

TO CATCH A CHEAT

VARIAN JOHNSON



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Sequel to: *The Great Greene Heist*.

Summary: Because of his reputation for practical jokes Jackson Greene is the automatic suspect for anything that goes wrong at school — but when he and his friends are framed for a crime they did not commit, Gang Greene sets out to expose the students responsible, who are trying to blackmail Jackson into helping them cheat on an important test.

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a TEST OF WILLS

Jackson Greene placed his pen on his desk, loosened his red tie, then flipped the page on his American history exam. It was only a practice test, but Mrs. Clark had promised that any student who scored above 95 percent would automatically be excused from her brutal end-of-the semester final. That was supposed to serve as an incentive for students to study over the winter break.

Given the moans, groans, and grunts echoing around the room, Jackson guessed that everyone would be taking the final exam. Including him.

He had just reached question forty-one out of fifty when Becca Simpson, the first period office helper, entered the room and handed Mrs. Clark a note.

"I'm sorry," the teacher said to Becca after she had switched on a desk lamp to read the message, "but the principal will have to wait until Jackson finishes his exam." Her eyes locked on to Jackson. "Eyes on your desk, Mr. Greene!"

Jackson sighed and returned to his exam as the office

helper left the room. Of course Dr. Kelsey wanted to see him — Jackson was always his number-one suspect when something went wrong at the school. Still, it would have been nice to go at least one full day after returning from winter break without seeing the principal.

A few minutes later, the timer on the teacher's desk buzzed.

Rob Richards slammed down his pen. "Forty minutes already?" He turned to his best friend, Thom Jordan. "I was sure we had —"

"No talking!" Mrs. Clark said, crossing her arms. "Or do you two need another reminder of my rules?"

"No, ma'am," both Rob and Thom mumbled.

Jackson shook his head. Sneaking a glance at Mrs. Clark was one thing, but *talking* during one of her exams? No way. The rumor was, the last time someone spoke during a test, she ripped the student's paper in half and kicked him out of the room.

Mrs. Clark passed through the rows of students, picking up each test and pen. She locked everything up in her file cabinet and slipped the ring of keys into her pocket.

"The final exam is in less than two weeks. Given the answers I saw as I walked around the room, I'd suggest you start studying *now*." She made her way to the front of the class. "Everyone turn to page eighty-five in the text. Except you, Mr. Greene," she said. "You're wanted in the main office."

Jackson grabbed his book bag and glanced at Hashemi Larijani, who sat a few seats behind him. Hashemi offered him a sympathetic look before turning back to his desk.