



***GEORGE
W. PECK***

***PECK'S
BAD BOY
AND HIS
PA***

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Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa

1883

EAN 8596547325406

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



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PECK'S BAD BOY.

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A young fellow who is pretty smart on general principles, and who is always in good humor, went into a store the other morning limping and seemed to be broke up generally. The proprietor asked him if he wouldn't sit down, and he said he couldn't very well, as his back was lame. He seemed discouraged, and the proprietor asked him what was the matter. "Well," says he, as he put his hand on his pistol pocket and groaned, "There is no encouragement for a boy to have any fun nowadays. If a boy tries to play an innocent joke he gets kicked all over the house." The store keeper asked him what had happened to disturb his hilarity. He said he had played a joke on his father and had been limping ever since.

"You see, I thought the old man was a little spry. You know he is no spring chicken yourself; and though his eyes are not what they used to be, yet he can see a pretty girl further than I can. The other day I wrote a note in a fine hand and addressed it to him, asking him to meet me on the corner of Wisconsin and Milwaukee streets, at 7:30 on

Saturday evening, and signed the name of 'Daisy' to it. At supper time Pa he was all shaved up and had his hair plastered over the bald spot, and he got on some clean cuffs, and said he was going to the Consistory to initiate some candidates from the country, and he might not be in till late. He didn't eat much supper, and hurried off with my umbrella. I winked at Ma but didn't say anything. At 7:30 I went down town and he was standing there by the post-office corner, in a dark place. I went by him and said, "Hello, Pa, what are you doing there?" He said he was waiting for a man. I went down street and pretty soon I went up on the other corner by Chapman's and he was standing there. You see, he didn't know what corner "Daisy" was going to be on, and had to cover all four corners. I saluted him and asked him if he hadn't found his man yet, and he said no, the man was a little late. It is a mean boy that won't speak to his Pa when he sees him standing on a corner, I went up street and I saw Pa cross over by the drug store in a sort of a hurry, and I could see a girl going by with a water-proof on, but she skited right along and Pa looked kind of solemn, the way he does when I ask him for new clothes. I turned and came back and he was standing there in the doorway, and I said, "Pa you will catch cold if you stand around waiting for a man. You go down to the Consistory and let me lay for the man." Pa said, "never you mind, you go about your business and I will attend to the man."

"Well, when a boy's Pa tells him to never you mind, and looks spunky, my experience is that a boy wants to go right away from there, and I went down street. I thought I would cross over and go up the other side, and see how long he

would stay. There was a girl or two going up ahead of me, and I see a man hurrying across from the drug store to Van Pelt's corner. It was Pa, and as the girls went along and never looked around Pa looked mad and stepped into the doorway. It was about eight o'clock then, and Pa was tired, and I felt sorry for him and I went up to him and asked him for half a dollar to go to the Academy. I never knew him to shell out so freely and so quick. He gave me a dollar, and I told him I would go and get it changed and bring him back the half a dollar, but he said I needn't mind the change. It is awful mean of a boy that has always been treated well to play it on his Pa that way, and I felt ashamed. As I turned the corner and saw him standing there shivering, waiting for the man, my conscience troubled me, and I told a policeman to go and tell Pa that "Daisy" had been suddenly taken with worms, and would not be there that evening. I peeked around the corner and Pa and the policeman went off to get a drink. I was glad they did cause Pa needed it, after standing around so long. Well, when I went home the joke was so good I told Ma about it, and she was mad. I guess she was mad at me for treating Pa that way. I heard Pa come home about eleven o'clock, and Ma was real kind to him. She told him to warm his feet, cause they were just like chunks of ice. Then she asked him how many they initiated in the Consistory, and he said six, and then she asked him if they initiated "Daisy" in the Consistory, and pretty soon I heard Pa snoring. In the morning he took me into the basement, and gave me the hardest talking to that I over had, with a bed slat. He said he knew that I wrote, that note all the time, and he thought he would pretend that he was

looking for "Daisy," just to fool me. It don't look reasonable that a man would catch epizootic and rheumatism just to fool his boy, does it? What did he give me the dollar for? Ma and Pa don't seem to call each other pet any more, and as for me, they both look at me as though I was a hard citizen. I am going to Missouri to take Jesse James's place. There is no encouragement for a boy here. Well, good morning. If Pa comes in here asking for me tell him that you saw an express wagon going to the morgue with the remains of a pretty boy who acted as though he died from concussion of a bed slat on Peck's bad boy on the pistol pocket. That will make Pa feel sorry. O, he has got the awfulest cold, though." And the boy limped out to separate a couple of dogs that were fighting.

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THE BAD BOY AT WORK AGAIN—THE BEST BOYS FULL OF TRICKS—THE OLD MAN LAYS DOWN THE LAW ABOUT JOKES—RUBBER-HOSE MACARONI—THE OLD MAN'S STRUGGLES—CHEWING VIGOROUSLY BUT IN VAIN—AN INQUEST HELD—REVELRY BY NIGHT—MUSIC IN THE WOODSHED—
“‘T WAS EVER THUS.”

Of course all boys are not full of tricks, but the best of them are. That is, those who are the readiest to play innocent jokes, and who are continually looking for chances to make Rome howl, are the most apt to turn out to be first-class business men. There is a boy in the Seventh Ward who is so full of fun that sometimes it makes him ache. He is the same boy who not long since wrote a note to his father and signed the name “Daisy” to it, and got the old man to stand on a corner for two hours waiting for the girl. After that scrape the old man told the boy that he had no objection to innocent jokes, such as would not bring reproach upon him, and as long as the boy confined himself to jokes that would simply cause pleasant laughter, and not cause the finger of scorn to be pointed at a parent, he would be the last one to kick. So the boy has been for three weeks trying to think of some innocent joke to play on his father. The old man is getting a little near sighted, and his teeth are not as good as they used to be, but the old man will not admit it. Nothing

that anybody can say can make him own up that his eyesight is failing, or that his teeth are poor, and he would bet a hundred dollars that he could see as far as ever. The boy knew the failing, and made up his mind to demonstrate to the old man that he was rapidly getting off his base.. The old person is very fond of macaroni, and eats it about three times a week. The other day the boy was in a drug store and noticed in a show case a lot of small rubber hose, about the size of sticks of macaroni, such as is used on nursing bottles, and other rubber utensils. It was white and nice, and the boy's mind was made up at once. He bought a yard of it, and took it home. When the macaroni was cooked and ready to be served, he hired the table girl to help him play it on the old man. They took a pair of shears and cut the rubber hose in pieces about the same length as the pieces of boiled macaroni, and put them in a saucer with a little macaroni over the rubber pipes, and placed the dish at the old man's plate. Well, we suppose if ten thousand people could have had reserved seats and seen the old man struggle with the India rubber macaroni, and have seen the boy's struggle to keep from laughing, they would have had more fun than they would at a circus, First the old delegate attempted to cut the macaroni into small pieces, and failing, he remarked that it was not cooked enough. The boy said his macaroni was cooked too tender, and that his father's teeth were so poor that he would have to eat soup entirely pretty soon. The old man said, "Never you mind my teeth, young man," and decided that he would not complain of anything again. He took up a couple of pieces of rubber and one piece of macaroni on a fork and put them in his mouth.

The macaroni dissolved easy enough, and went down perfectly easy, but the flat macaroni was too much for him. He chewed on it for a minute or two, and talked about the weather in order that none of the family should see that he was in trouble, and when he found the macaroni would not down, he called their attention to something out of the window and took the rubber slyly from his mouth, and laid it under the edge of his plate. He was more than half convinced that his teeth were played out, but went on eating something else for a while, and finally he thought he would just chance the macaroni once more for luck, and he mowed away another fork full in his mouth. It was the same old story. He chewed like a seminary girl chewing gum, and his eyes stuck out and his face became red, and his wife looked at him as though afraid he was going to die of apoplexy, and finally the servant girl burst out laughing, and went out of the room with her apron stuffed in her mouth, and the boy felt as though it was unhealthy to tarry too long at the table and he went out.

Left alone with his wife the old man took the rubber macaroni from his mouth and laid it on his plate, and he and his wife held an inquest over it. The wife tried to spear it with a fork, but couldn't make any impression on it, and then she see it was rubber hose, and told the old man. He was mad and glad, at the same time; glad because he had found that his teeth where not to blame, and mad because the grocer had sold him boarding house macaroni. Then the girl came in and was put on the confessional, and told all, and presently there was a sound of revelry by night, in the wood shed, and the still, small voice was saying, "O, Pa,

don't! you said you didn't care for innocent jokes. Oh!" And then the old man, between the strokes of the piece of clapboard would say, "Feed your father a hose cart next, won't ye. Be firing car springs and clothes wringers down me next, eh? Put some gravy on a rubber overcoat, probably, and serve it to me for salad. Try a piece of overshoe, with a bone in it, for my beefsteak, likely. Give your poor old father a slice of rubber bib in place of tripe to-morrow, I expect. Boil me a rubber water bag for apple dumplings, pretty soon, if I don't look out. There! You go and split the kindling wood." 'Twas ever thus. A boy cant have any fun now days.

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The bad boy's mother was out of town for a week, and when she came home she found everything topsy turvey. The beds were all mussed up, and there was not a thing hung up anywhere. She called the bad boy and asked him what in the deuce had been going on, and he made it pleasant for his Pa about as follows:

"Well, Ma, I know I will get killed, but I shall die like a man. When Pa met you at the depot he looked too innocent for any kind of use, but he's a hard citizen, and don't you forget it. He hasn't been home a single night till after eleven o'clock, and he was tired every night, and he had somebody come home with him."

"O, heavens, Hennery," said the mother, with a sigh, "are you sure about this?"

"Sure!" says the bad boy, "I was on to the whole racket. The first night they came home awful tickled, and I guess they drank some of your Sozodont, cause they seemed to foam at the mouth. Pa wanted to put his friend in the spare bed, but there were no sheets on it, and he went to rumaging around in the drawers for sheets. He got out all the towels and table-cloths, and, made up the bed with table-cloths, the first night, and in the morning the visitor kicked because there was a big coffee stain on the tablecloth sheet. You know that tablecloth you spilled the coffee on last spring, when Pa scared you by having his whiskers cut off. O, they raised thunder around the room. Pa took your night-shirt, you know the one with the lace work all

down the front, and put a pillow in it, and set it on a chair, then took a burned match and marked eyes and nose on the pillow, and put your bonnet on it, and then they had a war dance. Pa hurt the bald spot on his head by hitting it against the gas chandelier, and then he said dammit. Then they threw pillows at each other. Pa's friend didn't have any night shirt, and Pa gave his friend one of your'n, and the friend took that old hoop-skirt in the closet, the one Pa always steps on when he goes in the close, after a towel and hurts his bare foot, you know, and put it on under the night shirt, and they walked around arm in arm. O, it made me tired to see a man Pa's age act so like a darn fool."

"Hennery," says the mother, with a deep meaning in her voice, "I want to ask you one question. Did your Pa's friend *wear a dress?*"

"O, yes," said the bad boy, coolly, not noticing the pale face of his Ma, "the friend put on that old blue dress of yours, with the pistol pocket in front, you know, and pinned a red cloth on for a train, and they danced the can-can."



HIS PA DANCES THE CAN-CAN.

Just at this point Pa came home to dinner, and the bad boy said, "Pa, I was just telling Ma what a nice time you had that first night she went away, with the pillows, and—"

"Hennery!" says the old gentleman severely, "you are a confounded fool."

"Izick," said the wife more severely, "Why did you bring a female home with you that night. Have you got no—"

"O, Ma," says the bad boy, "it was not a woman. It was young Mr. Brown, Pa's clerk at the store, you know."

"O!" said Mas with a smile and a sigh.

"Hennery," said his stern parent, "I want to see you there by the coal bin for a minute or two. You are the gaul durndest fool I ever see. What you want to learn the first thing you do is to keep your mouth shut," and then they went on with the frugal meal, while Hennery seemed to feel as though something was coming.

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THE BAD BOY'S FOURTH OF JULY—PA IS A POINTER NOT A SETTER—
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"How long do you think it will be before your father will be able to come down to the office?" asked the druggist of the bad boy as he was buying some arnica and court plaster.

"O, the doc. says he could come down now if he would on some street where there were no horses to scare," said the boy as he bought some gum, "but he says he aint in no hurry to come down till his hair grows out, and he gets some new clothes made. Say, do you wet this court plaster and stick it on?"

The druggist told him how the court plaster worked, and then asked him if his Pa couldn't ride down town.

"Ride down? well, I guess nix. He would have to set down if he rode down town, and Pa is no setter this trip, he is a pointer. That's where the pinwheel struck him."

"Well how did it all happen?" asked the druggist, as he wrapped a yellow paper over the bottle of arnica, and twisted the ends, and then helped the boy stick the strip of court plaster on his nose.

“Nobody knows how it happened but Pa, and when I come near to ask him about it he feels around his night shirt where his pistol pocket would be if it was pants he had on, and tells me to leave his sight forever, and I leave too, quick. You see he is afraid I will get hurt every 4th of July, and he told me if I wouldn’t fire a fire-cracker all day he would let me get four dollars’ worth of nice fire-works and he would fire them off for me in the evening in the back yard. I promised, and he gave me the money and I bought a dandy lot of fire-works, and don’t you forget it. I had a lot of rockets and Roman candles, and six pin-wheels, and a lot of nigger chasers, and some of these cannon fire-crackers, and torpedoes, and a box of parlor matches. I took them home and put the package in our big stuffed chair and put a newspaper over them.

“Pa always takes a nap in that stuffed chair after dinner, and he went into the sitting room and I heard him driving our poodle dog out of the chair, and heard him ask the dog what he was a-chewing, and just then the explosion took place, and we all rushed in there, I tell you what I honestly think. I think that dog was chewing that box of parlor matches. This kind that pop so when you step on them. Pa was just going to set down when the whole air was filled with dog, and Pa, and rockets, and everything.”