

**BOB'S
"BREAKING IN"**

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Bob's "Breaking In" by Eleanor Putnam

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ELEANOR PUTNAM

**BOB'S
"BREAKING IN"**



BOB IS CALLED UPON TO MEET HIS DOOM.

BOB'S "BREAKING IN."

BY

ELEANOR PUTNAM.

Illustrations by Helen M. Child

(WITH OTHER STORIES BY FAVORITE AUTHORS.)



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† BOB'S "BREAKING IN."

"WHY don't you write a story, Tom?" said Jim.

"Can't," said I; "never did such a thing in my life."

You see the beginning of it all was Jim's coming home for a three months' leave. Jim's in the navy and just home from Japan. So he came to see us, and so I broke my leg. When we came home from school we had planned no end of larks for the vacation, what with the Christmas tree and sleighing and skating and coasting, and making candy over to Aunt Lewes', and going into Boston to Pinafore and having Charlotte-russe at Parker's, and all the rest.

So the first thing I did the very night after we got home, was to fall through a bad place in the stable

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floor and break my leg, and Will said it was lucky it wasn't one of the horses. Of course that finished my fun, for I could not go anywhere with the rest, but just had to lie there with my leg in splints; and though of course I had my presents just the same, I was mad all the vacation.

It wasn't any great fun, you'd better believe, to lie on a lounge and stick in the house and see Will going everywhere and having no end of jolly times every day.

Then when the Saturday came for him to go back to Dr. Thomas's and leave me behind, and I thought of seeing all the fellows and hearing what they had for presents and all that, I concluded that if I'd been well I'd have been glad for once in my life even to go back to school. It wasn't that I didn't have enough done for me either, for mother and Jennie, the cook, almost cured me of ever liking cream cakes and jam again, by the heaps of it they gave me. Nell made me more neckties than I can wear in ten years, and played backgammon by the hour. Father brought me a new book from the city nearly every night, and Jim told me more stories — "yarns" he called them — and he and I made the most complete man-of-war that ever was seen in these parts. So you can see that I was not neglected, but I tell you there's nothing like being well and having two whole

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legs to stand on. I'd got pretty tired of reading and jig-sawing and painting, and one afternoon I'd been telling them about the time we broke Bob Richards in at school, and says Jim :

"Tom, old fellow," says he, "why don't you write a story. Write it all out, and send it for publication ; you never know what you can do till you try," says he.

I thought I couldn't at first, but the next day Jim had to drive over to Medford, and Nell had to go too to match mother's gray dress and get some red ribbons for the dog. They both went off, and mother had a caller down stairs, so I was left all alone, and that's how I came to write about it anyway.

You see our fellows have always had a fashion of giving the new boys a "breaking in." The thing began by just doubling up the bed clothes, or sewing up the fellow's sleeves, and then they got to ducking them and scaring them with ghosts, and when at last they pumped on little Fred Harris and frightened him into brain fever, Dr. Thomas forbade anything more of the sort.

Now when Dr. Thomas says anything he has a way of meaning it, so we fellows were surprised enough when one day Jeff Ryder came into the gym where we were having a circus, and said : "I tell you what

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let's do! Let's give Bob Richards a regular breaking in!"

"Yes I would, Jeff," said Harry Thorndike, in the odd, quiet way he had with him. Harry Thorndike was our head boy, and entered Harvard last summer. "Yes, I would," says he, "and get sent home for a month; it would be no end of fun. I would."

Of course we boys all looked at Jeff when Harry spoke in that way, to see if he didn't feel cheap, but he didn't, a bit.

"I'll take all the blame," says he, "and I'll risk being sent home."

So then he told us all about his plan, and we thought it was a jolly good one too.

Bob Richards was a new fellow; only been there four weeks; and when he first came we thought he was a regular moon-calf. He was rather small of his age and had a kind of pinched, half-starved look, as if he'd never had a good square meal from soup clear through to pudding in his life. He was homesick and lonesome too, and we got into the way of calling him "baby" and "sissy," but he never seemed to mind a bit, but would always help a fellow with his lessons just the same, and was first-class in any game.

One day Ralph Bixby, the bully of the school, said something about Richard's mother, and I just wish