

This terrible secret had dogged him all his life. Now, within the dignified walls of St Michael's he feared what would happen if his secret became known.

Somehow Matt couldn't see Dr Granite looking kindly on a master blown out with tripe and onions, followed by spotted dog, especially when the man was a scientist!

There was no doubt in Matt's mind! He would have to give it up. He would have to cultivate a stiff upper lip like the rest of the school, and be content with the sort of fiddle-faddle food that the toffs ate.

The Secret Food Store.

MATT heard footsteps in the corridor, and grabbed at the two meat pies, hiding them under the bed. But the steps passed, and Matt looked round for a safer hiding place.

On the wall of his living-room was a shelf of books, and the middle book was a vast tome about nine inches thick. It was called "Lives of Men of Principle" and it looked as if it hadn't been opened for fifty years.

Matt pulled it down and laid it on the table. Then, with his sharp clasp knife, he cut a square section out of the middle of the pages.

When the book was closed it looked perfectly all right, But when he opened it, he now had a sort of box in which he could hide the pies!

He removed all the paper he had cut out, and placed it in the grate ready for burning. He placed the two pies in the book and closed the cover.

No one would ever guess his hiding place. Matt couldn't imagine anyone ever opening such an incredibly dull-looking volume!

He was just about to replace the book on the shelf when he heard the footsteps outside again. He froze, and after a sharp knock, the door burst open. The Dean of St Michael's strode in.

"Well, Crannis?" Dr Granite demanded. "Settling in, eh?"

The Dean was a tall, dark man, with a long face and flinty eyes. He could probably touch his breastbone with his chin when he yawned, and his upper lip seemed to be reinforced with whalebone.

Dr Gustavus Granite had never been known to smile, and his sole entertainment, it was said, was flogging boys with a stout malacca cane for the benefit of their souls.

"Yes, Dean, er—sir!" Matt said, caught off balance. "Everything's swell."

"Swell?" Dr Granite repeated. "Where? A boil, I expect. There's time to go to

surgery before lessons. Matron will lance it for you."

"I mean, everything's O.K. Fine, that is!" poor Matt floundered.

"Swell? O.K.?" Dr Granite shook his head. "These modern scientific terms mean nothing to me. While you're at St Michael's you'll have to speak the sort of language we ordinary people understand. The golden tongue based upon the great literatures of Greece and Rome."

"I'll see what I can do, sir," Matt said.

The Dean turned to go—and saw the thick tome lying on the table.

"Ah!" he cried, and his bony hand fell on the book. "So you've been reading 'Lives of Men of Principle,' eh, Crannis? Good! Very good! There's a wealth of precept and example in those pages. I myself paid to buy enough volumes of the work to place one in the room of every master!"

Matt's heart stood still! If Dr Granite even guessed that he had concealed the two meat pies inside the book, Matt's life in St Mike's would come to a sudden end.

"I shall read it every night, sir!" he managed to gasp. "Isn't it time for the first period?"

"I was saying," Dr Granite snapped, "I consider it the duty of every master to study this book, and to put into practice the principles propounded therein. Now, Crannis, as a scientist, I recommend you to read—"

His talon-like fingers felt to open the book. At the same instant Matt clamped down on the top cover with his powerful hand.

"Please, sir!" he panted. "I'm sure you don't want me to be late for class on my first day here!"

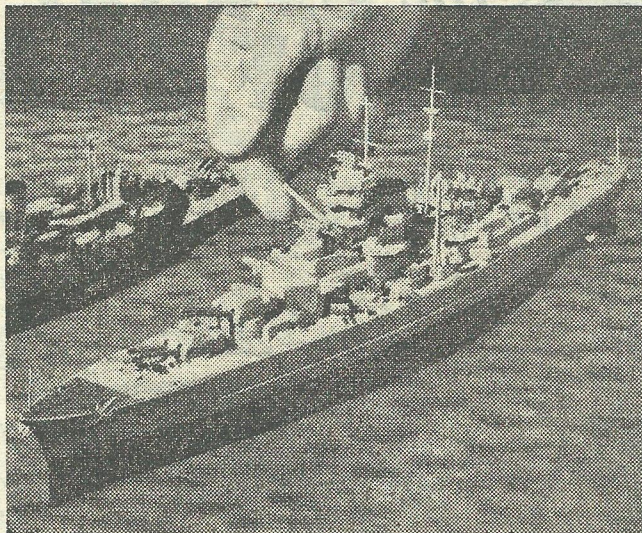
And before the Dean could open the book and discover its secret, it was back on the shelf. For a moment he did not know how to take Matt's action.

"Punctuality is a fine virtue," he said at length. "You'll find a homily by Gladstone on that point on page 94. Well, Crannis, I'll look forward to having a good talk with you later. Perhaps I'll be able to assist you with some of the more difficult parts of that priceless tome!"

"Priceless!" Matt thought as he hurried off to the science laboratory. That was the word.

Contraband Cooking.

RATHER surprisingly, Matt settled down at St Mike's and found that by and large they weren't such a bad lot after all! Although a scientist, he was a good sportsman, and he was



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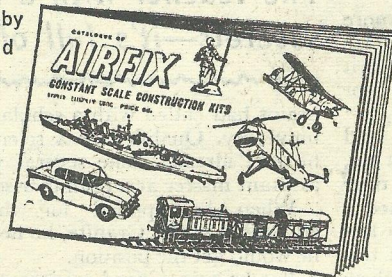
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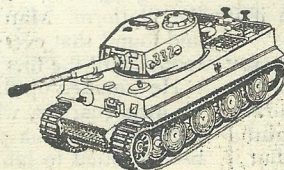


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