to me confidentially that these mummy itchers are second cousins to our seventeen-year locusts what live in the ground fur years and years and then come out and git busy killin' the leaves on the trees, only to go back into the ground ag'in fur another seventeen years.

“That's jest the way these mummy itchers act. No tellin' when they'll come a-borin' out through the casin' what holds 'em in; and once they're out they spread like sixty. First thing you know everybody livin' near that spot where the mummy is has the mummy itch; and then it's scratch, scratch, scratch from breakfast to dinner and from dinner to supper and from supper to bedtime and from bedtime to breakfast ag'in. It's plumb awful! Mister Wallknocker sez that back in Egypt where they have the mummy itch purty bad, havin' so many mummies layin' around, the rich people hire purfessional scratchers to scratch 'em so they kin grab a bit of sleep; and where a poor family has it they take turns keepin' awake and the one what's awake

does the scratchin' till it's his turn to go to sleep and be scratched. I reckon, boys, there never was a worse disease.”

The old man paused in his story and his voice trailed away. A concerned look came into his wrinkled face, as though he was feeling sorry for the poor Egyptians who had the mummy itch. When I grow up I want to be that kind of a man—full of sympathy for other people and always thinking of some one else. Dad is that way. When they raise money for the poor people or pass a subscription paper for some worthy cause, like repairing the baseball park, you always find Dad's name at the head of the list.

Yet, with all my belief in Mr. Arnoldsmit, I looked at him sharply. Was he stringing us? It was hard to believe the things he pictured—the Egyptians scratching each other and the itchers living for thousands of years. That sounded like bunk. It was interesting, and I wanted Mr. Arnoldsmit to keep on with his story, but I wasn't wholly willing to believe that all he was telling us was true.

“Now that you know what an awful disease it is,” the old man continued, “and how it ought to be stamped out and not allowed to spread in this country, I'm a-goin' to tell you how Mister Wallknocker came to app'int me Chief Mummy Inspector fur the hull United States and how I git pay from him fur goin' 'round the country inspectin' the mummies his company sells. But first I got to make you swear you won't reveal any of these vital secrets, jest as Mister Wallknocker made me swear not to. Now jest stand up and hold up your right hand and put your left hand on your heart and bring your heels together like this.”

We were pretty sober as we stood up and raised our right hands and did as he said. When a fellow swears to a thing that's a serious matter. You don't feel like laughing and cracking jokes about it. You feel all solemn-like inside and a bit worried for fear you won't always be able to get those things straight that you were going to swear to.

Very solemnly the old man looked us over to see if we had our heels together and our hands on our hearts like he directed. When it was clear to him that we were in the correct position to take the oath he said:

“You will repeat after me slowly and distinctly: I promise and swear—that I will never reveal—to any person in the world—the facts about the mummy itch—as given to me this morning. That I will keep the information to myself—and will do all in my power—as loyal, trustworthy Juvenile Jupiter Detectives—to recover the mummy—what was stole last night—so that it kin be—duly and properly inspected—and investigated—to see if it has—the dreaded—mummy itch. And by so doing—render a service to the community—and humanity—by guardin' it ag'inst—a possible invasion of—mummy itchers. To all of which—I do most solemnly swear. Amen.”

When we said “Amen” Mr. Arnoldsmitth stated we had conducted ourselves with honors like loyal, trustworthy Juvenile Jupiter Detectives and could now sit down on the bale of hay. He walked to the door and looked out. Scoop nudged me and whispered:

“Jerry, is he stringing us?”

“You mean about the mummy itch?” I whispered back.

He nodded.

“I half think so,” I said.

“Me, too,” put in Peg.

“What’s his game?” said Scoop.

Peg and I didn’t have an answer for that. We just shook our heads. Then the old man came back and continued with his story:

“One day I was in my office soot in New York when in come a tall man, his face twitchin’ with excitement, and he sez, sez he: ‘Are you Mister Anson Arnoldsmit, the great and famous detective?’ And I nodded gravely, jest like this, not wantin’ to admit right out as how I were great and famous, which weren’t modest. And he sez, sez he: ‘Kin I hire you to do some important detectin’ fur me?’ And I sez, sez I: ‘You kin if it’s clean and honest work and upright manly employment.’ He said it was; and he made me swear like you jest done and then he told me about the mummy itch jest like I told you, only mebbly he got in some fancy words I don’t recall precisely. He said he was awfully worried about the mummy itch ’cause his business was importin’ mummies which he sells to museums and collectors. He said he was placed in a peculiar situation. Bein’ an honest man he didn’t like to keep on importin’ mummies into the United States and likely some day start a bad epidemic of the awful mummy itch from some mummy he brought into this country lettin’ loose a colony of ambitious itchers unexpected and sudden-

like. And he didn't like to tell the people who bought the mummies to look out fur the pesky itchers 'cause then no one would want to buy the mummies and take a chance. He said he had a scheme which he wanted me to help him out with, and his scheme was to make me Chief Mummy Inspector fur the hull United States and it was to be my job to travel 'round the country once each year and inspect the mummies he sold to see if any of them was a-gittin' ready to let loose some itchers and I was to git my travelin' expenses and five dollars per mummy, which weren't terrible big pay fur a purfessional man like I be, with an office soot in New York, but I ain't always thinkin' of the money when I kin perform a service to humanity. Of course Mister Wallknocker explained I'd have to do my inspectin' on the sly 'cause it never would do at all to let the people who owned the mummies know *why* they had to be inspected. If they knew, right away they'd ship the mummies back and sue the American-Egyptian Mummy Importin' Association, which Mister Wallknocker is president and general manager of, to git their money back.

“So that's how I come to be app'inted Chief Mummy Inspector. It's kind of delicate work tellin' if the mummy itchers are gittin' restless and likely to come a-breakin' out, but I ain't had a bit of trouble so far. One time I reckon I saved the hull city of Chicago from gittin' the awful mummy itch. Yes, sir-e! I found a mummy in a downtown museum what was jest on the p'int of lettin' loose a colony of itchers and I took that mummy and put it in an iron chest and sunk it in the middle of Lake Michigan. And jest to show you how deadly and persistent them itchers is, even shet up in that iron chest they put their drillers to work and some of them got out and learned how to swim and went lookin' fur trouble.

Mebby you read in the *Chicago Tribune* how a man in Michigan City caught a turtle what was so limber it looked like it was made of rubber. Well, now, do you know what made that turtle so limber? He had bin bit by one of them mummy itchers and he was twisted all out of shape from tryin' to scratch the top of his shell with his hind feet.”

Again I looked at the old man sharply. I was pretty certain now he was kidding us. What he was telling sounded a good bit like a crazy joke to me. But he was all sober and serious. He had me guessing. I began to get uneasy.

“I guess you know now, boys, how I happened to be in the museum; and you kin understand why I couldn't tell what I was there fur. Why, if I'd come right out and told the president of your college how I was Chief Mummy Inspector fur the hull United States, which is an awful responsible position, you kin see what he'd a-done. Right away Mister Wallknocker'd had a lawsuit on his hands and the newspapers would have got hold of it and the big business of the American-Egyptian Mummy Importin' Association would bin busted up like a drum with both heads kicked out. So I jest slipped into the museum on the sly. I reckon that's jest about the hull story, boys.”

“But you haven't told us who stole the mummy and who hit you on the head,” Scoop reminded quickly.

“I ain't knowin' that,” the old man said slowly. “Where that mummy went to is jest as much of a mystery to me as it is to you. But we got to find it and inspect it; and with you boys helpin' me, like you promised, I reckon we'll get track of it quick.”

“Then you *don't know* who hit you on the head?” said Scoop.

“That’s jest about the size of it. You see I were a-hidin’ under the mummy case when——”

“Was it you who made the mummy whisper?” Scoop cut in tensely. Again his hand slipped down and closed tightly over mine. A dark look touched his face. His doubt of the old man was turning into distrust.

“I reckon, boys, I ought to be ’shamed of that trick——”

“Then it *was* you?” cried Scoop.

“Yes, I were the cause of the whisperin’,” the old man admitted. “You see it was this way: I were anxious to git rid of you boys, not recognizin’ you, of course, so I could go ahead and do my private inspectin’ of the mummy, and I thought it was quickest and easiest to scare you away. I’m plumb sorry if I scared you very much.”

Scoop gave his head a stiff bob.

“Oh, we soon got over our scare,” he said. “We knew a mummy couldn’t whisper. We blamed it on the students.”

I took a long breath. Well, part of the mystery was cleared up, anyway! We knew who did the whispering. While I was glad to know that, in a way I was disappointed. Of course in talking about the matter we *said* it wasn’t possible for a mummy to whisper; but nevertheless it was exciting to *think* that maybe we were wrong after all and the

mummy *did* whisper. Now the spookishness was all gone and that part of the mystery became commonplace.

“When you boys had run away,” the old man continued, “I began my inspectin’ but I didn’t git more than an inch of surface carefully inspected before I heard somebody tiptoeing into the museum and I dodged under the mummy case ag’in. I could peek out without bein’ seen much and there was three men with black masks on their faces. They didn’t say nothin’—they jest came right up to the mummy case and started movin’ it around—and there I was *under* it!

“I stepped out, then, to inquire what business they had movin’ the mummy case around and I guess they weren’t expectin’ to have me come a-bobbin’ up that way out of the dark, kind of, ’cause one of them give a yell and grabbin’ somethin’ from a table hit me on the head and I didn’t come to till you-all was a-puttin’ me in the automobile.”

Scoop stared.

“Why, Doc said you were still unconscious at one o’clock this morning,” he put in.

“I jest had to fool the doctor and that policeman what you call Bill. It was my only chance to git away. You kin see how I were fixed: If I *told why* I were there I’d be breakin’ my solemn and bindin’ oath what I give to Mister Wallknocker.” He paused and his face grew very grim, all around his mouth and around his nose and around his eyes. “No Jupiter Detective,” he added, “ever breaks his pledge.”

Scoop shrugged his shoulders.

“Of course not, but——”

“I guess you kin see now I did the only *right* thing. I made believe I were unconscious and when I had a chance to git away I got. And I come here and here I be.”

Here the old man got to his feet and moved restlessly about the room. His hand wandered to the blue lump on his forehead.

“Does it hurt your head where you were hit?” I inquired anxiously.

“Not much, Sonny. It’ll be all right in a day or two. It’s only sore jest at the one spot what is swelled up. Mebby now you boys better tell me all you know about what happened last night. I learned a lot from listenin’, but there may be some things I ought to know about and don’t. I reckon if we put together what I know and what you know we’ll make faster progress in gittin’ our hands on the mummy.”

Scoop went ahead and told the old man about the telephone call from the depot and about the missing cart and the reward. When he mentioned the watch and other things I found under the mummy case the old man gave a start. A queer look flashed across his face.

“Maybe you know how the things got there,” said Scoop.

“I reckon they must ’a’ bin put there after I were hit on the head,” the old man returned.

“I thought maybe *you* put ’em there,” Scoop said pointedly. He nodded his head in my direction. “Jerry here says he’s sure the handkerchief the stuff was wrapped in belongs to you.”

“Here it is,” I said quickly, taking the handkerchief from my pocket and handing it to the old man. He took it and looked it over slowly and thoughtfully.

“Now ain’t that *queer*?” he said. “It *is* my handkerchief jest as sure as anything. Mebby it was taken from my pocket while I were unconscious,” he suggested.

“And you haven’t any idea at all,” questioned Scoop, “who the three men were or why they took the mummy away with them?”

“Yes, I got an idear. But that’s all it is: jest an idear. I suspect the mummy is right in this town; and I suspect it ain’t no great distance from the college. Mebby it is right in one of the college buildings this very minute.”

“We’ve been thinking right along that the students have something to do with it,” said Scoop. “At first we thought it was a joke; but it’s plain to us now there is a serious side to the matter.”

“Yes, if it were jest a joke I wouldn’t ’a’ got hit,” the old man said. “There’s a *reason* fur that mummy bein’ took.”

“And whatever the reason is,” Scoop declared, “the students are more or less at the bottom of it.”

“I ’spect you’re right, Sonny. What we got to do is to *find the cart* what you say is missin’. Wherever we find the cart the mummy ain’t likely to be fur off. Mebby you kin follow the trail made by the cart wheels.”

“We’ll try,” Scoop promised.

We talked quite a bit more about the missing mummy and what we should do to get track of it, agreeing to let Mr. Arnoldsmitth know about it as soon as it was recovered. After he had inspected it we could shape some plan to get the reward. He said he’d help us do that.

“I’ll keep out of sight in this old house,” he said as we were leaving for town. “Now don’t you go and furgit your promise what you swore to as loyal and trustworthy Juvenile Jupiter Detectives and tell about me bein’ here and about me bein’ the Chief Mummy Inspector fur the hull United States. Jest you keep all that to yourself. And you better come out and report to me as often as you kin. When you come jest yowl three times like a cat and I’ll come out if I’m hidin’. I’ll know it’s you by the yowls.”

“We’ll yowl once like *three* cats,” laughed Scoop, as we started away.

The old man called after us:

“Be awful careful, boys, if you find the mummy and don’t let it git rained on.”

“Is rain bad for a mummy’s complexion?” grinned Scoop.

“It’s the mummy itchers. They ain’t nothin’ that will bring ’em out like water. So if you find the mummy and a rain storm comes up be sure and keep it covered up with a rubber cloth, or somethin’.”

CHAPTER X IN DISGUISE

When we were a short distance from the old stone house Scoop stopped dead still and said:

“Fellows, that old geezer has me guessing.”

“What do you mean?” said Red.

“Oh, that bunk about the mummy itch.”

“How do you know it’s bunk?” Red followed up. “You’ve never been in Egypt.”

“It sounds like bunk. Good night! How can a fellow believe that mummy itchers have drillers that’ll bore right through iron? The old fellow isn’t daffy. And he isn’t playing us for suckers just for fun. He’s got a reason.”

“Maybe he’s testing us out to see what kind of detectives we are,” Peg suggested.

Scoop gave a whistle.

“Gee-miny! I never thought of that. I hope you’re right. Still——” There was a thoughtful expression on his

face as he stared through the trees to where the canal lay like a silver ribbon in the sunshine. After a bit he went on: “Fellows, I think the thing for us to do is to let on that we believe all these queer yarns he tells us about mummy itchers and rubber turtles. As I say, he has a reason for telling us these things; and that reason may be to test us as detectives. I don’t know. He’s the head of our detective company and I suppose we ought to believe in him. Detectives do queer things I suppose. It’s a cinch he’s dead anxious to get possession of the mummy. We’ll help him. Maybe he hasn’t told us all he knows about the missing mummy. We’ll keep our eyes and ears open when we’re around where he is and learn all we can.”

Just as we started toward the turnpike Red gave a happy yip.

“A free ride, fellows! Come on,” and he beat it through the brush in the direction of the canal.

Sure enough a man was passing in a skiff.

“Hey, Cap’n!” cried Red. “Give us a ride into town.”

Cap’n Boaz Tinkertop is a good friend of ours. We call him Cap’n because years and years ago he had charge of a fleet of tow boats that hauled grain up and down our canal. One time he had a bad accident. His left leg got pinched between two boats and the doctors had to amputate the leg at the knee. But it never seems to bother the Cap’n to get around on his peg leg.

Pretty soon we were parked in his fishing boat. It was natural for him to ask us what we were doing at the old Morgan

house, but we gave him an evasive reply.

On the edge of town we passed close to where the Stricker gang had built a hut on the canal bank. You will remember that I mentioned Jimmy Stricker and his cousin, Bid, in the opening chapter of my story. They were at the depot the morning we paid our five dollars and became Juvenile Jupiter Detectives. We never suspected, though, that Bid had been listening until he yelled out:

“Lookit the Jupiter Detectives! Ain’t they cute little things? I bet they use a quart of metal-shine every day keeping a polish on their dollar-and-twenty-five-cent stars.”

“They ought to use a little metal-shine on their heads and polish up their brains,” another jeered.

Well, there wasn’t much we could do except sit in the boat and scowl. It made us hot to learn that they knew all about us being detectives. They’d blab it all over town.

Then the somewhat pleasing thought came to me that maybe *we* would have a chance to do some laughing when we got the two hundred dollars. Yes, sir-e! Let them make fun of us if they wanted to. They’d shut up like clams and feel pretty sick when they learned about the reward.

When we landed at the place where the Cap’n keeps his skiff the Methodist church bells were ringing and people were coming from their homes into the street all dressed up for church. I knew what Mother would say if I skipped Sunday-school, so I hurried home to clean up and put on my good clothes. The house was closed but I found the front door key

in the mail box. Mother and Dad were at church. When I reached the church the morning service was over and Sunday-school was about to start. I saw Dad come down the stone steps. He got his eyes on me and a happy grin came into his face.

“Found the mummy yet, Jerry?” he called down to me.

“Not yet,” I returned, “but we’ve got an important clew.”

“Fine! I hope you hurry and get the reward. The preacher just volunteered the happy information that the parsonage needs a new roof and each church member is supposed to buy a bundle of shingles. I put your name down for a bundle, thinking all the time I was doing it that I’d have to foot the bill. But if you get the reward you can pay for your own shingles.”

“I suppose so,” I said slowly, wondering was he joking. He’s full of nonsense, Dad is, and keeps me guessing.

Mother came down the steps talking with Mrs. Meyers about what a nice sermon it was, only the prayer was too long for a hot day, and how she had just learned to bake a cake with only one egg. While Mrs. Meyers was writing down the recipe on the back of her pledge card Mother got her eyes on me. Right away she started fussing because I had on a red necktie. I didn’t want to be fussed at so I ran up the steps into the Sunday-school room.

The other kids were just getting into their places. Peg and Red were there. Scoop is a Presbyterian, but that’s about as good as a Methodist, I guess, only I’d rather be a Methodist than a

Presbyterian because our pipe organ runs with an electric motor and you don't have to pump it with a handle like you do the Presbyterian organ.

The superintendent told us our lesson was to be about Moses. He said Pharaoh's daughter found Moses in some kind of a basket in the pond lilies along the shore of a river. Right then Peg jabbed me in the slats with his elbow and hissed:

"Know what Pharaoh he's talking about, Jerry?"

"I never was acquainted with any of the Pharaohs," I whispered back.

"Why, he's talking about Ramses. Don't you remember about Scoop telling us that Ramses was the Pharaoh who was mean to the Hebrews? He got that story from the museum tender."

I listened close after that. It was interesting. It seemed just as though the superintendent was talking about a neighbor or some one I knew pretty well. But when he said Pharaoh was drowned in the Red Sea I sat up sharp and stiff. If that were in the Bible I knew the fellow who wrote the Bible got things twisted. How could they make a mummy out of Ramses and sell him to the Tutter college for two thousand dollars if he were drowned in the Red Sea? Of course they might have recovered his body, but the Sunday-school superintendent didn't say anything about that.

Red went home with me to dinner because we were going to have fried chicken and ice cream. Lots of times we trade off meals that way. He lets me know when his mother is going to

have something extra so I can invite myself over. And I keep him posted on what Mother is doing.

After dinner we got Scoop and Peg and headed for the college grounds. As we came even with the town hall we slowed up to read the reward notice on the bulletin board:

\$200.00 REWARD

This sum will be paid to the party or parties providing information that will lead to the recovery of the mummy taken from the college museum on the night of September 5th.

(Signed)
J. H. BARTON, *President*,
Tutter College.

As we came up we noticed Bill just inside the screen door. He kicked the door open and came onto the sidewalk where we were.

“How does the notice look to you?” he inquired good-naturedly.

“Fine!” said Scoop. “I can feel the two hundred dollars getting closer and closer to my pocket every minute. I suppose you’ve found Mr. Arnoldsmit?” he added, giving me a nudge. That made me grin.

Bill scowled and the wart on his nose puckered up till it looked like two warts.

“No, I ain’t—gol darn him! He got away. But I got word to all the nearby towns and he’ll be ketched before many hours.”

“And then what?” said Scoop.

“Then he’ll go plump into jail, by gosh!”

“And then, I suppose, getting the reward will be like pie for you?” went on Scoop.

“That’s one time you supposed right,” said Bill.

We passed on down the street and Scoop said:

“He’s got a big surprise party coming but he doesn’t know it.”

The museum was locked and we couldn’t get in. But for that matter we didn’t care particularly about getting in. We were more concerned over the possibility of trailing Scoop’s cart.

It is the regular thing for a number of Tutter people to climb the hill and stroll about the college grounds Sunday afternoon. The young fellows go there with their girls and walk around and giggle over nothing and act silly. Some of the older people who have lived in Tutter for years and years like to go there to talk about the Indian mounds which have never been dug into and are supposed to contain the bones of Indian warriors and arrowheads and things like that. I’ve always had a great longing to dig into one of these mounds but I never

quite dared. I suppose they would arrest a fellow if they caught him doing that.

There is one big mound shaped to represent a turtle. It is called the Turtle Effigy. It is here we had left the cart.

Sure enough we could follow the trail made by the wheels in the soft earth. This filled us with excitement. Our spirits sagged, though, when the trail was lost at a point where the cart was drawn onto the concrete sidewalk close to the cemetery and in the direction of Oakcrest. We tried for more than an hour to pick up the trail but failed. Hot and tired and disappointed we sat down to get our wind and talk it over.

“We know one thing anyway,” said Scoop, “and that is that the trail leads into this part of town. This indicates, as Mr. Arnoldsmitth says, that the mummy is very likely in one of the college buildings. The thing now is to find out *which* building.”

We scouted around till supper time, searching for the missing cart. We looked in all the garages and under the dormitory steps and on the rubbish piles back of the fraternity houses. We found not a single trace of the cart.

“We’ll come back to-night,” said Scoop, when we were about to head south for town.

“And do what?” Peg wanted to know.

“Do detecting, of course. We probably can do better work when it’s dark. For instance we can get closer to the buildings without being noticed. By peeking under the curtains and

listening to what is said within we ought to pick up a few good clues.”

Red’s eyes were sparkling like he was burning up with a bright idea.

“And we can disguise ourselves,” he suggested, “like it tells about in the detective book.”

“Sure we can,” I followed up quickly. “That’ll be a lot of fun.”

“All right,” Scoop agreed.

He had the detective book in his coat pocket and read that chapter telling how to fix up different kinds of disguises. We finally decided it would be best to disguise ourselves as Italians. We could make four mustaches out of fur and wear red handkerchiefs about our necks. No one would recognize us in a fine disguise like that.

Scoop thumbed through the book.

“Here’s something that ought to interest us,” he said. Then he read aloud:

CRIMINAL CHARACTERISTICS

It is an established law in police practices that a criminal will sooner or later experience a compelling desire to return to the immediate scene of his crime. Have this in

mind always. If you set your trap well the criminal you achieve to apprehend may walk directly into your hands.

“That means,” interpreted Scoop, “that whoever stole the mummy is likely to return to the museum; and as the mummy was stolen at night the ones who stole it will be most likely to return at night. We’ll be watching. We’ll set a trap, like the book says. And we’ll do it this very night.”

We went to Red’s house and got a lunch. Some cookies and doughnuts and two bananas apiece and some apples and chocolate pie. There wasn’t much left in the ice box when we got through, but Red said his mother wouldn’t care. There was a note on the hall table saying that his father and mother and big sister had gone out riding.

In the attic we found a black fur muff hanging on the wall in a paper bag with some little white balls in the bottom of the bag. Red said the muff wasn’t any account, he guessed, so we took it downstairs. The fur was long and wiry and made swell mustaches. With the red handkerchiefs around our necks and the mustaches glued into place I want to tell the world that we looked *tough*. A timid person meeting us on a dark street would just about throw a fit. When we mussed up our caps we looked still worse. Peg said all we needed was a red sash apiece with some daggers and revolvers stuck in our belts and we’d be honest-to-John pirates.

The only thing that didn’t look right was our knee pants. Red’s pa is kind of short and Red said maybe we could borrow four pairs of his pants, rolling them up at the bottom if they were too long and in the way. He got out a pair for

himself and two more pairs for Peg and Scoop. It looked as though that was all the spare pants Mr. Meyers had. Then Red remembered there was a masquerade suit hanging in the attic. Disguised as a Quaker his father had worn the suit to a Hallowe'en party. Red got the pants to the suit. They buttoned at the sides but I didn't mind that. I put them on in a jiffy and we got ready to start. Scoop had the handcuffs. Red stuck a flashlight into his pocket and he and I armed ourselves with pokers that we found in the kitchen. Peg unscrewed the handle of a dust-mop. That made a dandy club. All prepared to capture our criminal we set forth.

It was good and dark now. We sneaked up the alley and across the railroad track and up the hill without being seen. That was lucky. Soon we were in the college grounds. At the museum we separated, each one stationing himself on a different side of the building. Scoop instructed us to lay perfectly still in the grass with our ears close to the ground.

"If any one comes slipping up on you," said he, "you'll know it. And if any one *does* come sneaking up on you in a suspicious manner don't be afraid to use your clubs. Aim for the head. And hit hard. If you need help yell 'thirteen!' just as loud as you can. Get me?"

I dropped into the grass on my stomach. My heart was going thump! thump! thump! Gee, it was still and spooky and lonely! It was dark, too. After a bit my eyes got used to the blackness and I could make out the form of trees and bushes close by. It was easy to see the museum because the walls are built of yellow brick and the upper part of the walls seemed to

reflect the glow of the puny lights that straggled across the campus in line with the sidewalk.

As I lay there watching the museum the silence seemed to grow deeper and deeper. There was no movement to the air and the leaves in the trees above me and all about me hung limp and lifeless. I began to long for familiar sounds—the croak of a frog, the voice of a katydid, shrill and penetrating, the swish of wings as some night bird dipped down from out of the blackness.

But no such sounds came to me. All Nature seemed to have vanished from the spot. And in the deep silence it seemed to me that an atmosphere of mystery, grim and fearful, was settling about the yellow brick walls of the museum. I had the feeling that something was going to happen. And something *did* happen.

Scoop was stationed in front of the museum. Red was somewhere behind the building, near the college heating plant. Peg was on the side opposite me. I was on the hill side. The concrete sidewalk that crosses the campus was in back of me, hidden by trees and bushes, but no great distance away.

A thrill passed over me when footsteps I had been listening to on the hard surface of the sidewalk suddenly ceased. There was no sound for a moment; then I heard cautious footsteps on the soft earth. A twig crackled a short distance away. Some one, coming up the hill from town, had followed the sidewalk as far as the museum, then left the walk, heading seemingly for the very spot where I lay.

I was a good bit scared. I wouldn't want you to think I wasn't scared. But the scare inside of me wasn't great enough to send me off on the run to where the other fellows were. It was a different kind of a scare. I didn't want to run. I wanted to stay right there and do what Scoop had instructed me to do. I was scared, I guess, that I might not be able to do the job up as good as I should.

Gripping Mrs. Meyers' kitchen poker I sort of squirmed about to see if I could make out who was coming up on me. I didn't want a criminal to step on me like I was a toad. I couldn't *see* anything. But constantly I could *hear* something. Whoever it was came nearer and nearer, not quickly, but slowly and very cautiously. After a bit I could make out a moving form. It was a man!

He stopped dead still and I hardly dared to breathe for fear he would hear me, he was that close. He stood silent and motionless, for all the world like the statues in front of the museum. The statues, though, are white and he seemed as black as the night itself.

Scoop's instructions were bobbing about in my head. I was to knock him out with Mrs. Meyers' kitchen poker. I was to aim for the head and not miss my aim. I was to hit hard. It wouldn't be easy. I realized it now. If I started moving toward him he would hear me. And if he came on much farther he would surely step on me. The doughnuts and cookies and other truck I had filled up on at Red's house seemed to get heavy in my stomach when I thought of what was likely to happen then.

After a while the man sat down with his back to the trunk of a big oak tree. The tree was between us. I crawled up a bit, finding that I could get along with scarcely a sound if I went ever so slowly and felt ahead of me for twigs.

Working in this way I kept getting closer to the oak tree. The thing that bothered me the most was my heart. Would he hear it? *I* could hear it.

When I was directly behind the trees I drew myself to my knees and raised the poker. In the darkness it grazed the rough tree trunk and made a slight scratching sound. The man sucked in his breath with a startled gasp and started to spring to his feet.

But I was too quick for him—and this is the part that always brings a shiver over Mother. Down came the poker. It *struck* something. I knew I had landed on the man's head.

He gave a gurgling, choking groan. Just like the last cry of a drowning cat. Then he toppled over. All was still as death. As still as a graveyard at midnight. My arms and knees felt funny. I didn't quite know what was wrong with them for a moment or two. Then it came to me. I was trembling. In my arms and in my knees and in my whole body I was trembling.

CHAPTER XI

THE EMPTY BOX CAR

I knew I must force down the trembling that gripped me. So I gritted my teeth and clenched my fists and the trembling became a mere shiver and then went wholly away, seemingly out through the tips of my fingers and toes. Raising my voice I yelled, "Thirteen!" just as loud as I could.

Scoop and the others came on the run, breathing hard and excited. They began firing questions at me, all talking at once, but I just pointed to where the man lay in a heap at the foot of the oak tree. Red turned his flashlight on the spot. A gasp broke from me when I saw that the fellow was a strange negro. Never had I seen a blacker man. He lay dead still and I was afraid I had killed him. A load was lifted from my mind when Scoop spoke up and stated that the man's heart was still beating.

"Here's a lump on his head where you hit him," said Scoop. He held his fingers close to the flashlight. "No blood," he added.

Satisfied that the negro would soon revive Scoop snapped the handcuffs on the man's wrists.

“Now that we’ve got him, what are we going to do with him?” Red wanted to know.

“We’ve got to get from him what he knows about the missing mummy,” said Scoop. “We’ll take him to some quiet place and ‘third degree’ him.”

“What kind of a ‘nitiation is that?” inquired Peg.

Scoop glanced up.

“Why, haven’t you read about it in the newspapers? The ‘third degree’ is what detectives always do to criminals to make them talk up and confess. We wouldn’t be real detectives if *we* didn’t do it.”

“How do you do it?” Peg followed up.

Scoop ran his fingers through his hair, pushing his cap to the back of his head.

“I don’t know *exactly* how to do it, but we can experiment. It’s a cinch the man knows something about the missing mummy or he wouldn’t be here like this. Um—— Wonder who he is? He doesn’t belong to the college outfit, I’m sure of that, unless he’s a new cook, or something.”

Red was fidgeting.

“Maybe we ought to take him down town and lock him up in jail,” he suggested.

Scoop gave a scornful laugh.

“And have Bill ‘third degree’ him and get the reward ahead of us? I guess not!”

“But we can’t ‘third degree’ him right here on the side of the hill,” Red followed up quickly. “If we try that first thing we know he’ll let out a yell and some one’ll come running to see who’s being murdered. We ought to have some place to take him to. Maybe our barn would be a good place.”

At that moment an engine whistled in the direction of the railroad siding that stretches up Happy Hollow just beyond the cemetery and down the hill from the Golden Sphinx fraternity house. Lots of times this siding is filled with cars. An empty box car would be a fine place in which to “third degree” the negro. By cutting across the cemetery we could reach the siding in just a few minutes.

“Fine!” Scoop said, when I made the suggestion.

This settled, we lifted the negro and started. Peg was in front, a foot in each hand. Red and Scoop each took hold of an arm up close to the shoulder. I brought up the rear, keeping the man’s head from wabbling.

Peg gave a jerky laugh.

“I feel like a murderer, kind of,” he said. “The deed has been committed and I’m helping to get the body out of sight.”

“We aren’t murderers,” said Scoop.

“All the same,” said Peg, “I hope we don’t meet anybody. We’re likely to get into trouble if we do.”

“We’ll drop flat,” said Scoop, “if we hear anybody coming.”

The negro was pretty heavy. We had to rest twice before coming to the cemetery. When the tombstones stood out ahead of us like grim white ghosts Red went stock-still.

“Go-o-od night!” he chattered. “You ain’t going into the cemetery, are you?”

“Course,” Scoop said shortly.

“Suppose we meet a ghost?” Red said unhappily. “I—I ain’t wanting to be chased by no ghost. Let’s go up the road and cut around the cemetery by the Golden Sphinx fraternity house.”

“Nix. That’s too far.”

“I—I won’t go in that old cemetery,” Red declared.

Scoop snorted his disgust.

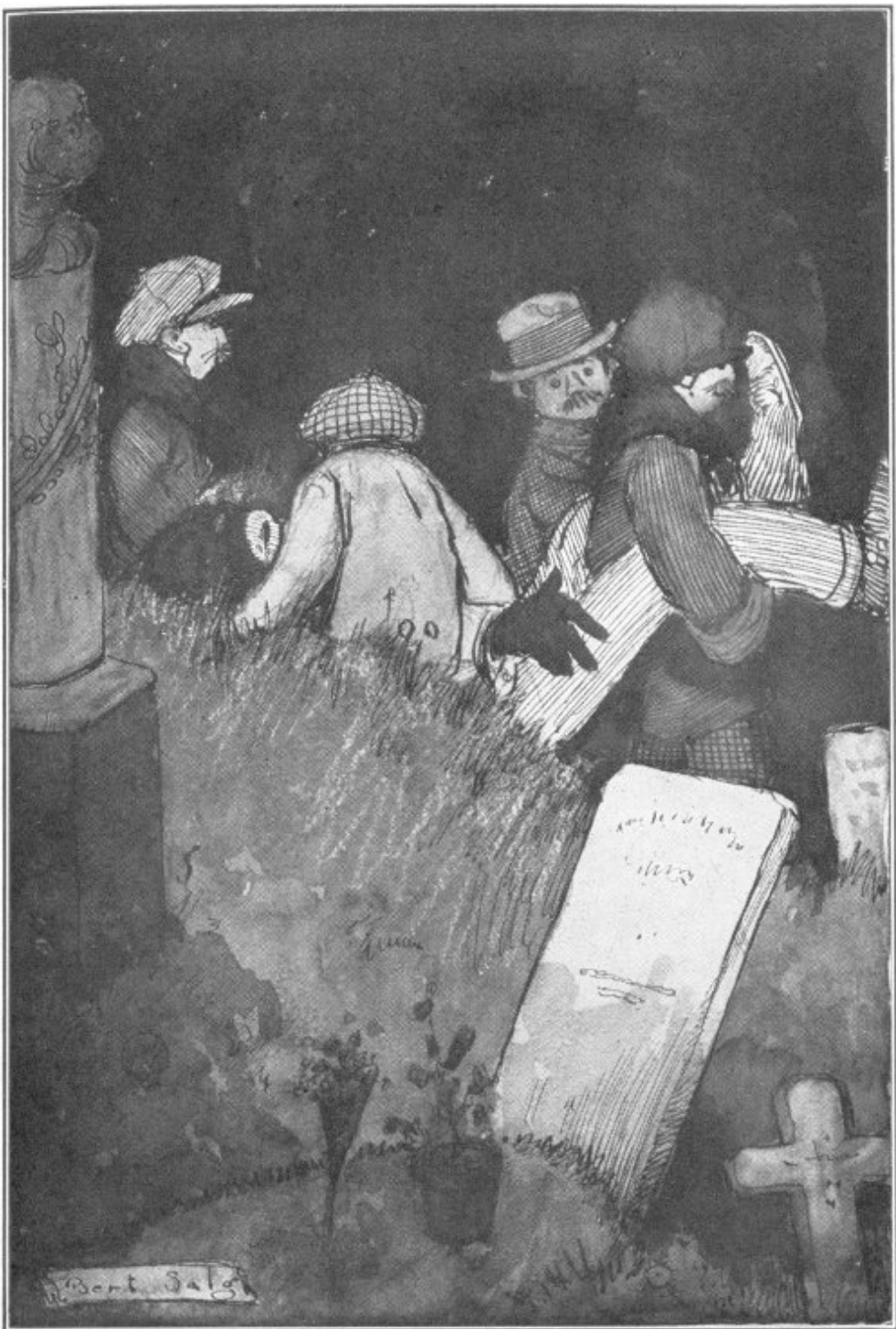
“Gee whiz! Whoever heard of a detective being scared of ghosts? A ghost isn’t real,” he added.

“All the same my scare is real,” said Red.

The cemetery *did* look spooky. But *I* wasn’t scared. I knew we wouldn’t see any ghosts; and I was anxious to get to the railroad siding so we could start “third degreeing” the negro.

“Aw, don’t be a calf,” I jeered. I knew if I could get Red mad his grit would help him out. It worked.

Hurriedly we crossed the cemetery, following one of the drives, no one saying a word and no sound near us except the crunching of the gravel beneath our heavy shoes. We had a time getting the man over the back cemetery fence. He was so limber-like it was hard to handle him. But we succeeded, and then scrambled down the gravelly hill to the railroad siding.



HURRIEDLY WE CROSSED THE CEMETERY.

When we located an empty box car Red flashed the light in through the side door and the rest of us hoisted the man into the car, dropping him onto the slivery floor. Then we gathered around. After a bit he began to move. He raised his head, looked about him wildly, and settled back with a groan.

“Now’s your chance to ‘third degree’ him,” said Red.

Peg gave Scoop a nudge.

“Sure; go ahead. What are you waiting for?”

Scoop scratched his head, a puzzled look on his face.

“I’m not sure how to start in,” he said uncertainly.

“Ask him questions,” suggested Peg.

Scoop was about to carry out this plan, but the words he formed in his mouth changed suddenly to a startled cry. Off in the distance where the siding joins the main track running east and west and parallel with Main Street there came a shrill whistle. Then a loud, jangling bump! bump! bump! Each “bump!” got louder and sounded closer. We knew what that meant. An engine was coupled to the string of “empties” and was either backing up or pulling out.

“Gee whiz!” cried Peg, scrambling to his feet. He rushed to the door of the car. “They’re getting ready to pull out, fellows. We’ve got to move from here if we don’t want a free ride.”

Here the car gave a violent jerk and Peg went reeling. Something happened to Red's flashlight and it died out. We didn't wait for him to get it working again—there wasn't a moment to spare. Quickly we reached forward in the dark and took hold of the negro, intending to drag him to the door of the car. We were almost to the door when a lantern flashed outside and a brakeman who had heard us in the car yelled:

“Git out of there, you durn hoboes! Git! This railroad ain't no charity ins'tution. Come, git a shove on you or I'll bring out my gun.”

I want to tell you right now we stepped lively! We dropped the negro and jumped from the moving car on the side opposite to where the brakeman was standing. Then we beat it up the gravelly hill, digging in with our fingers to make better speed.

When we came to the cemetery fence we paused and looked down. Off in the distance the engine was filling the night air with sparks like a Fourth-of-July fire-pot. The string of “empties” moved below us like a vague, shadowy serpent. From a slow, dull grind the sound made by the wheels changed to a steady hum. This continued till the last car passed by.

No matter how old I grow or what happens in the years that lay ahead of me I'll never be more disappointed or feel more helpless and unhappy than at that moment. It seemed as though Fate was struggling to make a failure of our plans to succeed as Juvenile Jupiter Detectives. Nothing else could explain the way things had turned out. We were a million times out of luck.

On the way back to town we almost got into a scrap. Scoop kept spitting out mean words, blaming me for the whole thing. He called me a dumb-bell. He talked about what a good hat rack my head was and how that is all I used it for. He said the negro wouldn't have gotten away from us if I hadn't insisted on putting him in the box car. Scoop is like that. He isn't perfect. I'm glad I'm not like him. When things move along lovely he's in his glory. If *he* makes a miscue he smooths it over. Just a little thing—not worth mentioning, to hear him tell it. If some one else makes a mistake it takes him a month of Sundays to get over it. He makes me tired sometimes.

Before we turned into Main Street we took off our mustaches. Pretty soon we came within sight of Red's house. Lights streamed from all the windows. Even the attic and basement were lit up. People were running about the lawn and front porch. Inside the house many people were moving quickly from room to room.

“Something's happened,” cried Red, darting ahead of us. Following him we crossed the lawn lickety-cut. Up the front steps we tumbled and into the house.

Mr. Meyers was excitedly running about the hallway. He was in his shirt sleeves and his collar was loose in front and flopping. Dad was in the living room. He got his eyes on us; and all of a sudden he collapsed into a Morris chair and started to laugh. He laughed and he laughed. And every second or two he'd point to our pants—I mean Mr. Meyers' pants—the ones we had borrowed for a disguise.

I tumbled then to what was up. And on the instant I felt pretty foolish. Mr. Meyers had missed his pants, and thinking he had been robbed had called in the neighbors. That was why Mrs. Meyers was upstairs looking in the bureau drawers and Mother was in the dining room counting the silver spoons. She dropped the spoons when she heard Dad and came into the room. A look of amazement settled over her face when she turned toward me. When she saw my Quaker pants her face got red. Then it got purple. She gave a gasp, stuffed her handkerchief into her mouth, and fell over into Dad's lap. By this time everybody in the room was laughing, though Mr. Meyers' laugh was kind of jerky and nervous-like.

Peg nudged me in the ribs.

“It's you they're laughing at, Jerry,” he hissed. “You've got Mr. Meyers' Quaker pants on hind side to.”

CHAPTER XII IN AN INCUBATOR

Mostly when I wake up in the morning I feel pretty happy. The first thing that pops into my head is the thought that I have another whole day ahead of me. A day can hold a lot of fun. The little things that trouble me when I drop off to sleep don't seem like troubles and difficulties after a good night's snooze.

But the morning after Mr. Meyers had the whole neighborhood aroused over what he thought was a robbery—*that* morning I didn't wake up with the usual happy feeling inside of me. My mind was troubled when I dropped off to sleep and it was still troubled when I opened my eyes and heard Mother rattling the cover of the oatmeal cooker. A lot of things had come crowding in to make me feel that way.

There was the negro getting away from us just when we were all set to "third degree" him and by making him tell what he knew about the missing mummy pave the way for a complete solution of the mystery. I wondered what was likely to happen to him. How would he free himself from the handcuffs? How far would he travel in the empty box car before he was discovered? Would he then be arrested? That was likely because the handcuffs would arouse the suspicions of any one with whom he came in contact. And if he were

arrested would he tell what he knew about the missing mummy, enabling some one else to step in and get the reward? I thrilled under the thought that he might escape arrest in some way or another and return soon to Tutter. I'd tell Scoop about that and we'd be on the lookout.

My thoughts jumped to the Quaker pants and my face burned when I recalled how everybody had laughed at me. A fellow hates to be made fun of that way. Mrs. Meyers said it was all a joke about our borrowing Mr. Meyers' pants—she said that boys would be boys and for her part she'd rather have Donald doing Juniper detecting than practicing circus stunts on his gas-pipe trapeze and likely to get his neck broken, or something.

It would soon be all over town about me wearing the Quaker pants hind side to. And at school the girls would look at me and put their hands over their mouths and giggle. You know how girls act about a thing like that. The boys would poke fun at me, too. I didn't mind that so much. Take the Stricker gang. If they got too fresh I could turn in and clean up on them. But you can't clean up on a girl, no matter how mean and smart-acting she is.

Certainly things weren't working out very well for me. As a Juvenile Jupiter Detective I had planned on being a bit reserved around the school grounds. Dignified, sort of. I felt a detective should be like that because being a detective and guarding the safety of the public is an honor. But it was no use thinking of such things now. If I tried to act dignified I'd look silly and the kids would likely yell "Quaker!" at me. I gave my pillow an angry thump at the thought of how a pair

of Quaker pants had about upset my plans to become a famous detective.

It was tough to be so unlucky. And I got right out of bed and took down my horseshoe from over the door and I pitched it just as far as I could out of the window—and I was mad enough to hope it hit somebody like Bid Stricker or one of his gang. And I took my lucky stone from under the carpet where I hide things, and the rabbit's foot I traded my cat skull for, and I pitched the lucky stone and the rabbit's foot after the horseshoe. They didn't help a bit to keep a fellow lucky. I had believed in them until this moment but I wouldn't believe in them another second. I was mad clear through, and disgusted.

When I went down to breakfast Dad was fussing with the electric toaster and saying things under his breath every time he got a shock.

Just as I finished eating breakfast Scoop whistled in front and I grabbed my cap and ran out.

“Anything new?” I inquired hopefully.

He shook his head; then said:

“I've been thinking about that negro we caught in the college grounds last night. Maybe we can find out from Bill who he is. That will give us a clue. If he's a regular criminal he'll have a police record and Bill should know something about him.”

Half way down the block we came upon Peg and Red. Scoop told them where he was headed for and they fell into line. But we met with disappointment in carrying out Scoop's plan. Bill wasn't at the town hall. And he wasn't anywhere in sight on Main Street.

The last bell was ringing when we tumbled into the schoolhouse. Miss Grimes was to be our new teacher now that Miss Skinner had resigned to marry Bill. I didn't like the change a bit. Miss Skinner was pretty and good-natured and Miss Grimes was kind of old and awfully cross.

When I was passing into the schoolroom Bid Stricker gave me a stiff elbow.

"Hello, Jupe," he jeered in an undertone.

"I'll 'Jupe' you on the end of the nose with my fist if you don't shut up," I fired back at him.

"You better get your gang to help you," he scowled.

"One of these days," I threatened, "my gang is going to make your gang look like a railroad wreck."

"You think you're pretty smart," sneered Bid, "since you got to be a Poodle Detective. I guess we can show you a trick or two, though."

"You couldn't show me an eclipse of the moon through a telescope," is what I handed him, as I passed on to my seat.

I was hungry when noon came and beat it home to dinner. Mother was excited. All she could talk about was Lulu Skinner's coming wedding. She had been over to Miss Skinner's home that morning doing some fancy sewing on the wedding dress. Miss Skinner and Mother are pretty chummy.

"I hope it doesn't rain to-morrow morning," said Mother, when we were seated at the table. "It is so discouraging for a bride to start her married life under a cloud."

"Bill must be doing a lot of primping over at his boarding house," said Dad. "I stopped in at the town hall to see him on the way home to dinner and he hasn't been near his desk all morning."

"He's probably over in Ashton getting the marriage license," said Mother. "With that old car of his it wouldn't surprise me if he never got back. Lulu says they are going on their honeymoon in the car, but I don't know what she's thinking of."

I didn't give much thought to this conversation till Scoop and I stopped in at the town hall on our way to school and learned that Bill was still out of town.

That afternoon Red and Peg acted up in history class and had to stay after school and work sums. When school was dismissed I looked around for Scoop but he was nowhere in sight.

I was running across the school grounds when I noticed the Stricker gang under a tree. They had their heads together and

were talking in low tones. Right away I had the feeling they were talking about Scoop and Red and Peg and me. They hate us like we hate them.

If they were cooking up some kind of a scheme to get the best of us I wanted to know about it. So I slowed up and listened. They never noticed me.

Bid had a paper in his hands and they were all looking at it.

“Must be some kind of a map,” said Bid.

“Sure it is,” said Jimmy.

“I picked it up in the street,” said Bid. “Never thought it was any account.”

“Wonder what it’s a map of,” said Jimmy.

“It has something to do with a mummy,” said a third member of the gang. “See; the arrow points to a barn, and it says ‘mummy concealed here.’ It’s a map showing where a mummy has been buried or something.”

Bid gave a low whistle.

“I bet,” said he, “it’s the mummy that was stolen from the college museum last Saturday night. Whoever stole it made this map.”

“And then lost the map out of his pocket and you found it,” said Jimmy.

“Exactly,” said Bid.

“Isn’t there a big reward for finding the mummy?” said Jimmy.

“Two hundred dollars,” said Bid.

“I guess this is our lucky day,” said Jimmy.

“I’ll tell the world it is,” said Bid. “We can go to the barn and get the mummy and claim the reward.”

“Whose barn is it?” some one inquired.

“Deacon Pillpopper’s. The map says, ‘Look in the big incubator.’ I bet that’s where the mummy is hid.”

“Incubator?” said Jimmy.

“Sure. Didn’t you ever hear about the big incubator the Deacon made? It fills one whole corner of his barn.”

“That’s a funny place to hide a mummy,” said Jimmy.

“We should worry about that. The thing for us to do is to get possession of the mummy so we can claim the reward. Come on, fellows.”

Jimmy held back.

“I’ve got to go home first. Can’t you come around by my house?”

“I suppose so,” said Bid.

Well, I can't describe the queer feeling I had as I watched them leave the school grounds. At first I was stunned, kind of. It made me sick to think that the Stricker gang should stumble onto the map telling where the mummy was concealed. Here again Fate seemed to be working against us. Otherwise *we* would have found the map.

I had a mental picture of the Stricker gang coming into town with the mummy, a triumphant procession, kind of, with all the people telling them what smart boys they were and how lucky to get the big reward.

Yes, like I say, I was sick. In my stomach and in my head and all over. I wanted to go away somewhere out of sight and hide my face.

Then my thoughts switched and I took a deep breath. Why couldn't *I* get to the barn ahead of the others? Deacon Pillpopper lives on the river road south of town. Zulutown, where the Strickers live, is on the west side. It would take fifteen or twenty minutes for the Stricker gang to reach the barn by way of Zulutown. I could make it in five minutes if I ran. That would give me a good ten minutes to drag the mummy out of the incubator and hide it in some other place till I could get Scoop and the others to help me take it to Mr. Arnoldsmith for inspection. That is what we had promised to do. Afterwards we would claim the reward.

Again I looked about for Scoop. He was nowhere in sight. Peg and Red were upstairs doing sums. I had to act alone. And I had to act quick. Tightening my belt I beat it out of the school grounds and down the street.

Deacon Pillpopper is a queer old gentleman. Eccentric is the word to use, I believe. When he isn't working on his inventions he talks excitedly about the world coming to an end. One time he got an idea for a community incubator. He said he could build such an incubator and thereby save a lot of work for the farmers' wives who used small incubators. It took him two years to get his big incubator to working. But he kept at it until it was a success. I don't remember how many thousands of eggs it holds. But it is the biggest thing of its kind I ever saw. He gave me a quarter once to get inside and clean it out. He runs the incubator in the spring, only he doesn't hatch out everybody's eggs like he planned to do. People were suspicious of his machine and wouldn't trust him with their eggs. So now he buys eggs and hatches thousands of little chickens, selling them when they are a day old for ten cents apiece.

I guess I wasn't more than four minutes getting to the barn where the mummy was concealed. The side door was unlocked. Once inside I paused and listened. It was barely possible that whoever had stolen the mummy from the museum was on the lookout. I didn't want to walk into a trap.

Everything was dead still outside. I peeked through knotholes in all four walls but not a soul was in sight. Assured that I had entered the barn unobserved I ran across the littered floor to where the incubator stood on its heavy wooden legs.

Opening the incubator door I squinted within. Sure enough I could detect something at the farther side. I couldn't say for certain was it the mummy, because the incubator's glass front was dirty and held back the light.

Giving another glance around the interior of the barn I crawled inside. Moving forward on my hands and knees I soon found myself within arm's reach of the black shape in the shadows. Gee, I was excited! I reached out a trembling hand; and then——

A wild, jubilant shout and the clatter of feet fell on my ears. Before I could turn about in the incubator the door was slammed shut and locked. When I squinted through the glass front there was Bid Stricker and his gang grinning at me like I was some kind of a freak in a cage.

I saw right away they had played me for a sucker. The map they had talked about was a fake. They had made up the scheme in order to get me here and lock me in the incubator. I felt like two cents. Yes, sir, I felt cheaper than that. There I was a Juvenile Jupiter Detective locked in an incubator!

Bid and the others danced around in front of the incubator and jeered at me. Then they beat it out of the barn. I didn't know what took them away; but I was soon to learn.

For more than fifteen minutes I squirmed and twisted, trying to find a way out of the incubator. I felt all over the top for a loose board. I tried the glass panels. No use. The only way for me to get out was to put a foot through the glass front.

I hesitated to do that. A fellow doesn't like to destroy other people's property. I wondered if Deacon Pillpopper would hear me if I shouted. The thought of calling for help filled me with shame. A Juvenile Jupiter Detective calling to people to

come and release him from an incubator! Could anything be more humiliating?

Well, as a matter of fact, I didn't shout for help and I didn't kick my foot through one of the glass panels. I probably would have done one or the other, but while I was deliberating, kind of, the barn door opened cautiously. Then it closed. Some one was in the barn. I squinted through the glass front. It was Scoop!

My first thought was one of happy relief. Scoop had learned about me being shut in the incubator and had come to my rescue. Then my forehead went puckered. How had he found out about my predicament? I couldn't imagine that the Stricker gang had put him wise. How then——

I noticed that Scoop was acting queer. Instead of coming directly to the incubator to let me out he gave his attention to the barn's knotholes just as I had done. And as I watched him the conviction came to me that *he didn't know I was in the incubator!* *He* had been played for a sucker, too.

Presently he came to the incubator and cautiously opened the door.

“Good afternoon,” I said, when he peered inside.

He gave a gurgle like he was choking and fell over backwards. I never seen a scarer-looking kid in all my life.

Crawling out of the incubator I brushed the dust from my hair. And while I was dusting myself Scoop stood there staring, his eyes big and horrified.

“I suppose you came to get the mummy,” I said, and somehow I couldn’t feel half as mad as I wanted to. It did me a lot of good to think that Scoop had let the Strickers work him the same way they had worked me. He’s pretty chesty. It would do him good to get taken down a peg or two.

Scoop got his voice and came closer.

“How—how did you know about it?” he inquired.

“About what?” I said, picking a cobweb out of my left eye.

“About the mummy being in the incubator?”

“It isn’t,” I said.

“But Bid Stricker has a map——”

“Sure he has,” I cut in, letting my eyes go narrowed as I regarded him. “He’s got a map and he made it himself and he worked his old gag on me and locked me in the incubator and then he worked the same gag on you.”

Scoop’s face got red.

“Jerry,” he gritted, “is this straight?”

I nodded; and then told him the whole story.

“I think,” said he, “that the Strickers have got something coming to them.”

“Yes,” I said. “I kind of got that slant on the situation when I was parked in the incubator.”

“We’ve got to think up something,” said Scoop.

“Where’d they work it on you?” I inquired.

“Down by the store. I saw them with their heads together and listened in——”

“You needn’t recite the whole story,” I cut in, “because I know what happened.”

Scoop made a wry face.

“If I didn’t hate the Strickers so I’d say it was a pretty slick trick.” After a brief silence he added: “Maybe, Jerry, we—er—better keep it to ourselves.”

“And not tell Red and Peg?”

He nodded.

“All right,” I said, and started for the door.

We were half way home when we met Red and Peg coming on the run.

“It’s a good thing we met you,” panted Red, swabbing his sweaty face with his coat sleeve. Then, as usual, he hitched at his belt.

“We’ve found the mummy,” puffed Peg. “It’s in Deacon Pillpopper’s incubator.”

Well, the joke was on the four of us but I had to laugh. After what had happened in turn to me and Scoop it

struck me as being funny to see Red and Peg hotfooting it for the Deacon's barn to recover the stolen mummy. Scoop, though, saw nothing to laugh at. He was as sour as a dill pickle. For once he let me do all the talking and explaining. When Peg and Red learned the truth of the situation they felt pretty cheap.

“Like I told Jerry,” gritted Scoop, “the Strickers have got something coming.”

“I’ll tell the world,” growled Peg.

CHAPTER XIII

WAITING AT THE CHURCH

It was supper time when I got home. Mother wanted to know what made my school clothes so dusty but I evaded her question. You can bet your Sunday shirt I didn't want her to know about me being locked in Deacon Pillpopper's incubator. Not much! She'd tell Dad and I'd never hear the last of it.

Dad was trying to read the *Tutter Daily Globe* and talk with Mother at the same time. I wanted him to hurry and get through with the newspaper so I could read about the missing mummy. There was a lot about it on the first page under the heading:

COLLEGE MUMMY MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARS

Officer Hadley Baffled

STRANGER IMPLICATED IN ROBBERY

When Dad let me have the newspaper I went onto the front porch and curled up in the swing and read the whole story. It was disappointing to learn that my name wasn't mentioned. I thought it would be, and maybe Scoop's name, too, and Red's and Peg's. The reporter, I guess, hadn't found out about our being Juvenile Jupiter Detectives.

The newspaper article gave the history of the mummy, telling how it was the embalmed body of Ramses II, who ruled in Egypt when the Hebrews were held captive by the Egyptians. There was a part down near the bottom of the page where it mentioned that Mr. Dixon White had purchased the mummy from a Chicago dealer named Amos Herzog, the transaction involving two thousand dollars.

Right then and there I uncurled my legs from under me and sat up still and straight and read that part over again. The reporter certainly had things twisted. Mr. Arnoldsmit had told us the mummy was secured through Mr. Wallknocker, president and general manager of the American-Egyptian Mummy Importing Association. Which was right?—the newspaper or Mr. Arnoldsmit?

The latter was given considerable mention. The article told how he was found in the museum and pictured his escape from the emergency rooms a few hours later. Also there was mention of the two-hundred-dollar reward, and the telephone call from the depot. It was a very amazing complication, the newspaper stated, and the police and public were baffled to arrive at a motive for the robbery, as a stolen mummy carried practically no commercial value.

The newspaper didn't hesitate to pan Mr. Arnoldsmith. In several places he was referred to as the "man of mystery." They sure had him right on that.

I sat in the porch swing till it got dark. The living room clock struck eight-thirty; then nine. Dad wanted to know why I was so still and what kept me around the house so close. He asked was I in some kind of a scrape again. I said I wasn't. But I didn't tell him that the reason I was keeping out of the streets was to evade being jeered at by the Stricker gang. It wouldn't be very nice to get yelled at across Main Street about being shut in the old incubator. Not so you notice it. It made me unhappy, too, when I thought of what I would get handed to me the next day at school.

The following morning Mother called me earlier than usual. It was all on account of Miss Skinner's wedding.

"I promised Lulu I'd be over by nine-thirty to help her dress," said Mother, as she poured the coffee.

"Maybe," joked Dad, "I better go down to Mrs. Kilk's boarding house and help Bill dress."

"It's no trick for a man to dress," said Mother. "I guess he doesn't need your help."

"Did he get back from Ashton with the marriage license?" inquired Dad.

"I suppose so," Mother returned absently. Then she collected her thoughts and added: "Why, of course he did. What a

foolish question. How could they get married this morning without a license?”

“Well,” said Dad, “he hadn’t got back at six o’clock last night.”

“It’s that old flivver,” Mother sputtered. “Lulu says it stalls every time they go for a ride.”

“Maybe,” said Dad, “Bill is dickering with an Ashton dealer for a new car and that is what kept him so late.”

Mother gave a happy cry.

“Oh, how lovely! I must telephone to Lulu right away.”

Presently the first school bell rang. But I wasn’t in a hurry. I timed myself so that the school grounds were deserted when I got there. I expected to be scolded for being a minute late. Instead, Miss Grimes smiled at me. Dressed up in a thin fluffy waist and a green silk skirt, she seemed awfully pleased over something. She had white powder on her nose, too. I wondered at it. At ten-thirty she told us we were to form in line and march down to the Methodist church to see Miss Skinner married to Bill. So *that* was why she was all dressed up and had white powder on her nose!

It was a surprise to us to learn that Miss Skinner had invited us to her wedding. We were tickled. I guess the reason why we like her so well is because she’s always doing something kind like that. Of course we didn’t care a terrible sight about the wedding, itself, because those things are kind of mushy;

but if we went to the church we'd skip our arithmetic lesson and that was a happy thought.

Miss Grimes lined us up in the hall and we marched down the stairs and out of the schoolhouse and along the street. The wedding was to be at eleven o'clock and it was just five minutes to eleven when we came to the Methodist church.

Automobiles were parked up and down both sides of the street like on Sunday afternoon when the Choral Club gives a free concert. I thought maybe Bill's new car would be in front of the church, all trimmed up with ribbons and flowers. But if it was there I didn't see it.

Scoop and I were marching side by side, our shoulders thrown back and our chests thrust out. We stomped up the steps and into the church. It was filled with Tutter people, mostly women. The pews were decorated with blue and white ribbon streamers, just like the hearse was the time Mr. Kelley was buried by the Masons. It was a beautiful sight. Everybody turned around and rubbered at us when we marched in and I heard one of the ladies whisper: "How perfectly sweet of Lulu to invite them! The little dears!"

When we were seated up front Scoop nudged me.

"Do they pass around cake and things at a church wedding, Jerry?"

"I don't know," I whispered back. "I've never been here before when there was a wedding."

“Maybe they take up a collection,” whispered Peg. “You kids got any money?”

“What would they take up a collection for?” whispered Scoop.

“Oh, to buy a wedding present maybe.”

“Shucks!” said Scoop.

I noticed Peg’s mother and Mrs. Meyers and Mrs. Ellery in the crowd. Mother wasn’t in sight. Very likely she was in the Sunday-school room fussing around Miss Skinner with a mouthful of pins and a powder puff. Women like to do those things. Dad came in just as the college clock on the hill donged eleven times. He looked across at me and winked. I winked back and grinned. Dad and I always do that. It’s our way of showing that we are pals.

We had to sit pretty still because Miss Grimes was close by and every time we wiggled or started counting the circles on the ceiling where the rain came through the roof and smudged the plaster she scowled. She’s the easiest scowler I know. It’s almost a habit with her.

It got to be tiresome after that—sitting there like a poker. I looked at my watch. It was five minutes past eleven. I began to wonder why Bill and Miss Skinner didn’t parade into the church and get hooked up and have it over with so we could go outside and have some fun.

“I’ll bet a cookie Bill’s late,” Peg whispered to Scoop and me.

“Bill’s a poor fish,” said Scoop. “No one but a poor fish would be late on his wedding day.”

We waited some more, and after what seemed an age the college clock struck eleven-thirty. By this time the women all over the church were buzzing like a lot of bumblebees. And as they whispered to one another they kept their heads stuck up straight so they wouldn’t miss anything.

Then the minister came in. He walked to the platform and everything became as still as death. His face was awfully sober and serious. My heart went sliding down. I just *knew* something terrible had happened to Bill. Maybe he had been killed in an automobile smashup. Maybe that morning at breakfast he had choked to death on a pancake. I pictured what a shock this would be to Miss Skinner. Of course she might have another chance to get married, but it would be a shock to her just the same.

“It is with exceeding distress that I have been asked to make the announcement that the wedding will be postponed indefinitely,” the minister stated slowly. “It seems that the groom has been mysteriously called away. We do not know where; we only know that he has not been seen in Tutter since early Sunday evening.”

There was a gasp throughout the church and all the women looked as though they wanted to get hold of Bill and tear him to pieces. Just in back of me an old lady sniffled and said: “Poor Lulu! To be tricked this way. The awful wretch ought to be hung!”

As there wasn't going to be a wedding the people got onto their feet to go home. They paused in their tracks, though, when a commotion took place at the door.

I stood up on the seat and rubbed over the heads of the people to see what was happening. There was Mr. Riley Gorman, the mayor of Tutter, hurrying up the aisle, his heavy dog-headed cane coming down on the carpeted floor with a dull thump! thump! thump! I never had seen him walk so fast. He has rheumatism and just now his legs moved in a jerky way, as though they were fastened on a jumping-jack and some one was yanking the string. His spectacles jiggled on his nose. In his excitement he forgot to remove his hat. And there he was, right in church!

A yellow paper showed in the mayor's left hand. He kept on up the aisle and gave the yellow paper to the minister. Then he whirled about and struck a pose, leaning on his cane, his left hand cupped over his ear. The yellow paper was a *telegram*! My heart bobbed into my throat and didn't seem able to bob down again. It was plain to me that the mayor *knew* what was in the telegram and he was waiting for the minister to read the message aloud so the people in the church would get the same shock he had gotten.

With hands that suddenly trembled the minister adjusted his glasses and looked at the telegram. His face went white and he stared about him in a dazed, helpless manner. It was a tense moment. Everybody in the church knew there was something in the telegram about Bill. And everybody wanted to know what that something was.

It was then that Dad took a hand in things. I was glad. Dad is a leader just like he wants me to be when I grow up; and he always knows what to do in a moment like this. You don't catch my Dad losing his head.

Coming quickly up the aisle he took the telegram from the minister's hand and read it slowly.

"It's a bit hard to explain," he said after a moment, "but from the telegram I grasp that Mr. Hadley is confined in the insane ward at the county infirmary. The message is from the superintendent. He states that he is holding a suspicious character who claims to be William Ackley Hadley. He wants to know if we have a citizen by that name in Tutter. He further states that the man is handcuffed and blacked up like a negro. Friends, it is plain that Mr. Hadley is in some grave trouble. This thing must be investigated right away. Can any one throw any light on the situation?"

I felt Scoop clutch my arm. Just as though he was suddenly turned into a skeleton and his bony fingers were being forced together by strong steel springs. Further down the seat I heard Peg and Red gasp. It wasn't an ordinary gasp. Maybe you've heard a cow lifting its feet as it moved about in a bog. That is what the gasp sounded like. As for me if the roof of the church had opened up and Bill came through with wings on his old flivver instead of wheels I couldn't have been more dumbfounded.

So our negro wasn't a criminal, after all! It was Bill in disguise. And while *he* was doing detecting, with the power of the law behind him, we had knocked him silly with Mrs. Meyers' kitchen poker and handcuffed him with his own

handcuffs and caused him to be taken away in an empty box car to face adventures and troubles of which we knew nothing, and in the end to be locked up in the insane ward at the county infirmary. All this when he should have been in Tutter getting married to Miss Skinner.

My mind worked by skips and jumps, like Dad's automobile does when the carburetor gets flooded. At the moment it didn't seem a bit strange to me that Bill should turn up at the county infirmary. I didn't try in any way to reason out *how* he got there.

The thing worrying me was what would happen to Mr. Arnoldsmit's four Juvenile Jupiter Detectives when Bill got back to Tutter.

CHAPTER XIV TO THE RESCUE

Dad drove out of town lickety-cut. He didn't invite me to go along. I was glad. I didn't want to go along. I was scared stiff he would take a good look at me and tumble to the fact that I had a mountain of trouble pressing down on my shoulders. I couldn't see how I *looked*, but I knew how awful I *felt*. I was pretty certain that some of the unhappiness inside of me showed on the surface. The last thing I wanted Dad to do was to start asking questions.

Scoop and I hung around the church. The people continued to come out in pairs and groups, talking in low tones and looking tragic, as though there had just been a murder. They straggled down the street and the automobiles parked in front of the church churned into motion and melted away.

I was close by the door of the Sunday-school room when Mother and Miss Skinner came out and got into Mr. Skinner's wire-wheeled sedan. Something stung my eyes when I looked at Miss Skinner. She was all white like her dress and tense-looking, as though she wanted to cry and was too proud to break down with everybody half suspecting that Bill had fooled her. There was a hurt look in her face that stabbed me where my heart is. Oh, I tell you I was wretched in the thought that I had helped to bring this trouble into her

life! She had been kind to me and never took my chewing gum away from me in school and last Christmas she gave me a book telling about snakes with beautiful pictures in colors. The book has one hundred and sixty-eight pages and I felt I didn't deserve it after what had happened. I longed to rush up to her and tell her how sorry I was. But I couldn't do that without bringing up a lot of things that would likely get me into trouble clear up to my eyes.

Mother noticed me hanging around and called me over to the sedan.

"You better go home with one of the boys for dinner," she instructed. "I may be at the Skinners' till late in the afternoon. Poor Lulu! Where's your father?"

"He's gone after Bill," I explained.

A cold, hard look came into Mother's eyes and she stiffened. I could see she had no sympathy for Bill. She was ready to blame him for everything. I shivered. What would she say if she *knew* who really was to blame?

Scoop told me I could have dinner with him. We didn't eat very much. Our appetites had gotten away from us. Mrs. Ellery thought we were feeling sad because of the way Miss Skinner had been disappointed at the church. A warm light came into her motherly eyes and she put an arm around each of us and told us we were good, kind-hearted boys and she was proud of us, only she wished Howard would be a bit more particular about washing his hands when she had a clean tablecloth on.

When dinner was over Scoop and I went out in front and sat down on the lawn by the rubber plant.

“Well, what are we going to do about it?” said he.

“What *can* we do?” said I.

“We ought to do something,” said he.

“I guess we’ve done enough for one trip,” I said miserably. “We’ve got Bill in the crazy house and upset Miss Skinner’s wedding and broke her heart——”

“We didn’t do it on purpose,” Scoop said fiercely. “No one can say we did. We didn’t *know* it was Bill we handcuffed. It was just a—a——”

“Accident,” I supplied.

“Not accident—misfortune,” corrected Scoop.

“I guess it was both,” I said.

There was a reflective silence. Then Scoop spoke up:

“When Bill gets back to town he may want to make it hot for us. No one can blame him. But I don’t think he can do an awful lot. I guess if he tries any ‘jail’ business on us our folks won’t stand for that.”

“Maybe our folks won’t stick up for us like you think,” I said, remembering how Mother looked when I mentioned Bill’s name. Her sympathy was all with Miss Skinner; and when she

learned that the wedding was upset because Scoop and I and the others had——

Scoop cut in on my unhappy thoughts.

“Of course our folks will stick up for us,” he argued. “That’s what folks are for. If pa got into trouble wouldn’t I stick up for him? Of course I would. Even if he were wrong I’d stick up for him. And won’t your pa stick up for you? Sure enough. Shucks! I’m beginning to lose my scare. I don’t think we’re going to find ourselves in such a whale of a lot of trouble, though it may be our folks’ll take our detective stars away from us and make us cut out doing detecting when they learn just how we got mixed up in the thing. We’ll live through that. And I guess it won’t kill us if some of the people in town give us the laugh over the way we’ve sort of twisted things up.”

“You said a mouthful when you put in that word ‘twisted,’” I said gloomily. “Pretty nearly everything we’ve tackled since we became Jupiter Detectives we’ve twisted. Look how we had Red’s pa scared thinking he was robbed; and how we whanged Bill on the head and let the Stricker gang lock us up in the incubator——”

“I didn’t get locked up,” said Scoop.

“No,” I fired at him, “of course you didn’t. And the only reason why you didn’t was because I got there ahead of you.”

That shut him up.

“Anyway,” said he, “we didn’t lose out in trailing Mr. Arnoldsmitth. We know where he is and no one else knows. And we know about the three masked men. We’ve made mistakes, like you say, but I guess everybody does that. Pa says if people didn’t make mistakes they wouldn’t put erasers on pencils. But even with all our mistakes we’re a lot closer to a solution of the missing mummy mystery than any one else.”

With Scoop talking that way I got my grit back. He was right as right could be. We had muddled things; but with all our muddling we were making progress. We had every chance in the world to solve the mystery if our folks didn’t get bossy and interfere with our plans.

“To-night after school we’ll go out and see Mr. Arnoldsmitth,” Scoop went on. “We may be able to pump something out of him that will help clear up the mystery.”

The school period that afternoon seemed like an age. I guess Miss Grimes wondered why Scoop and Red and Peg and I were so quiet. Once she asked us if we were sick. Our thoughts kept turning to Bill in the crazy ward at the county infirmary. We pictured Dad and the mayor filing the handcuffs from Bill’s wrists and helping remove the black stuff on his face and hands. The infirmary is just eight miles from Tutter. Bill would soon be back in town. Things would happen then; though, as Scoop pointed out, we weren’t likely to end up in jail or anything like that. What would come tumbling down on us would come from our folks and not directly from Bill.

The afternoon carried through and nothing happened. When we were dismissed at four o’clock we beat it out

of town along the Treebury pike. For once Red didn't kick on walking. Somehow to stretch our legs that way in the open country was a big relief. Crossing Mr. Wilson's pasture we tumbled into the old Morgan house. No one was in sight. Scoop gave three cat yowls and presently the trapdoor opening into the deep, dark cellar raised ever so slightly. We saw a pair of blue eyes and we knew they were Mr. Arnoldsmitth's eyes. When he saw us he threw the trapdoor back and came up from the cellar, closing the door after him and sliding the bolt into place with his foot.

"I bin hopin' you boys would come out to see me to-day," the old man said in a glad sort of way. "Mebby you got track of that mummy," he added hopefully.

"Not yet," said Scoop. Then he told the old man about Bill and how we knocked him out and handcuffed him.

Mr. Arnoldsmitth was grave.

"My, my," he murmured, running his fingers through his wiry hair. "You boys be a-goin' to git crosswise with the law if you don't keep a lookout."

"We aren't worrying much about what the law will do to us. Our folks, though, may make us put away our stars and quit doing detecting."

"And what be I a-goin' to do in that case?" the old man said quickly, his voice touched with a shrill note of alarm.

"You tell me and I'll tell you," said Scoop.

“We’ve jest got to git that mummy, boys, and that’s all there is to it,” the old man said grimly. There was a sudden fierceness about him that startled me. His jaws were square and stiff and the cords stuck out in the backs of his hands, like his fingers were clenched tight. “Yes, sir, boys, we got to git it so it kin be inspected reg’lar. Why, I’d feel I were a good-fur-nothin’ quitter if I let that mummy git away from me and didn’t inspect it and were the cause of it lettin’ out a colony of itchers. I reckon as how you don’t want me to be a quitter, boys.”

“No-o,” Scoop said slowly.

The old man made a queer sound in his throat.

“Then that settles it,” said he. “You boys jest got to stand by me and help me git the mummy.”

There wasn’t a great deal to talk about so after a bit we prepared to return to town. We took our time. The longer we put off facing our folks the safer we’d be. Peg said maybe we better run away from home and go down to Texas and become cowboys. That didn’t sound good to me. I didn’t want to leave Mother and Dad. Besides, to run away would be cowardly. It would be more manly to stay and take what was coming to us.

CHAPTER XV

BILL COMES BACK

Arriving in town we sneaked up the alley till we came to Red's barn. It was now close to supper time and we could see his mother at work in the kitchen. Red's barn is old and many knotholes puncture the wooden walls. Through these knotholes we kept a close watch on what was going on in the neighborhood.

After a bit Dad came up the street in our automobile and turned into the drive. He didn't look so terribly worried; and when he went up the steps of the side porch he was whistling.

"I think it's high time to find out where we stand," said Scoop. "Jerry, can't you slip over to your house and listen on the sly to what your pa says to your ma and find out in that way?"

"Guess so," I said a bit uneasily.

"We'll wait here for you," said Scoop.

I followed along the alley fence and turned into our yard. As I tiptoed up the back porch steps I heard Dad in the kitchen talking with Mother. He mentioned Bill and the county infirmary and I peeled my ears to catch every word.

“We’re thinking of appointing a vigilance committee,” Dad said in a sputtery voice, and I knew he was wiping his face on the kitchen towel like I do when I don’t want to make the trip upstairs to the bathroom. “This thing of having a gang of toughs come into town and mess up things to suit themselves has got to be stopped. Bill says there was a dozen of ’em and they looked like hunkies. In the scrap they got the best of him and soaked him on the head with a gas pipe when he wasn’t looking.”

“I haven’t much sympathy for Bill,” Mother said tartly; and there was a sizzle as though she were stirring potatoes in a frying pan. “Not after the way things turned out this morning—and me working my fingers off on all that fine stitching to get Lulu ready.”

“Shucks!” exploded Dad. “Bill wasn’t to blame. Why, woman, he’s a hero! What other man do you know would have the nerve to face a dozen hunkies and fight the whole gang like Bill did? I tell you we’re lucky to have a cop who’s got that much sand.”

“I know one man who’s braver even than Bill,” said Mother with a low titter.

Dad snorted.

“I suppose you mean that simp from down the line who bought you the furs for Christmas before we were married and tried to cut me out. He’s a joke—that guy is.”

“Oh,” Mother said sweetly, “I didn’t mean him. You’re the hero I had in mind.”

There was a scurry of feet, followed by a giggle and a loud smack. I knew Dad had grabbed Mother around the waist and kissed her.

Gee-miny crickets, I was happy! I wanted to kiss somebody myself, only I couldn't because there wasn't any one handy to kiss except our cat and I didn't want to kiss a cat.

Right away the sun came out warmer and brighter. A rooster crowed on our alley ash box and filled the air with beautiful music. Instead of walking I wanted to skip. And I wanted to shout and sing and whistle and turn handsprings.

There was a lot to Bill's adventure that I didn't understand. But that would come later. The biggest thing in my mind just then was the thought that we were in no way connected up with the knockout he got in the college grounds.

"We're a bunch of prize boobs," said Scoop, when I was back in Red's barn and had told the fellows what I overheard. I didn't tell about the kissing. It wasn't playing square with Dad and Mother to tell that. "Of course Bill didn't recognize us," added Scoop. "How could he?"

"What do you mean?" said Peg, slow to realize the great streak of luck that had dropped down on us.

"He didn't recognize us because we were disguised," said Scoop. "And I never once thought of that."

"Sure thing we were disguised," tittered Red. "Didn't Jerry have on pa's Quaker pants? He was trying to set a new fashion."

I grabbed Red by his brick-colored topknot and held him down. He yelled and clawed but I didn't let go.

"If you ever say 'Quaker pants' to me again I'll shake the tar out of you," I threatened.

"No need to get so touchy about it," Scoop put in. "If any one happens to ask you, those Quaker pants helped to keep us out of trouble."

"All the same," I sputtered, "I ain't going to have no freckle-faced imp with a strong gab and a wart on his big toe yelling 'Quaker pants' at me."

That evening at the supper table I got from Dad the whole story of what had happened to Bill. In telling the story Dad paused every minute or two to remind me Bill was a hero. That made me want to laugh. Bill had made up an awful yarn. Sometimes a kid with a big imagination gets to telling things double; but it isn't to be expected that a man will do a thing like that. A man is supposed to have judgment and *know* always what is right and what isn't, and it wasn't right for Bill to let on that he had been jumped onto by a dozen husky hoboes and had only been put out of the fight when he was hit from behind with a gas pipe.

"Bill put up an awful fight," said Dad. "He slammed 'em right and left."

"Yes, sir," I said.

"But they had him outnumbered," Dad continued. "When he was knocked out they loaded him into an empty box car and

got him out of town on number seventeen. The train slowed up at the junction over by the county infirmary and Bill slipped out of the car and went to the infirmary for help in removing the handcuffs the hunkies had put on him. With him blacked up and everything it's easy to understand why the superintendent locked him up. But this morning Bill induced him to send the telegram."

"Where did the hunkies get the handcuffs?" I inquired gently, keeping my eyes on my plate.

"Oh, out of Bill's pocket, I guess. He says they're his."

I had been worrying some about the handcuffs. It struck me that Bill would recognize them as the ones he had lent Scoop. But it was plain from Dad's story that we were safe in that quarter.

"Bill ought to get a medal, he's so brave," I said, keeping my face straight, though inside of me a laugh was chasing itself around and around in happy circles.

"Now," said Dad, "isn't that a fact."

"It must took a lot of courage to stand up and fight all twelve of 'em single-handed," I added.

"Bill's got the courage all right," declared Dad.

"And now that he's a hero, like you say, maybe Miss Skinner will marry him after all," I said.

"Oh, that's all patched up," said Dad.

“Yes,” Mother put in tartly, “Lulu’s easy!”

“They’re going to have the wedding to-morrow,” stated Dad.

When supper was over I went onto the front porch to read the evening newspaper. There was nothing in it about the missing mummy. I was about to toss the newspaper aside when an inside heading caught my eye:

CANDIDATES TO BE INITIATED
INTO MYSTERIES
OF GOLDEN SPHINX FRATERNITY

“Gee whillikers!” I exploded, jumping to my feet. And as quickly as I could I beat it out of the yard and down the street to Scoop’s house.

“Maybe you forgot what night this is,” I said, when I found him in the backyard shying rocks at a calico cat.

“Tuesday,” said he.

“Then you don’t remember?” I kept on.

“I don’t have to remember to remember it’s Tuesday night,” he said, letting go another rock.

“But this is the night we promised to work for the students at the fraternity house,” I reminded.

He gave a long whistle and shelled the rocks out of his pockets.

“You’re right,” said he. “We better hurry and look up Red and Peg.”

We came upon the other fellows in front of the Lyric Theatre. They were stalling around the ticket window hoping, I guess, that some one they knew would come along and invite them to go in and see the show. We reminded them of the initiation and drew cuts to see which two of us would go to the fraternity house. Scoop and I were out of luck. The two long toothpicks fell to Peg and Red. It tickled them. Disappointed, we told them we hoped they’d have a nice time and get a lot of ice cream and sandwiches to eat and not miss us very much.

“I tell you what,” said Peg.

“Well, tell it,” said Scoop with no great interest.

“You and Jerry come along with us. You can wait around out back and maybe we’ll get a chance to slip you something good to eat.”

“Maybe,” echoed Scoop.

“Well then, we *will*,” Peg promised firmly.

“It won’t be very exciting for us to hang around in the dark with nothing to do,” said Scoop.

“I bet you can peek through the windows and look in on the ’nitiation,” said Peg. “Golly, Ned! I hadn’t thought of that. Probably Red and I, working in the kitchen, won’t get a

chance to see any part of the 'nitiation. You and Jerry are in luck. You can see it all.”

Scoop's interest bubbled up right away.

“They'll probably have a lot of fun 'nitiating the candidates,” said he. “Remember the time they made a candidate roost in Miss Ervin's cherry tree and hoot like an owl?”

“And Miss Ervin called the police and they locked the guy up in jail and he hooted all night,” I supplied.

“I'd like to see what they do to-night,” said Scoop.

“You and me both,” said I.

“Let's do as Peg suggests,” said Scoop.

“I'm on,” said I.

CHAPTER XVI

WE FIND IT

It was now nearly seven o'clock. We had promised to be on hand at the fraternity house at seven, so we hurried down Main Street, turned into Hill Street, crossed the railroad tracks and trudged up College Hill. Following the concrete sidewalk across the campus we passed the museum and rostrum and Science Hall. Pretty soon we came to the cemetery. The road into Oakcrest runs by the cemetery and as we tramped along we could see the white tombstones and dreary-looking pine trees with their drooping branches. A big evergreen tree grew near the fence and as we passed by it seemed to reach out to us and whisper in a mysterious sighing voice. I shivered a bit because my thoughts immediately jumped to the whispering mummy. I guess I'd have shivered worse than I did if I had known what was going to happen to me before the night was over.

"I don't think I'd care to belong to the Golden Sphinx fraternity if I had to walk by here every night in the week," opined Red, squinting uneasily into the silent cemetery.

"What you 'fraid of?" inquired Scoop.

"Maybe a ghost——"

“There you go talking about ghosts again. Every time you get within sight of the cemetery it’s ‘ghosts!’ Good night! Didn’t I tell you there ain’t no such thing as ghosts? Forget it.”

This shut Red up.

Shortly after passing the cemetery we came to the drive leading to the fraternity house. Lights blinked at us from the many windows. There seemed to be a tremendous lot of activity about the place. Students were carrying the porch chairs into the house and through an open window we could see them arranging the chairs in a large room.

“I bet that’s where they’ll put on the ’nitiation,” said Scoop.

“Let’s hope they don’t pull down the curtains,” I said.

“Even if they do I’ve got the feeling we’re going to be in on part of the ’nitiation,” said Scoop.

“You mean the outside part?—like the time they made the candidate roost in the cherry tree?” I said.

Scoop nodded.

“You fellows be on the watch,” said Peg, as he and Red prepared to present themselves at the kitchen door.

“We’ll use Mr. Arnoldsmith’s signal. If you hear a cat yowl three times from the back porch come on the run. We’ll have something for you.”

“All right, Pussy,” grinned Scoop.

From behind a low barberry hedge skirting the drive Scoop and I watched Peg and Red disappear around the corner of the building. We knew that shortly they would be washing dishes and grinding ham for the sandwiches and doing other things like that. Maybe they would be put into white coats and made into waiters, like Scoop and I were the evening Mrs. Ellery entertained the Stitch and Chatter Club and Scoop spilled the ice cream on Mrs. Montgomery's poodle, which he stepped on by accident, of course.

It was fearfully still and quiet in the grounds of the fraternity house. The breeze that had set the evergreen tree to whispering to us over the cemetery fence died away until the oak leaves above us scarcely moved. I had the feeling they were asleep and with closed eyes were unmindful of our presence. Now and then a bird whisked itself into the overhead branches and as quickly flew away again. An owl hooted down the road in the direction of the cemetery. It was a mournful hoot. Over the ridge in Happy Hollow automobiles were speeding along the Treebury pike, the even purr of the high-powered engines coming to us faintly.

Darkness settled lower and lower. The trees and bushes retreated into the gloom and became meaningless blurs. Ahead of us the fraternity house lights seemed to glow brighter as the outside world took on the ways of night. Within the building there was still a great deal of activity; and now we could hear the player piano and an occasional burst of laughter. There was a "party" feeling in the air and we knew the students were planning on a big night with a lot of fun and a lot of good things to eat.

“Wonder when the ’nitiation starts,” I spoke up.

“Don’t know,” said Scoop.

“They seem to be having an awful time to get things fixed up just right.”

Scoop’s fingers closed on my arm.

“Look what they’re bringing in, Jerry.”

“It’s a sphinx,” I said excitedly. “They’re carrying it on a tray. Look at it shine! Must be made of solid gold.”

“I guess not *solid* gold,” said Scoop. “It’s too big. Why, if it were solid gold and that big it would be worth a million dollars. I wonder what they do with it.”

“Probably it has something to do with the ’nitiation,” I said.

“Maybe they make the candidates kneel in front of it and swear to things,” said Scoop.

“Like we did when we took the mummy itch oath,” I said.

“Something like that only more impressive and a lot sweller,” opinioned Scoop. “This ’nitiation is going to be a nifty affair, all right. Just gaze at the wall decorations.”

“Looks like pictures of Egypt,” I said.

“All they need for trimmings is a few mummies standing around,” said Scoop.

It must have been about eight-thirty when a side door opened. A moment later Scoop's fingers again closed over my arm.

“Look, Jerry! Why, that's my cart!”

A thrill chased itself up and down my backbone. If the two students were actually bringing out Scoop's cart——

“We've got to get closer,” Scoop said in a low tense voice. He was breathing hard, as though something inside of him was clutching at his windpipe. It was the excitement, of course. I felt the same way. What made us feel that way was the thought that the mummy was probably no great distance away. If we now watched our P's and Q's we'd learn where it was and thereby solve the mystery and get the reward.

It was easy for us to squirm along in the dark. Soon we were very close to the fraternity house and could see that the side door opened into the basement. A light came through the doorway. It *was* Scoop's cart beyond any doubt.

The two students, after placing the cart just outside the door, disappeared into the building and we could hear them clattering down the basement stairs. We weren't more than a jiffy in making up our minds what they were after on this second trip. It was the missing mummy!

“I'll skin around to the kitchen and get Peg and Red,” I said breathlessly, my mouth close to Scoop's ear.

He held out his hand.

“Wait a minute,” he said quickly. “Let us figure this thing out. We’ll suppose they have gone after the mummy. And we’ll suppose they have the cart there for a purpose. I think I know what that purpose is. They are going to take the mummy away on the cart. I don’t know where they intend taking it, but we can trail them and find out. Two of us can do that just as well as four. When we find out where the mummy is taken to we can get Peg and Red and shape our plans to gain possession of it. S-h-h-h! Here they come.”

There was a scuffle of feet on the basement stairs. A moment later one of the students backed out of the doorway, his shoulders bent under the weight of something he was helping to carry. It was the mummy! I had a glimpse of its leathery face as it was carried from the building and placed lengthwise on Scoop’s cart.

“It’s a heavy brute,” a voice grumbled, and I was sure it was Thirsty.

“As heavy as it is homely,” said a second voice.

“Glad we’ve got the cart.”

“Yes; it wouldn’t be any fun carrying the blamed thing all the way to the cemetery.”

“Got the string?”

“O. K.”

“Flashlight?”

“O. K.”

“Slip it along to me. I’ll push the cart. You skid along in front and steady the blamed thing. We don’t want it rolling off the cart. When we return it to the museum late to-night we want it to be whole.”

“I’ll be glad when it’s back in its case. I think the next time we borrow it we won’t.”

“Right you are,” said Thirsty.

“See last night’s newspaper?”

“Yes. We sure stirred up a mess by taking the mummy. And some one here said it never would be missed! Good night!”

“The old man gave them the slip and got away. Glad we didn’t hurt him very much. Let’s be moving.”

I was a good bit stunned over the way things were working out. It was queer that we should stumble upon a complete solution of the mystery when we had not the slightest thought of being Jupiter Detectives. I didn’t even have my star on! It must be home on the dresser, I thought.

It was plain to me now that the mummy had been taken from the museum by three of the students. They spoke of having “borrowed” it, and I had the feeling they were planning to use it in connection with the initiation. It was one of the students who whanged Mr. Arnoldsmitth over the head and later telephoned from the depot.

One thing certain we were going to get that two-hundred-dollar reward! Absolutely. The fact that the students were planning to return the mummy didn't change the situation a bit. We had worked hard for the reward and were wholly entitled to it. Mr. Barton would have to pay us the two hundred dollars. Certainly we had solved the mystery *before* the mummy was returned and that clenched matters.

Thirsty turned on the flashlight and started down the drive, the cart rumbling over the hard-packed gravel. Scoop and I trailed closely behind. At the darkest and spookiest spot in the cemetery road the cart came to a pause and Thirsty said:

“Get out your string and tie it here.”

We crept closer and saw that his flashlight was turned on a fence post. The other student produced a ball of white string from his coat pocket and tied one end to the bottom of the post. Then Thirsty took the ball of string and shinned over the fence.

“You stay here and visit with Ramses,” he instructed. “If you hear any one coming get off the road into the weeds. I'll run the string. When I have it fixed I'll come back and help you with the mummy.”

Scoop put his mouth close to my ear.

“We've got to separate, Jerry. Suppose you follow Thirsty and I'll stay here and keep an eye on this other fellow. I don't want the mummy to get out of my sight for a minute. That string gets me. Wonder what it's for. We've got to find out and you're the one to do it.”

I shivered as I looked over the fence into the heavy gloom of the silent cemetery.

“Gee! I’ve had jobs I liked better,” I said. “I wouldn’t mind if I had some one with me.”

“Thirsty’ll be with you—only he won’t know it. Get onto his trail, Jerry. If you don’t I’ll have to. I didn’t think you were a scaredy-calf! Of course if it were Red I wouldn’t expect anything different. But I thought *you* had some sand.”

“I’ll do it,” I returned, gritting my teeth and driving back the fear that wanted to grow big inside of me.

I went up the road a piece and shinned over the fence. Then I picked up Thirsty’s trail. This was easy because he had the flashlight turned on and moved slowly. As he worked his way into the middle of the cemetery he kept unwinding the string, trailing it around spooky-looking bushes and old, slanting tombstones. He had me guessing—especially when he circled to the back of the cemetery.

It seemed to me he had let out about a mile of string when all of a sudden he paused at an old, tumble-down tombstone that marked the head of a sunken grave. He flashed his light on the tombstone and I recognized it as one of the oldest monuments in the cemetery.

“Jinks! I can’t even read the inscription with my flashlight,” he chuckled to himself. Then he gave a low, contented laugh. “What’ll the poor boobs do who have to read it with matches?”

So that was the object of the string! It was part of the initiation scheme and the candidates were to be brought to the cemetery in the dark and given the road end of the string and instructed to follow it to the other end and bring back the inscription on the old tombstone.

“But where does the mummy come in?” was the thought that followed.

Crouching low, I watched Thirsty tie the string to the old tombstone; then he took a short cut back to the road.

“Are you there, Hersh?” he said in a whisper, when he came to the fence.

“O. K.,” said the student who had been left to guard the mummy. There was a slight rumble and he came into the circle of Thirsty’s flashlight pushing Scoop’s cart.

“Sidle the cart against the fence,” instructed Thirsty.

“That’s it. Now take the feet and slide His Majesty onto the fence. Be careful and don’t scrape any of the skin from his back. Atta boy! If you’ll climb over now we’ll end this trip in a jiffy.”

“String all fixed?”

“You bet she am, old dear.”

The fence rattled as Hersh climbed over and joined Thirsty. When they started across the cemetery with the mummy I fell behind. Pretty soon I heard Scoop’s cautious footsteps near

by. When he joined me I told him about the string and what it was for.

“It’s plain enough what they intend doing with the mummy,” he said.

“What?” said I.

“They’re going to place it on the old grave so that it will scare the wits out of the poor sucker who starts striking matches and finds it staring up at him. Wough! Jerry, just imagine yourself feeling around in the dark and getting your mitts on that mummy!”

“Cut it out,” I said, keeping close to him.

Scoop was right. Thirsty and his companion placed the mummy on the sunken grave. Then they beat it back to the fence as though they were anxious to get away. We followed them to the road and heard them start off on a dogtrot for the fraternity house.

“We haven’t any time to lose,” said Scoop, when the footsteps died away. “Jerry, you skin up the road and get Peg and Red. We’ve got to get the mummy away from here before the ’nitiation starts.”

“Where’ll we take it?” I said.

“We’ll take it where we promised to take it—that is, we’ll take it there first.”

“You mean to the old Morgan house where Mr. Arnoldsmit is?”

“Sure thing. We promised him we would and we’ve got to keep our promise. He’s probably giving us a lot of bunk about wanting to inspect it; yet we don’t *know* that he is. I’m anxious to see what he does to the mummy. Later we’ll bring it back to town and claim the reward. Hot dog! Two hundred dollars! That’s fifty dollars apiece. *Fifty dollars!* Beat it, Jerry, old pal. I’ll stay here and guard the mummy.”

CHAPTER XVII

GETTING EVEN

I ran down the middle of the dusty road. The dust got into my nose and I kept wanting to sneeze. But I didn't mind that. I could run faster and quicker in the middle of the road and I just sneezed and kept on.

A thing that made me happy and filled me with pep was the thought that we were on the very last lap of our adventure in solving the mystery of the missing mummy. Soon there would be no mystery because a mystery isn't a mystery any longer when everybody knows what happened and why it happened and all about it.

As I rounded the corner of the fraternity house a cat yowled three times from the back steps. I knew it was Peg—only at the first yowl I thought it *was* a cat.

“Here's a couple of sandwiches,” said Peg, when I came up on the run. The kitchen door was wide open and inside I could see Red perched on a stool jiggling a cream beater. While I was looking he stuck a finger into the cream and licked it. The cook was busy at the stove.

“Well, ain't you going to take 'em?” said Peg, shoving the sandwiches at me. “The cook says they're N. G., but they

don't taste bad. I just got hold of the salt shaker instead of the pepper shaker. A little salt won't kill you. It's what the farmers give to their cows to keep them healthy."

"I'm no cow," I said, and I took the sandwiches and threw them out into the fringe of darkness.

Peg stiffened.

"Gee, but you're getting particular all of a sudden," he said huffy-like. "Maybe you want me to bring your stuff out on a silver tray, with a linen napkin."

"Go get Red and forget about the sandwiches," I panted.

Peg tumbled then that something unexpected had happened. A scared look came into his eyes.

"We've found the mummy," I explained, heading off his questions.

"Honest?" he gasped.

"Yes, honest. It's in the cemetery. Go get Red and I'll tell you all about it as we run along. We haven't a moment to spare. Beat it—quick!"

Peg and Red didn't stop to be excused. Maybe the fraternity house cook was surprised when they grabbed their caps and skinned out. We should worry! What was a dish-washing job in a fraternity house as compared to a reward of two hundred dollars?

Quickly I told Peg and Red about the string and the mummy. And when we came to the spot where the students had left the cart in the weeds we lifted the cart over the cemetery fence and hurried to where Scoop was waiting for us. Red had his flashlight and this helped to show the way, though in our hurry we ran the cart into a black corner marker and put an awful kink in one of the wheels.

In a jiffy we had the mummy loaded onto the cart and then streaked it for the nearest drive leading out of the cemetery. The mummy jolted about on the cart quite a bit, giving out a dull, hollow sound that sort of put me on edge. But we couldn't help giving the mummy a few bad jolts if we wanted to make speed, and speed was what we were after.

When we were in the main road we took a short cut down the hill to the Treebury pike in Happy Hollow. Here we had our difficulties. Every minute or two an automobile would come bearing down on us and it was no easy task to keep the lights from showing up the mummy. Peg suggested that we cover the mummy with mustard weeds. That helped a lot.

Then, just as we were going nicely, with a prospect of getting to the old Morgan house by ten o'clock or thereabouts, the cart wheel that we had damaged in the cemetery collapsed.

The mummy would have gone rolling into the road if Peg hadn't caught it.

"What in Sam Hill are we going to do now?" he inquired, supporting the mummy on its feet.

“We can’t carry it,” Red put in quickly, as a picture came into his mind of the two miles that lay between us and the old stone house.

Scoop was fiddling with the broken wheel. Straightening, he brushed his hands and squinted in the direction of town.

“If we only had another cart——”

“Or an automobile,” put in Red.

“Why not get a rowboat?” suggested Peg.

Scoop gave a happy cry and snapped his fingers.

“That’s the dope.”

“But what good’ll a rowboat do us?” said Red. “We’re a mile from the canal.”

“You’re stretching it,” said Peg. “The canal is just over that knoll. It won’t kill us to carry the mummy that far.”

“I don’t like to touch it,” said Red. “It gives me the creeps.”

“Just so it doesn’t give you the mummy itch,” I laughed.

“Quit talking about it,” said Red. “You make me want to scratch.”

Scoop said out of his thoughts:

“Yes, a rowboat is just the thing. Queer I didn’t think of it. It’ll be an easy way to get the mummy to the old Morgan house and then back to town when it has been inspected. I tell you what we’ll do: Peg and I’ll go back to town and get Cap’n Tinkertop’s skiff. He’ll let us borrow it. Then we’ll row to a point just over the knoll and tie the boat to a tree or bush. You can hide here in the pasture till we give you a signal from the top of the knoll.”

“We’ll yowl three times,” said Peg.

Red didn’t like the idea of being left with the mummy.

“Can’t we hide the blamed thing in the weeds beside the road and all go back to town?”

Scoop snorted.

“Nix. I don’t want that mummy to get out of our sight till the reward has been paid to us.”

I linked arms with Red.

“There’s nothing to be afraid of,” I told him.

“Every time I look at the mummy,” said Red, “it makes me think of a corpse.”

We ditched the useless cart beside the turnpike and then carried the mummy through the barbed wire fence and stood it against a tree. Here the shadows were deep and dark.

“This is a cow pasture,” said Scoop, “and no one will bother you here.” He gave Peg the signal to start. “We’ll be back in less than an hour,” he added.

“You can’t get back any too soon to suit me,” spoke up Red.

Peg chuckled.

“Be nice and sociable with Ramses and don’t let him get lonesome. And if a shower comes up be sure and keep him dry. You remember what Mr. Arnoldsmitth said about the mummy itch. I’d hate to come back and find you in the rain with mummy itchers parked all over you.”

“Shut up,” said Red.

Peg’s chuckle trailed away. We heard the wire fence rattle as he and Scoop crawled through. Scoop let out an “Ouch!” and we knew he got hooked on a barb. After that, silence.

The minutes dragged. I got the fidgets, kind of. It was spooky sitting there in the dark with that old mummy watching us. We couldn’t *see* it looking at us but we could *feel* its eyes boring into us. It was imagination, of course. But imagination can easy enough lead a fellow into a bad scare. The mummy was dead. We knew it was dead. We knew it couldn’t watch us. All the same I had the feeling, and Red did, too, that the sunken eyes were very much alive.

Red was hanging to my arm.

“I wish they’d come,” he said.

“They aren’t to town yet,” I returned.

“Suppose they can’t get the Cap’n’s boat.”

“They can get Mr. Ellery’s boat.”

“It’s locked.”

“Scoop can get the keys.”

“I wish they’d come.”

“Let’s tell stories,” I suggested. “That’ll make the time go faster.”

“Not ghost stories,” Red objected.

“I know a dandy giant story.”

“There never was any giants,” said Red.

“Of course not. This is just a made-up story. The giant’s name was Jig-a-lot and he was the king of Melody Island. It was a floating island and that is why it was so hard to find. One time it would be in the Atlantic Ocean and the next time it was sighted it would be in the Pacific Ocean.”

“I bet it went through the Panama Canal,” said Red.

“Of course not, you gilly. This happened millions of years ago. There wasn’t any Panama Canal then.”

“Then how could it get from the Atlantic Ocean into the Pacific Ocean?” argued Red.

“Don’t ask *me*,” I said. “It just did.”

“Maybe it had legs,” said Red, “and walked over the land.”

“You can put legs on it if you want to,” I said, and proceeded with my story. When I came to the point where King Jig-a-lot stomped down the great stone steps of his marvelous castle Red’s hand closed tighter on my arm.

“Listen!” he breathed into my ear.

The way he said it put a shiver into me, kind of. I peeled my ears. Somewhere near us I could hear a dull thump! thump! Like somebody was coming toward us.

“It’s the giant!” gasped Red, his imagination getting the better of him.

Thump! thump! Whoever it was seemed to see us in the dark, though we couldn’t see them. Then I tumbled. *It was a cow!*

I told Red. And we turned the flashlight in the direction of the mysterious visitor. Sure enough it was a big cow.

Red gave a sigh of relief.

I guess a cow is one of the most curious animals in the world. Anyway, that old cow had an awful big curiosity bump. It wasn’t satisfied till it came to within a few feet of us. It

lowered its head and snorted, as though it were trying to scare us away. Then it went to the tree and poked its nose in the mummy's face. We didn't want Ramses to get a part of his head bit off, so we got sticks and drove the cow away.

Shortly after that we heard three cat yowls from the top of the knoll. We yowled back and turned on the flashlight. Pretty soon Scoop and Peg joined us. Peg wanted to know who owned the cow. We laughed and told him about our scare.

"We ran most of the way to town," said Scoop.

"Did you get the Cap'n's boat?" inquired Red.

"Sure thing. It's tied to a tree just beyond the knoll."

I'll tell the world that a full-grown mummy is an awkward thing to carry. It's hard to get a hand hold. Peg and Scoop took the head and Red and I handled the feet. In this way we stumbled our way to the top of the knoll and down the opposite side to the canal. No one was sorry when we came to the rowboat.

We had a time getting the mummy into the boat. There didn't seem to be any place suited to it. We couldn't make it sit on one of the seats, and we couldn't lay it lengthwise of the boat because that interfered with the fellow rowing. Finally we decided to put it crosswise, balancing it nicely. In this way we started, Red in the prow, Ramses next, Peg handling the oars and Scoop and I in the stem.

The boat slid through the still black water, the oars going dip! dip! dip! No one talked. I guess we were all anxious to bring

the mummy under Mr. Arnoldsmitth's attention for inspection and get back to town.

Suddenly Scoop clutched my arm and went, "S-h-h-h-h!"

Peg held the oars out of the water.

"What's the matter now?" he inquired anxiously.

"The Stricker gang," said Scoop, pointing ahead. "They're in their hut. I can see a light."

"We'll have to go by careful," put in Red.

"Go by nothin'," sputtered Scoop. "Here's where we get even with that smart gang for playing the incubator trick on us."

"What do you mean?" Peg said eagerly.

"We'll give 'em a good scare," said Scoop.

Peg giggled.

"We'll do it with the mummy," planned Scoop. "Row careful, Peg, and when we get to the hut we'll carry the mummy up the canal bank and stand it in front of their window where the light will fall on it. Then we'll let out a few groans, or something."

"We'll make it whisper like it did in the museum," said Peg.

Scoop chuckled.

“Sure thing.” And then he said in a hollow, ghostly voice: “*I am not dead; I am sleeping!*” He laughed. “How’s that?” he inquired.

“Elegant,” said Peg.

“It’ll scare ’em into fits,” I put in.

“What if it doesn’t?” came from Red. “Suppose they come boiling out of their hut and clean up on us.”

“Don’t worry, old sorrel-top,” laughed Scoop. “I don’t think you’ll carry home a black eye. When they see the mummy squinting in at them their only thought will be to beat it for town. I bet they’ll leg it out of the hut at sixty miles an hour.”

“I hope they stumble into the canal,” said Peg.

Dipping the oars lightly he slowly brought the rowboat opposite the lighted hut. We could hear voices. I could distinguish Bid Stricker’s coarse voice easy enough. Jimmy Stricker was there, too, and other members of the Zulutown gang.

“While I carve the watermelon,” yelled Bid, “you fellers sing a song.”

“Did you hear that?” whispered Peg. “Watermelon! Um-yum. Let’s go up and take it away from ’em.”

“S-h-h-h!” went Scoop.

“Come on with the song,” Bid Stricker called out.

“Here we go,” said Jimmy. “Everybody get in on it.”

We're bummers, we're bummers,
We're a long ways from home;
And if you don't like us
You can leave us alone.
We eat when we're hungry,
We drink when we're dry,
And if camping don't kill us
We'll live till we die.

“They're bummers, all right,” whispered Scoop, “and when we get through with them they'll be on the bum.”

“Easy,” snickered Peg.

He brought the boat against the canal bank and Red hopped out, pulling the prow out of the water. Then we carefully unloaded Ramses. It wasn't easy because the boat tipped as we moved about.

At this point the canal bank was six or eight feet high, sloping steeply to the water. We had to dig in with our toes to keep from slipping. But we managed it.

“Now go easy,” cautioned Scoop, when we came to the top.
“Don't let 'em hear you.”

“No danger,” said Peg, “with all that racket inside.”

“They're cutting the melon,” I put in.

Here the occupants of the cabin again started in on the “bummers” song.

“We’ll stand the mummy in front of their window,” said Scoop, “and when they stop for breath I’ll give a groan and do the whispering.”

“Don’t fumble,” cautioned Peg. “And if they start off with the melon yell at them to drop it.”

Moving on our tiptoes we approached the hut. Through the open window I counted five members of the Stricker gang. They were seated in a circle on boxes and old chairs and Bid Stricker was cutting a long watermelon into thick slices. The others were yelling out the “bummers” song at the top of their voices. It was some racket, I’ll tell the world.

I gritted my teeth as Scoop moved the mummy into position. I was glad for this chance to even scores with Bid Stricker. He was the ringleader. If we could send him and his gang back to town on the run, with a crazy story of how they had been chased by the missing college mummy, it would take some of the cockiness out of them. They wouldn’t be so quick to yell “Jupe!” at me and go “cluck! cluck! cluck” like they did that afternoon during recess.

Well, they came to the end of their song and then Scoop gave the awfulest groan you can imagine. Some one inside the hut let out a screech. “It’s the mummy!” Then a chair crashed to the floor.

“I am not dead; I am sleeping!” whispered Scoop, letting the words sort of rattle around in his mouth.

There was an awful clatter within the hut and pretty soon Bid Stricker came flying through the doorway, the others close on his heels. They never looked back. Their only idea, I guess, was to get as far away from the whispering mummy as they could.



BID STRICKER CAME FLYING THROUGH THE DOORWAY.

“There,” said Scoop, a deep satisfaction in his voice, “I guess that fixes ’em.”

“Come on,” said Peg, heading for the open door. “Here’s where we get some free watermelon.”

We didn’t waste any time getting on the outside of that melon. Then Peg fished a pencil stub from his pocket and wrote on a piece of white wrapping paper: “Thanks for the watermelon,” and signed it “Four Jupiter Detectives.”

“We’ll blow out the light,” he said, “and they won’t dare come back. They’ll think the mummy is in the hut.”

Red was moving about uneasily.

“Let’s get out of here,” he said.

“Wait till I tack this note to the door,” said Peg.

After looking at the hut lamp the outside darkness seemed more intense than ever. As we carried the mummy back to the boat we couldn’t see where we were putting our feet. Red was in front with the flashlight. This helped some but not much.

Well, I don’t know who it was that stumbled.

Afterwards Peg accused Scoop and Scoop, as usual, shifted the blame onto me. Anyway, just as we started down the steep bank some one gave a screech and I felt the mummy slipping from my grasp. I couldn’t hang onto it. Then there was a splash as Ramses hit Red in the stomach, knocking him backwards into the canal. Red came up puffing and snorting

and half scared out of his wits. We helped him into the boat. Everything was pitch dark now because his flashlight was at the bottom of the canal.

“Who’s got the mummy?” said Scoop, out of the blackness.

“I haven’t,” Peg spoke up.

“Nor me,” I put in.

“It’s in the ca-anal,” chattered Red. “It ma-ade a jump at m-me and hit m-me in the bread basket——”

“Good night!” cried Scoop. “We’re in a pretty mess.”

“We can dive for it,” was Peg’s practical suggestion.

“Help yourself,” said Red. “You don’t catch *me* going into the canal for no-o old mummy. Not so you can notice it.”

Scoop made a queer sound in his throat.

“We’re going to be out of luck,” he said shortly, “if the Stricker gang comes back for their watermelon.”

“Some one ought to keep watch down the canal bank,” advised Peg. “You be guard, Jerry. If you hear them coming, run back and warn us. Scoop and I’ll strip and do the diving.”

I didn’t say anything. But I can’t say I was very tickled over the job Peg gave me. The Strickers could easy enough creep up on me in the dark and hammer tar out of me.

But I did as he said. I gritted my teeth and got my nerve back. The minutes passed. I didn't hear a sound. It seemed to me I had been on guard an hour or two when Red came creeping toward me.

"Have they found the mummy?" I whispered.

"No," said Red. Then he added in a dismal tone: "I wish I was home. Blame it! I'm wet through. I-it makes me sh-hiver."

"I don't believe the Strickers will come back to-night," I said hopefully.

"I hope not," said Red.

"It's funny they can't find the mummy," I said. "Peg's a good diver."

"It's so dark—you can't see what you're doing," said Red. "If we only had a light——"

"Why don't you get the lamp in the hut?" I suggested.

"Scoop ne-ever thought of it," said Red, and started back toward the boat.

Presently I saw a light in the cabin. Then Peg came through the doorway carrying the lamp. It wasn't very long after that before he called out:

"Come on, Jerry. We've found it."

When I got to the boat he told me:

“All the time we were diving for it the blamed thing was floating in the middle of the canal.”

“I never knew a mummy would float,” put in Scoop.

He was standing in the water beside the boat. When I looked close there was the mummy floating face uppermost on the canal’s surface.

“I bet Mr. Arnoldsmitth will have a fit when he learns about the mummy falling in the canal,” spoke up Red. “You remember what he said about keeping it dry.”

“Shucks!” said Peg. “Take hold of it and we’ll load it in the boat.”

Red promptly backed off.

“Nothin’ doin’,” he said. “I’m not going to get mummy itchers all over me.”

“Mummy itchers, your grandmother,” sputtered Peg. “I don’t believe all that crazy truck the old man handed out to us.”

“You don’t *know* that it isn’t true,” argued Red. “I’m not going to take a chance.”

“There’s an old rubber coat in the boat,” said Peg. “If you’re so scared of mummy itchers, put that around your pretty little hands.”

But Red wouldn't help. He gets those stubborn spells. You can't budge him. He let us do all the tugging and lifting. It took all our strength to get the mummy into the boat.

When we were all set Peg and Scoop dressed and we returned the lamp to the hut. Then we piled into the boat and headed up the canal.

CHAPTER XVIII

TRAPPED LIKE RATS

It was well after ten-thirty when we lifted the mummy from the boat and carried it through the brush to the old Morgan house. In the darkness the stone house didn't show up till we were right on it. Here we paused dead still and listened. Not a sound came to us. But we were pretty sure Mr. Arnoldsmitth was somewhere about. Scoop gave the cat-yowl signal. Presently a guarded voice came to us from out of the darkness.

“Be it you, boys?”

“Yes,” Scoop said shortly, like he was out of breath. I guess we were all breathing hard. It was no easy job lugging the mummy through the underbrush that grew on the canal bank between the strip of water and the old house. I was pretty much fagged out. I noticed it all of a sudden. I wondered a bit unhappily how we'd ever manage to get the mummy back to town.

A flashlight was turned on, revealing Mr. Arnoldsmitth's face peering at us through the wooden bars. When the old man saw the mummy he gave a gasp and clutched at the door bars to steady himself. His knees seemed

suddenly to tremble. Red took the flashlight from the trembling hand that held it or it would have fallen to the floor.

Scoop gripped my hand and hissed in my ear, “Watch him, Jerry!”

“I jest knowed you boys’d do it; I jest did,” the old man cried after a moment, coming out through the bars and bending over the mummy. His trembling hand felt of its head and arms and body. “It’s the right one,” he muttered, as though in answer to his own thoughts.

“We’ve kept our promise,” Scoop said shortly. “You asked us to bring the mummy here, and here it is. Now you can inspect it; and maybe you won’t mind if I ask you to make it snappy. We’ve got to haul it back to town to-night and deliver it to the college president and get the two-hundred-dollar reward.”

The old man was bustling about. Excited, kind of.

“We’ll take it inside,” he said. “If I’m goin’ to inspect it right and official I’ve got to have plenty of light; and if we go showin’ lights out here mebby some one’ll see us. That won’t never do nohow.”

We lifted the mummy through the door bars and placed it on the hay bale where we had made seats for ourselves when Mr. Arnoldsmitth told us about the mummy itchers.

“Now you hold the light jest so,” said the old man to Red, directing the flashlight onto the mummy’s head. We gathered in close. Our jaws sagged a bit, I imagine. A fellow is likely to do that when a thing like this happens. Never in all our

lives had we seen a mummy inspected for the mummy itch (if there were such a thing!) and we wanted to see just how it was done.

Mr. Arnoldsmith continued to bustle around importantly and told Red to hold the light first this way and then that way until it was just right. He took a reading glass from his inside coat pocket and held this close to the mummy's head. He squinted through the glass, first with both eyes, then with his left eye closed. Once he coughed sudden-like and I jumped and almost bit a chunk out of my heart, it was so high up in my throat.

“Good heavens!” said the old man, his voice trembling with emotion.

“What’s the matter?” Scoop said quickly.

“Why, it’s wet. It’s drippin’ wet.”

“It fell in the canal,” explained Scoop.

“This is awful. How come you to put it in the canal when I said to you jest as plain as I knew how that nothin’ livens up mummy itchers like water? Didn’t I tell you that, hey?”

Scoop nodded.

“Then how come you to put it in the canal?”

“It was an accident,” said Scoop. “We didn’t intend to do it.” I could see from his uncomfortable actions that the old man had him guessing.

“The water is got them to workin’,” said Mr. Arnoldsmitth.
“Yes, sir, they’ll be out in no time hardly.” He pushed us out of his way like we were nothing but wooden tenpins and began pacing back and forth between the old cupboard and the fireplace, scratching his head with the handle of the reading glass.

Scoop shot an uncertain look at the mummy, as though he half believed that it had mummy itchers like the old man said. He started to say something but was cut off.

“I ain’t got no iron chest; and I ought to have a iron chest,” said the old man in a voice that sounded a bit like a hopeless wail. I don’t mind telling you that he had me scared stiff. “A wooden box ain’t no ’count. The itchers jest bore right through wood.”

Suddenly he paused dead still and something rattled on the floor where he was standing. When I looked down I saw that he was directly on the trapdoor opening into the cellar. A sliding bolt holds the trapdoor in place, and he was working at this bolt with one foot.

“Now mebby,” he went on, “if we bury the mummy in the cellar——”

Scoop clutched my arm as the reflective words trailed away.

“But if you do that we can’t get the two hundred dollars.”

The old man scowled.

“This ain’t no time to be penurious and think of nothin’ but money,” he said sharply. “Humanity is beckonin’ fur us to reach out and save it from the awful mummy itch, and we’ve got to save it like it wants us to.” He stooped over and raised the trapdoor. I was close by. And as I squinted into the well of blackness where the cellar was I wanted to run. Afterwards I wished I had run.

“I never kin git down them steps with my rheumatism botherin’ me so,” said the old man; and he leaned on his left hip and placed his hand over it and groaned. Then he felt of his right hip and groaned. “You boys’ll have to dig the grave,” he concluded.

The *grave*! Gee-miny crickets! My hair got to acting funny, as though it wanted to stand up and squint around at what was going on. I didn’t like the idea one bit of going down into that deep, dark cellar to dig a *grave*.

But the old man said we had to do it—and he told us again how humanity was beckoning to us to save it. He said if we didn’t hurry and dig the grave and get the mummy buried it might be too late, as the mummy itchers, as a result of the mummy’s canal bath, were almost out, and no telling what would happen in the next hour if we didn’t brace up and do the manly thing like he asked us to.

We didn’t know how much of what he was telling us was true and how much wasn’t; but you can see how we didn’t dare stall at digging the grave. He gave us an old shovel and crowbar and we started down the cellar steps. Peg was in front with the flashlight. Scoop was second. Red, as usual, was last. And as he followed me down the stairs he kept

breathing hard on the back of my neck. I wanted to tell him to stop—it gave me the jim-jams.

There was a stale, musty smell in the cellar. When I touched one of the stone walls it was damp and clammy—just like a ghost’s hands or body would be, I imagined. The darkness was so heavy beyond the fringe of the flashlight that I could almost *feel* it pressing in on me.

“We’ll work fast and get out of here,” Peg said in a strained voice, starting to turn up the sandy floor of the cellar.

Mr. Arnoldsmitth was squinting down through the trapdoor.

“Dig it good and deep,” he instructed.

Red held the light while Scoop and Peg worked with the shovel and crowbar. Peg loosened the ground and Scoop shoveled the dirt to one side. The hole kept getting bigger and bigger. At length Scoop glanced up, the sweat streaking his face, and said in a panting voice:

“You take the shovel a spell, Jerry. I’m ’most tuckered out.”

Gritting my teeth I started to work. The dirt flew for a few minutes. Suddenly Scoop gave a screech. It scared me so I pretty nearly threw a fit. The shovel slipped from my fingers, and when I turned to where he was standing at the foot of the stairs the look on his face was awful. His mouth was open and something was choking him. He didn’t seem able to tell us what was the matter—he just pointed. I looked up. *The trapdoor was closed!* Mr. Arnoldsmitth had eased the trapdoor down while we were at work, moving slowly so we

wouldn't hear him. And, as a result, there we were trapped in the cellar like rats, with a half-dug mummy grave for company. Small wonder that a terrible feeling of helplessness came crowding down on me.

Peg dropped the crowbar and sprang up the steps.

“Open that door!” he yelled, crowding up on the door with his broad shoulders and furiously beating on it with his fists. But the door was bolted on the upper side and failed to give the least part of an inch.

Scoop and Peg then tried lifting on the door together but failed to budge it. We shouted till we were hoarse, first coaxing Mr. Arnoldsmitth to let us out; then threatening all manners of things. We even let a few tears come—at least Red and Scoop and I did. We weren't cry babies; I don't want you to think so. We were just plumb tired out and scared all the way through. It's hard to make Peg cry. He's just as gritty as a bulldog. I guess in moments of danger like this is when we fully realize what a wonderful pal Peg is.

While we were whimpering he took the crowbar and tried to pry up on the sliding bolt. Failing in this he battered on the door. At length he let the crowbar fall to the cellar floor and sat down all out of breath. It was no use.

We didn't say much after that. We just sat there and watched the flashlight grow dimmer and dimmer. Soon the light would entirely fade and we would be left in total darkness.

In the room above we could hear Mr. Arnoldsmitth moving about. A faint crackling came to us and we knew a fire was

burning in the fireplace. Why he should start a fire was beyond us. We all had the feeling he had turned traitor and had shut us up in the cellar so he could take the mummy to town and claim the reward. Why, then, did he keep piling wood on the fire and not let it die out and start for town?

In those terribly wretched moments I felt pretty cheap to think how I had been played for a sucker. I had been—good and plenty. I realized it now. And all the time I had been swallowing the hook and line and sinker, as it were, I never suspected what was happening. I had just gone about holding my head high and bragging to myself how smart I was, and now I was shut in a cellar by an old man who had soft-soaped me to a fare-you-well—and I let him do it because I was stuck on myself and didn't have any better sense. I thought it was nice, and liked it, and all he did it for was to get the mummy into his own hands so he could turn the tables on us and cheat us out of the reward.

Right then and there I made up my mind that never again would I believe in a mysterious stranger like I had believed in Mr. Arnoldsmitth. After this I'd go to Dad with things like this and get him to tell me what I ought to do. If I had told Dad about Mr. Arnoldsmitth being at the Morgan house the chances are we wouldn't be trapped in the cellar many hours.

But that view of things couldn't help us any just now. We could only hope that some one would happen along and let us out of the cellar before we starved to death. We knew Mr. Arnoldsmitth wouldn't let us out. We knew he'd keep us there till he got the two hundred dollars. Maybe when he was safely away he'd send a post-card back to Tutter telling where we

were. But that might take several days. It might take a week or two weeks. I wondered how long we could live in the cellar.

Peg startled us by giving a sudden yelp. He jumped from the cellar stairs and started to dance around in a circle, digging his hand down the back of his neck as though something was troubling him and he wanted to get hold of it and yank it out.

“I’ve been bit!” he yelled. “There it goes ag’in! Oh, good gosh! *I’m being bit by mummy itchers!* Fellows, there *is* such a thing as mummy itchers after all.”

For a moment the rest of us were struck dumb. We thought Mr. Arnoldsmitth had fooled us into thinking the mummy had itchers so as to get us into the cellar digging a grave while he locked us in. But now it would appear that he had told us the truth. The mummy *did* have itchers. And those itchers were loose and Peg had one of them down the back of his neck and goodness knows how soon we’d have them down the backs of our necks.

After that I just wilted. It was the one thing needed to make my misery complete. But I want to tell you I got into action pretty fast when something took a nip at my backbone. I jumped up and yelled and rubbed my back against the rough wall. Scoop and Red were rubbing their backs against the wall, too.

“O-h-h-h!” wailed Scoop. “Ain’t this awful? Ain’t this the *limit?*”

CHAPTER XIX

HERE COMES THE BRIDE!

I want to tell the world that it isn't any fun to be shut up in a dark cellar with a lot of busy mummy itchers. It's about the worst thing that can happen. A cellarful of rats or maybe a snake or two is bad enough. But mummy itchers are worse than rats and snakes put together.

Of course we found out afterwards there is no such thing as the mummy itch and Mr. Arnoldsmitth just made up that story to work us. Our itching was the result of our imagination—though maybe Peg's first nip might have been a spider bite or something. But at the moment the mummy itch was real enough to us. We scratched and scratched and the more we scratched the more we itched.

It seemed to me we had been in the cellar for hours and hours. When I thought to take a look at my watch it was just twelve-thirty. I wondered what Dad and Mother were doing. They probably were out in the street looking for me. And Scoop's folks were out, too, and Red's folks and Peg's.

Yes, it wouldn't be very long before the whole town would be looking for us; and the thought came to me that Mr. Arnoldsmitth would likely find himself in trouble if he went back to town with the mummy and the people got hold of

him. They'd suspicion he was connected with our disappearance.

He was still in the room above us; and the crackling of the fire seemed louder than ever. Again I wondered. Why was he feeding the fire? What could it mean?

All of a sudden there came the awfulest racket you can imagine. About a hundred pairs of feet began running about on the floor over our heads; and we could hear people yelling and talking. We heard Bill's gruff voice; and Dad called out: "Jerry, ol' pal! Are you here?" There was a screech and we knew it was Mr. Arnoldsmitth having the handcuffs put on him.

"Gosh all hemlocks!" yelled Bill. "Look what the old pirate's bin burnin' up. It's the mummy!"

Right then we set up an awful racket. We yelled and pounded on the door; and Peg got the crowbar and accidentally jabbed Red in the breadbasket, but we didn't mind a little thing like that.

It didn't take more than a jiffy for some one to open the trapdoor; and the first face I looked into was my dad's. He was holding a lantern, and never as long as I live will I forget the glad light that came into his eyes when he saw me. I bounded out of the cellar and his strong arms closed about me. They held me tight and that was just the way I wanted to be held.

"Jerry, are you hurt?" said Dad, smoothing the hair out of my eyes and looking at me sharply.

“Only the mummy itch,” I said.

“Mummy itch?” said Dad, looking puzzled.

I told him about the mummy itch and he just laughed. And it was then he said there was no such thing as the mummy itch, and explained that I was itching in my imagination. Just to show how *right* he was I quit itching on the spot. The imagination *is* a queer thing.

Well, there isn't much more to tell. The mummy was found to be made of wood and paper; and Mr. Arnoldsmithe wasn't Mr. Arnoldsmithe at all but Amos Herzog, the man who sold the fake mummy to Mr. Dixon White. It was a scheme of his to sell fake mummies, then steal and destroy them to avoid detection. When he was captured he had our mummy more than half burnt up. It was the light from the fire that attracted Mr. Charley Wilson's attention and prompted him to telephone to Bill. The old man was taken to jail and later sent to prison. That's where men should be who tell lies to boys and steal mummies and take jewelry and things from fraternity houses.

Of course we didn't get any reward because it wouldn't be right to make the college pay us two hundred dollars without getting something in return except bad news about a mummy that wasn't a mummy after all.

But every one admitted we had done some fine detective work and that was pay, kind of. Bill said we were a credit to the profession, and he told the people he was proud of us. He was so nice about it, I guess we never will tell on him about the twelve hunkies he scrapped and almost licked.

We wore our stars at his wedding because everybody in town knew about us being detectives and there was no use trying to make a secret of it any longer. Besides, Scoop has a pair of rabbits and we're going to raise rabbits and get rich just like the man did who raised chickens. I told about that in the early part of my story. Taking care of the rabbits is going to keep us busy and we won't have any time to do detecting.

At the wedding the minister asked a lot of questions and Bill said, "I will." And to the same questions Miss Skinner said, "I will." Then the minister let them be man and wife and Bill grabbed her like he was awfully tickled and kissed her. After that the minister kissed her, only he wasn't rough about it like Bill. He kind of stuck out his mouth and pecked at her cheek. Maybe that is the proper way to kiss a bride. I don't know.

When she had been kissed twice I thought that part was all over and went up with the other people to shake hands with her and tell her how lucky she was to get some one to marry her, and the minute her eyes fell on me a happy light came into her face and my knees began to wobble. Good night! She was expecting *me* to kiss her! And all those people rubbering.

Scoop gave me a dig with his elbow and hissed:

"You're next, Jerry."

I know what he said that for. He just wanted to get my goat. But it didn't work. No, sir-e! Him saying that made me feel all dare-devilish and I-don't-care. And when Miss Skinner—I mean when Bill's wife looked down at me and said ever so softly: "You know, Jerry, I've never been

kissed by a Jupiter Detective!”—right then and there I spoke up, just like a movie caveman:

“Well, if you ain’t, you’re going to be pretty quick!”

And I *said* it and I *meant* it and I *did* it.

THE END

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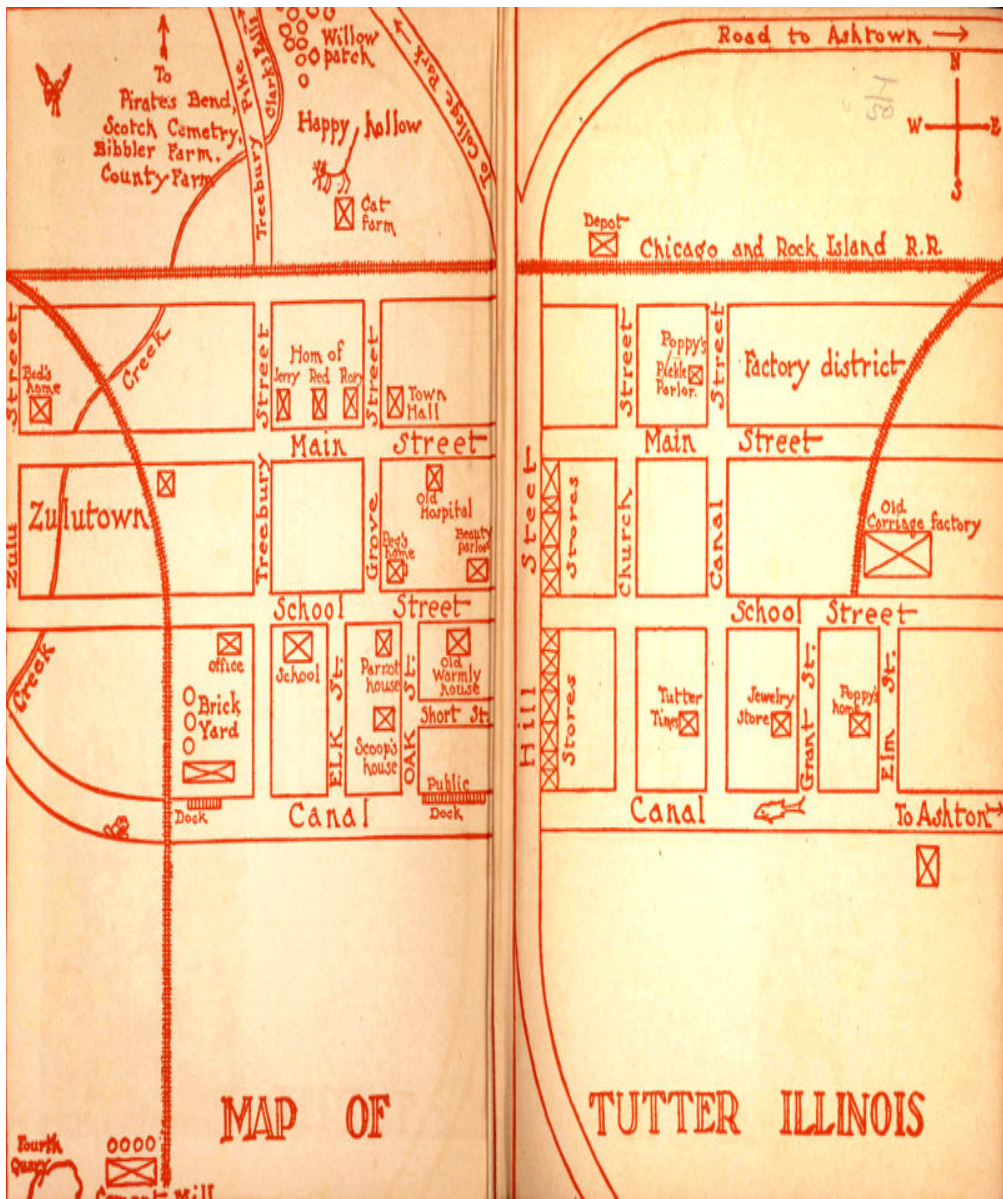
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- Relocated the illustrations (printed on unnumbered pages) to the corresponding paragraph in the text.
- In the text versions, delimited italics text in underscores (the HTML version reproduces the font form of the printed book.)

[The end of *Jerry Todd and the Whispering Mummy* by Edward Edson Lee (as Leo Edwards)]