

Chapter Two.

Sebastian stubbed out his cigarette, jumped up, and grabbed his valise from the rack above him. He slipped out of the carriage without a word ~~and~~ aware that the headmaster's eyes ~~never~~ left him.

He lugged his heavy suitcase ~~to~~ ^{where} the far end of the train, ~~found~~ ^{he} found a seat in a parked third class carriage. He stared out of the window as he tried to ~~think~~ ^{possibly} if there was anyway ^{possible} out of his present predicament. Perhaps he should return to first class, and tell the headmaster that he was traveling to London to spend a few days with his uncle, Sir Giles Bawington, the M.P. for Bristol Docklands. But why would he do that, when he had been instructed to return home, and give the letter to his father. Because his father was in America on a book tour, and his mother always accompanied him.

But Sebastian knew that it would only take one phone call to ~~disprove~~ ^{prove} that wasn't true. And why had he been smoking, ^{having} ~~having~~ been told to obey school rules until the end of ~~term~~ ^{term}. In an old boy now, and can do as I wish ^{who} ~~the~~ suspected wouldn't go down that well, ~~and~~ ^{who} said that he had learnt from his mistake. And if he did decide to return to first class, the headmaster would discover he was traveling on a third class ticket. As ever he always carried out up and down to Bristol at the beginning and end of ^{every} ~~term~~ ^{term}. Sebastian would occupy the corner seat of a first class carriage, always making sure he had a clear view of the corridor. The moment the ticket collector entered the far end of the carriage, he would nip out and disappear into the lavatory, not locking the door, but leaving the sign ~~on~~ ⁱⁿ ~~place~~ ^{place} ~~vacant~~ ^{vacant} sign in place.

Cippon's remarkable achievement would have to be deleted from his speech to the old boys that evening, but no one present needed to keep abreast of what had taken place that morning.

The Headmaster made another attempt to go over his speech, but failed to get past the ~~top~~ ~~part~~ ~~graph~~, as his thoughts kept returning to Sebastian Cippon, and what course, ~~his~~ ~~life~~ ~~was~~ ~~now~~ ~~take~~ ~~the~~ ~~king~~ would now take.

* * *

Sebastian was considering whether he should be the first off the train or the last ~~pro~~ ~~don't~~ matter that much which, as long as he ~~didn't~~ ~~pro~~ ~~was~~ ~~in~~ ~~direct~~ ~~contact~~ with the Headmaster. He decided to be the first ~~off~~ ~~the~~ ~~train~~ and sit on the edge of his seat for the last twenty miles of the journey. He checked his purse to find he had one pound and twelve shillings, far more than usual, but then, his Amusement had ~~been~~ ~~pro~~ ~~his~~ ~~purse~~ ~~money~~ as he would be ~~returning~~.

He had originally only planned to spend a few days in London before returning to Bristol on the last day of term, ~~and~~ ~~he~~ ~~had~~ ~~no~~ ~~intention~~ ~~of~~ ~~handing~~ ~~the~~ ~~letter~~ ~~over~~ ~~to~~ ~~his~~ ~~father~~. He removed the envelope from an inside pocket, it was addressed to Mr H.A. Cippon esq, Byland. He ~~looked~~ ~~around~~ ~~the~~ ~~carriage~~ ~~to~~ ~~see~~ ~~check~~ that no one was looking at him, before he ripped it open; He read it slowly and then re-read it. ~~It~~ ~~was~~ ~~measured~~, ~~and~~ ~~fair~~, and made no mention of Ruby. If only he taken the train to Bristol, gone home and handed the letter to his father, it might all have been

Damn it.

town news

so different. (What was the headmaster doing on the train in the first place.

~~Sebastian~~ returned the letter to an inside porter, and tried to concentrate on the first thing he would do once he arrived in London, because he certainly ~~would not be~~ ^{was} going back to Bristol for some time. He would have to be low, but how long would he hope to survive on one pound and twelve shillings.

Sebastian was ~~standing~~ ^{waiting} in the window long before the train pulled into Paddington, and reopened the carriage door even before the train had come to a halt. He leapt out, ran to the barrier as fast as his suitcase would allow him, handed in his ticket and disappeared among the crowd.

He'd only ever been to London once before, and on that occasion ~~there~~ ^{there} had been ~~his~~ ^{his} parents, and there had been a car waiting to pick them up, ~~and~~ ^{and} whisk them off to his uncle ^{Robert} Gyles in Smith Square. Uncle Gyles had taken him to the Tower of London to ~~see~~ ^{view} the crown jewels, and onto Madame Tussauds, to see a waxen image of Queen Victoria and Fred Perry. The following day he'd sat on the visitor benches at the House of Commons and seen Winston Churchill glowering from the front bench. He'd been surprised and small he was. When it was time for him to return, Sebastian ^{had} told Uncle Gyles, that he couldn't wait to ~~get~~ ^{return} ~~back~~ to London. But this time there was no car to meet him, and the last person he could possibly visit, was his uncle, not that he had any idea where he would be

spending his first night.

As he made his way through the crowd, someone bumped into him, nearly knocking him over. He turned to see a young man running away, who hadn't even bothered to apologise.

of the station and Sebastian walked out onto the pavement ~~and made~~ ^{pro} his way across the road, and down a street of tall Victorian houses, several of which ~~had~~ ^{displayed} red and white bunting signs in their windows. He selected ~~one~~ ~~with~~ one with a brightly polished door knocker, and the nearest window boxes in the street. A fat lady wearing a large flowing dress and a perfume answered his rap on the door, and gave her potential guest a lurch smile. ~~She was~~ if she was surprised to find a ~~the~~ young man in school uniform standing on her door step, she didn't show it.

Do come in sir she said ~~and~~ opening the door widely. No doubt your looking for accommodation.

Yes said Sebastian, I need a room for the night, and wondered how much that would cost me.

I charge ~~the~~ ^{five} shillings a night, which includes breakfast, or ~~for a week~~ ^{for a week}.

I only need a room for the night said Sebastian, ~~and~~ ^{pro} to search for cheaper accommodation in the morning. If he intended to ~~do~~ ^{do}

of course sir she said as she grabbed his suitcase and headed towards the stairs.

Sebastian had never seen a woman carrying a suitcase, but she was already half way up

the staircase, before he could do anything about it.

By the way she said my name ^{is} Mrs Tibbet, but my regular call me Tibby. When she reached the first floor land my she added, I'll be putting you in number eleven, it's at the back of the house, so your bed likely to be woken by the morning traffic.

Sebastian had no idea what she was talking about, as he'd never been woken by traffic.

Mr Tibbet unlocked the door to number eleven, and stood aside to allow her guest to enter the room. The room was even smaller than his study at Beechcroft, but like its owner it was neat and tidy. There was a single bed with clean sheets, and a wash basin attached to the wall.

~~Mr~~ The bathroom is at the end of the corridor, she added before he could offer an opinion.

We changed my mind Mr Tibbet he said, I'll take it for a week.

The high smile returned to Mr Tibbet's ~~lips~~, and clutched my on to the key she said. ~~That~~ Then that will be one pound, in advance.

Yes of course said Sebastian, quickly plucking a hand in his ^{trousers} pocket, but his ~~trousers~~ ^{Mr} ~~trousers~~ ^{trousers} were empty. He tried another ^{trousers} ~~trousers~~ ^{trousers} and then another, but there was ~~no~~ ^{still} sign of a purse. He finally fell on his knees, and opened the suitcase although he ~~knew~~ ~~and~~ ~~rummaged~~ ~~around~~, but ~~knew~~ ~~it~~ ~~couldn't~~ ~~be~~ ~~there~~.

and began frantically searching among his clothes

Mr Tibbet placed her hands on her hips, and her smile turned into a frown as Sebastian continued in vain ~~rummaging~~ ^{to rummage} around in his clothes but he no longer expected to find his purse.

He finally gave up, collapsed onto the bed, and burst into tears. Could anything else go wrong?

* * *
The headmaster checked into his room at The Reform Club. He had a quick bath before changing into his dinner jacket. He checked his bow tie in the mirror over the wash basin ~~and~~ and returned downstairs to join his host. men

The chairman of the old boys was waiting ~~for him~~ at the bottom of the steps, and led his guest of honour into the drawing room where they joined the committee for a drink

What would you care for headmaster asked the chairman.

Just a dry sherry, thank you.

~~The chairman's next words disinterested him.~~
~~Of course headmaster~~

Allow me to be the first to congratulate you ^(pro) on the school being awarded the top open scholarship to Peter Stone, a worthy achievement to crown your final year.

The headmaster said nothing, but relieved that the three lines in his speech that he had planned to delete would have to be reinstated. The truth ~~would have~~ to come out
wouldn't need

until some time later,
~~at some later date~~, after all Clifton had
won the scholarship, and that wouldn't
change until he had spoken to the
admissions tutor at Cambridge.

The chairman wasn't the only person
to refer to the achievement, and by the
time the headmaster rose to deliver his
annual ^{report}, he saw no reason to let the
assembled gathering know what he had in
~~mind~~ for the following day, although he
was surprised that the ^{awards} ~~awards~~ ^{ceremony} for the
received such prolonged applause.

The speech was well received, and so
many old ~~boys~~ boys stepped forward, ~~wishing~~
to wish him a happy retirement, that he
nearly missed the last train back to Beach
croft.

But no sooner had he settled down in
his first class compartment, ~~and~~ than his
thoughts returned to the life of Sebastian
Clifton. He began to pen a few words, ^(pro)
explaining why the action he had taken
had proved necessary. He had completed an
outline draft by the time the train pulled
into Beachcroft ^{station}.

When he handed in his ticket, he was
rejoiced to see his wife sitting in the
car ~~awaiting him~~ outside the station.

So how did it all go, she ~~had~~ asked
even before he'd pulled closed the ^{car door}.
Very satisfactorily, remember the ^{circumstances}
the circumstances repeated the headmaster's
wife.

By the time the car had come to a halt

outside the headmaster's house, he had
fully briefed his wife, on the encounter
with Clifton ⁱⁿ on the train.

And what do you intend to do about it,
she asked as he opened the front door.

He left me with no choice. I shall
announce at assembly to-morrow that Clifton
has been expelled, and will not be taking
up his place at Cambridge in September.
Isn't that a little draconian, suggested
the headmaster's wife, after all, he may
well or had a good reason for travelling
up to ~~the~~ London.

Then why did he leave the carriage the
moment he saw me.

Perhaps you should have asked him ^{my dear}
But ~~don't~~ ^{forget} also caught him smoking.
Why ~~shouldn't~~ ^{shouldn't} he? He was clearly off
the premises, and no longer in status
pupil.

I made it clear to Clifton, that the
school rules applied, until the end of term,
he reminded his wife as they reviewed
the stars.

Would you care for a nightcap my
dear?

No thank you, I must try and get a
good night's sleep, tomorrow isn't going to
~~be~~ prove easy.

For you, ~~and~~ ^{and} for Clifton she reminded
him.

The headmaster didn't respond, but spent
a sleepless night, cursing his wife's words.

* * *

Sebastian sat on the end of the bed, and told Mrs Tibbet every thing that had taken place that day. With this complete stranger he left nothing out, ~~and~~ even showed her the letter the headmaster had written.

Don't you think you ~~should~~ return to Bristol immediately, after all your parents ~~will~~ will be most anxious, and in any case you can't be sure that the headmaster is going to expel you.

Believe me he's already made up his mind, and my bet is he announces his decision at assembly tomorrow.

But that doesn't stop you returning to your family.

Don't go home said Sebastian, you see it's not the first time, let them know.

Be that as it may said Mrs Tibbet; my father always used to say if you've got a problem, sleep on it ~~it~~ it may look very different in the morning.

But I haven't ~~yet~~ even got anywhere to sleep. Mrs Tibbet said the same returning.

Don't be silly you'll be spending the night ^{here} but not on an empty stomach, so let's go down to the kitchen.

* * *
The following morning the headmaster stood on the stage ^(PTO) and addressed the boys. Although his usage was grim, he made no mention of Sebastian ^{Clayton} and when he returned to his study, he did place a call to the admissions ^{letter} at Cambridge. He assumed that Clayton had taken the ^(PTO) ^(PTO)

it might be wise to return
it before you make a decision
stay in the great hall and addressed

the first train back to Bristol, handed
the letter to his father, and he would
hear no more of the matter.

Sebastian ~~had~~ also had a restless
night, and by the time he joined
Mr. Tibbet in the kitchen, he had
made up his mind exactly what he
was going to do.

END OF CHAPTER