

Billy Bunter's Bad Luck



FRANK RICHARDS



The Greedy Owl . . .

Bunter grumbled that having 400 lines to write on a hot afternoon was altogether too thick. And though he wasn't a fellow to take chances, all he had to do to escape was pretend to be Lord Mauleverer.

But he soon discovers the drawbacks of being a peer of the realm, and a millionaire, *and* the owner of a rare collection of Egyptian antiquities.

Imagine Bunter's terror when he discovers that the smooth-talking Greek has lured him aboard his yacht to kidnap him, and not for the super tea that the gluttonous owl had been dreaming of! And all this nonsense over some wretched ancient scarab.

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Billy Bunter's Bad Luck

Frank Richards

Armada

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**CHAPTER ONE
TROUBLE FOR BUNTER!**

RAP!

“Whooooop!”

Billy Bunter, sagging over his desk in the Remove Form Room at Greyfriars, was half asleep — until Mr. Quelch's pointer rapped on his fat knuckles. Then he was suddenly awake — very wide-awake indeed.

It was quite a loud rap! But it was not so loud as the yell that followed it. That yell woke every echo in the Form-room, and a good many beyond.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was cross that morning. He was suffering from that end-of-the-term feeling — a common complaint among schoolmasters. And it was hot — the hottest day in July. A wasp had sailed in at the open window, and was buzzing about, with an irritating buzz. Twice Mr. Quelch had swiped at that wasp with his pointer, and missed. When he swiped at Bunter he did not miss.

Bunter was sleepy. Even energetic fellows in the Remove felt the drowsy heat a little. Billy Bunter felt it a lot. Never had Latin prose seemed so prosy to Bunter. Quelch's voice, in his fat ears, was merely an irritating buzz — just like that of the wasp.

Bunter nodded, and nodded, and his little, round eyes closed behind his big round spectacles, and he was just sliding happily into a delicious dream of ginger-pop and doughnuts, when that rap on his knuckles brought him back, with a jump, to reality.

“Ow, ow! Wow!” gasped Bunter, sucking his fat knuckles frantically.

“*You* must not go to sleep in the Form-room, Bunter!” said Mr. Quelch.

“I — I wasn't asleep!” gasped Bunter.

“What? Your eyes were shut!”

“I — I listen better with my eyes shut!” gasped Bunter. “I — I heard every word you said, sir! Wow!”

“Oh!” said Mr. Quelch grimly. “In that case, Bunter, repeat my last sentence.”

“Oh! I — I — I mean ” stammered the hapless Owl of the Remove.

“You will take fifty lines for untruthfulness, Bunter.”

“Oh crikey!”

“And do not utter ridiculous ejaculations in the Form-room!” thundered Mr. Quelch.

“Oh, sir! No, sir! Oh lor’ — I — I — I mean, oh, jiminy!

“Silence!”

Mr. Quelch stalked away from that hopeful pupil, leaving Bunter sucking his knuckles. Remove fellows who had been feeling drowsy, and disinclined for Latin prose on a sultry July morning, sat up and took notice. Evidently Quelch had to be treated, with tact that morning. He was in a mood to hand out lickings and detentions. And that afternoon was a half-holiday — the last half-holiday of the term. Nobody wanted detentions.

Bob Cherry closed one eye at his chums as the Remove master’s back was turned for the moment.

“Ware beaks!” murmured Bob. “The jolly old bean’s got his jolly old back up!”

It was the faintest of whispers, and ought to have been audible only to Harry Wharton, to whom it was addressed. But Henry Samuel Quelch seemed amazingly keen of hearing that morning. He spun round, and fixed his eyes, as penetrating as a pair of gimlets, on Bob Cherry.

“Cherry!”

“Oh crumbs!” gasped Bob, in dismay. “I mean, yes, sir!”

“Were you talking in class, Cherry?”

“I — I — I —”

“Were you talking in class, or were you not talking in class, Cherry?” demanded Mr. Quelch categorically.

“Oh, yes, sir! I — I just whispered to Wharton —”

“You will take a hundred lines, Cherry!”

“Oh! Yes, sir!”

“You will hand them to me before tea,” added Mr. Quelch.

“Oh!” gasped Bob.

There was no more whispering in class. Wharton and Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh, gave their chum sympathetic glances. The Famous Five had planned an excursion for that afternoon; but lines to be handed in before tea meant that Bob would have to stay within gates till they were done. Mr. Quelch was suffering from the end-of-the-term feeling, and now Bob was going to suffer from it, too!

Latin prose resumed its prosy course. The Remove longed for the end of third school. Perhaps Mr. Quelch was as anxious to be done with his Form, as his Form were to be done with him. But Quelch was a dutiful Form master, and he never slacked, or allowed slacking. On that blazing morning the Remove could have done quite well with a less dutiful master.

BZZZZZZ!

The wandering wasp was still busy.

Mr. Quelch turned his gimlet eyes on that wasp.

But the gimlet eyes that could almost petrify the Remove, had no effect whatever on the wasp. The cheerful insect buzzed about the Form-room, regardless of Henry Samuel Quelch. It sailed within two inches of Mr. Quelch’s nose, and the Remove master swiped with the pointer, and missed. It sailed cheerily over the heads of the Form, with a continuous buzzing.

“Shall I swat that wasp, sir?” asked Vernon-Smith hopefully.

Chasing a wasp would have been ever so much more entertaining than Latin prose.

The whole Remove would gladly have joined in such a chase. But Mr. Quelch was too old a bird to be caught with chaff like that.

“You will remain in your place, Vernon-Smith!” snapped the Remove master.

“Wary old bird!” murmured the Bounder to Tom Redwing, who sat beside him.

“What did you say, Vernon-Smith?” Undoubtedly Quelch’s ears were remarkably keen that morning.

“I said I was sorry the wasp should annoy you, sir!” answered Vernon-Smith meekly.

Mr. Quelch gave him a suspicious look. He did not quite believe that that was what Smithy had said to Redwing.

Buzzzzzz!

“Yarooooh!” roared Billy Bunter, as Skinner, on the form near him, surreptitiously tickled him behind a fat ear with a penholder.

“Bunter!”

“Ow! It’s the wops —”

“I mean the wasp! Ow! It’s on me!” yelled Bunter, jumping up. “Ow! I’m stung! Yaroooooooh!”

“Sit down, Bunter!” thundered Mr. Quelch. “You are not stung! The wasp is not near you! Take a hundred lines!”

“Oh, crikey! I — I thought I was stung!” gasped Bunter. “Something touched my ear! I think it was the wasp, sir

“Silence!”

“Oh, really, sir —”

“I shall cane you if you speak again, Bunter.”

Billy Bunter did not speak again. He rubbed his fat ear, and grunted. Skinner smiled serenely and winked at Snoop. The wasp sailed to the window, and drummed on the glass with a ceaseless buzz. Billy Bunter blinked round uneasily. He was sure that the wasp had touched him — and he was afraid that the insect might touch him again.

Wasp stings were neither grateful nor comforting.

“Bunter,” yapped Mr. Quelch, “sit still!”

“Oh dear! I — I’m afraid of that wasp, sir ——”

“Silence!”

Billy Bunter sat still, listening with uneasy ears to the buzz. The wasp, discovering that he could not get through the glass, left the window, and buzzed over the heads of the juniors once more. The playful Skinner, reaching behind Bunter, tapped the back of his fat neck with the pen-holder.

“Whoooooop!”

Bunter fairly bounded.

The form rocked, books went crashing to the floor, and ink spurted from an inkwell.

Bunter clasped the back of his neck and roared.

“Ow! I’m stung! Yaroooop! Whoooooop!”

“Bunter!” shrieked Mr. Quelch.



"Whooop!" yelled Bunter. "I'm stung on the back of the neck!"

"I'm stung!" yelled Bunter. "Stung on the back of the neck! Oow! Wow! Yow! I knew that wasp was going to sting me! Yaroooooh!"

"I do not believe that the wasp touched you, Bunter!" hooted Mr. Quelch,

"Ow! It did! I'm stung — stung in the neck! My neck's swelling — swelling fearfully —" howled Bunter. "I can feel it swelling —"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

Mr. Quelch made a stride to Bunter, grabbed him by the fat shoulder, and stared at the back of his podgy neck. There was no sign of a sting — and certainly no swelling.

"Bunter! You are not stung! You are deliberately playing tricks to interrupt the lesson! You are a young rascal, sir!"

"Ow! I — I thought I was stung

"Nonsense! You will take three hundred lines, Bunter ——"

"Oh, lor'!"

"And you will remain in the Form-room this afternoon to write them out. And if you make another sound during class, I shall cane you."

"Ow!"

The wasp, having found the open window at last, sailed out into the quad, and the buzzing ceased. But Mr. Quelch continued to drone, till, at long last, third school came to an end, and the Remove were dismissed — much to the satisfaction of both Form and Form master.

CHAPTER TWO THE MAN FROM THE YACHT!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Br-r-r-r-r-r!"

After dinner, Harry Wharton & Co. gathered by the House steps, to consult. It had been the intention of the Famous Five to get out immediately after dinner, and make the most of the last half-holiday of the term. That programme was rather upset by Bob Cherry's detention. Remarks from Billy Bunter were not required while the chums of the Remove discussed the matter. But the plans of the Famous Five were, of course, a trifle light as air, from the point of view of William George Bunter. Billy Bunter had three hundred lines on hand, which meant detention for the afternoon; and that was the most important matter, at the moment, within the wide limits of the universe.

"I say "recommended Bunter.

"Shut up, old fat bean," said Harry Wharton. "Look here, Bob, we'd better wait till you get

through —”

“The waitfulness for the idiotic Bob is the proper caper,” agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

“No good you fellows hanging about,” he said. “You’d better start, and I’ll get after you when I’ve done those dashed lines. You can get the boat ready —”

“I say, you fellows!”

“Shut up, Bunter! You’ll have to arrange about the boat at Pegg,” said Bob. “That will take some time. I’ll join you as soon as I can, and trot all the way.”

“I say, you fellows!” bawled Bunter, “You seem to have forgotten that I’ve got lines.”

“Dry up, old fat bean!”

“But I shan’t be able to come with you fellows if I have to stick in the Form-room doing lines!” hooted Bunter.

“We’ll try to survive it somehow,” said Johnny Bull sarcastically. “We may be able to pull through.”

“Oh, really, Bull! I suppose you want me to come for the trip on Pegg Bay!” said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five through his big spectacles.

“What on earth put that idea into your head?” asked Frank Nugent, in surprise.

“Oh, really, Nugent! Now, look here, you fellows,” said Bunter. “Three hundred lines will keep me till tea-time, and that means that you fellows will lose my company for the afternoon. You’d hardly like that, on the last half-holiday of the term.”

“Oh, my hat!”

“My idea is to whack out the lines,” explained Bunter. “I’ll do fifty — I’m no slacker, I hope — and you fellows do fifty each. That will be fair all round. You can make your fists like mine — near enough to pass! Ten to one Quelch won’t spot anything. See?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“What are you cackling at?” demanded Bunter.

“Your little joke, old bean.”

“I’m not joking, you asses! It’s the only way — otherwise, I can’t come! It means a licking if Quelch spots it — but I’ll chance that.”

“And we’re to chance it, too?” grinned Nugent.

“Exactly! Is it a go?” asked Bunter.

“The go-fulness is not terrific!” chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

“And, look here, you fellows,” said Bunter impressively. “I hope you’re not going to be beastly selfish! I never could stand selfishness. Look here, you stand by me in this, and I’ll tell you what I’ll do — I’ll ask the lot of you home to Bunter Court for the holidays. There!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! It will be rather a change for you, after your own humble homes, you know!”

“That’s settled, then,” said Harry Wharton. “We’ll trot down to Pegg, and you can trot after us when you’re done, Bob.”

“What about me?” hooted Bunter.

“Nothing about you, old fat bean.”

“I say, you fellows, I mean it!” said Bunter. “I’ll have the lot of you at Bunter Court, and it will be a chance for you fellows to mix, for once, in some really decent society, you know. Dash it all, I’ll ask the pater to let us have a run in his yacht!” added Bunter recklessly.

“Ha, ha, ha!” roared the Famous Five.

Bunter Court, which was Bunter's magnificent name for his father's detached villa in Surrey, was well known in the Remove. But the Bunter yacht was new. That day a handsome steam-yacht had been seen to drop anchor in Pegg Bay, a couple of miles from the school. Possibly that had put the idea into Billy Bunter's fat and fatuous brain.

"I mean it," said Bunter. "How'd you fellows like a yachting cruise these hols — dropping in at Continental ports, and all that —"

"Fine!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ripping!" chortled Johnny Bull,

"The ripfulness would be terrific!"

"Well, I'll work on it!" said Bunter fatuously. "Of course, you fellows aren't really the sort of chaps I should ask "

"Eh?"

"We generally have members of the nobility. But I'll stretch a point! After all, we're pals, and I never was a snob!"

"Oh crikey!"

"It's a go, then," said Bunter. "You fellows come in and whack out my lines "

"Bunter !"

"Oh lor'!" gasped Billy Bunter, spinning round like a fat humming-top at the sound of his Form master's voice.

Mr. Quelch was looking out of the doorway of the House. He was going to remind two members of his Form that it was time to turn up for detention. They might possibly have forgotten it, without a reminder.

"Bunter! Were you asking these juniors to write your lines for you?" asked Mr. Quelch, in an awful voice.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I — I wouldn't, sir! I — I — I like writing lines —"

"What?"

"Especially for you, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Because — because you're so — so nice, sir!"

"Upon my word, Bunter, go into the Form-room at once! You will write four hundred lines, Bunter."

"Oh jimmy!"

"Cherry, you will go in with Bunter." Two hapless Removites went into the House, under the gimlet eye of Henry Samuel Quelch. Four members of the Co. walked away to the gates.

"Too bad!" murmured Nugent. "We shan't get that trip in Bunter's yacht now! What a loss!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The lossfulness will be terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

The four juniors sauntered away cheerfully down the lane, and turned into the footpath through the wood.

Beyond the wood, Pegg Bay and the shining North Sea spread before their eyes. Brown sails danced on the bay in the bright sunlight, and some distance out, a large steam-yacht was at anchor. The juniors looked at it from the beach, feeling that the owner of that magnificent vessel was a man to be envied.

Having arranged with old Dave Trumper for the hire of a boat, and having packed in it a basket of tuck for tea afloat, the juniors sat down on the rail of the old wooden pier, to wait for Bob Cherry to turn up.

From the yacht's davits, a boat had dropped, and two dark-skinned foreign-looking seamen pulled for the shore. In the stern sat a slim, olive-skinned man, in a yachting

cap.

The juniors watched the boat idly as it pulled to the pier, and the seamen hooked on, and the olive-skinned man stepped out. The man, apparently the owner of the yacht, was some sort of a foreigner, though they did not know of what race. He glanced about him, with a pair of eyes that were quick, keen, and intensely black, as he landed, and looked at the four juniors sitting on the rail — and looked again. He seemed to be interested in Harry Wharton & Co. for some reason, why, they could not imagine.

After a long, keen look, he came towards the juniors, and raised his yachting cap in polite salute. Not to be outdone in politeness, the juniors “capped” him in return.

“You will excuse me,” said the foreign gentleman, in a very musical voice, “I am a stranger here, and perhaps you can tell me if there is a school called Greyfriars near at hand?”

“Yes, rather, sir!” answered Harry Wharton, with a smile. “We belong to Greyfriars School. It’s a couple of miles away.”

“Perhaps I can get a conveyance —”

“They’ll phone a taxi if you walk up to the inn yonder, sir.”

“Thank you.” The keen black eyes passed from face to face. “I guessed that perhaps you were Greyfriars boys, seeing you here. Possibly you are acquainted with a boy in the school named Mauleverer — Lord Mauleverer?”

“He’s in our Form — the Remove,” answered Harry.

The foreign gentleman smiled.

“Perhaps one of you is Lord Mauleverer?” he asked.

Wharton smiled, and shook his head.

“No, he’s not with us, sir!”

“Thank you, then I must go to the school,” said the foreign gentleman, and, saluting the juniors again, he walked on quickly towards the Anchor.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked after him, rather curiously.

“What the dickens can that foreign johnny want with old Mauzy?” asked Johnny Bull. “Goodness knows!”

The man from the yacht disappeared into the Anchor. He emerged again in a few minutes, and stood waiting by the old porch, till at length a taxicab came grinding up the road. The yachtsman stepped into the taxi, and was driven rapidly away in the direction of Greyfriars.

He disappeared from the eyes of the juniors on the pier. They wondered what business the foreigner from the yacht could have with Lord Mauleverer of the Greyfriars Remove — little dreaming of the strange events that were destined to happen that sunny afternoon.

CHAPTER THREE BUNTER IN A HURRY!

CRASH!

Bob Cherry threw down his pen, and hurled Virgil across the Form-room.

P. Vergilius Maro dropped into a corner with a crash, unheeded. The hundred lines were done at last, and Bob was done with the great Mantuan.

“Done!” said Bob. “Thank goodness!”

Billy Bunter blinked up at him dolorously.

Bunter had four hundred lines to write, and while Bob was doing a hundred, Bunter had done only ten. With three hundred and ninety still on hand, the fat Owl was not

feeling merry or bright.

“Finished, old chap?” groaned Bunter. “I say, I’ve done only ten of my lot!”

“Slacker!”

“Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, I’m jolly well not going to finish them,” said Bunter.

“I’m fed up!”

“Fathead!”

“I’ll chance it, and come along with you, old bean!” said Bunter.

“Don’t be an ass!” advised Bob. “You can bet that Quelch will have his eyes wide open. It means a licking and detention all the same. Stick to it, old fat bean!”

“Blow Quelch!”

Billy Bunter rose from his desk. There was an expression of deep determination on his fat face.

“Better stick to it,” said Bob. “If Quelch spots you going —”

“Bless Quelch!”

The fat Owl’s mind was made up. Bunter was not, as a rule, a fellow to take chances. But three hundred and ninety more lines, in a stuffy Form-room on a hot July afternoon, were altogether too thick. Bunter was not, perhaps, keen on the sail across the bay, but he was very keen on getting out of anything in the shape of work, and still keener on taking the lion’s share of tea in the boat. Bunter had made up his mind.

“I’m chancing it,” he said. “Look here, old chap —”

“Don’t be a goat!”

“Beast! You take in your lines to Quelch and keep him busy for a few minutes! See? Keep him from looking out of the window while I cut. Ask him something about deponent verbs, or —”

“Catch me!” chuckled Bob. “If I asked him something about deponent verbs, old bean, he might tell me.”

“Oh, really, Cherry! I’ll give you a minute to get to his study,” said the fat Owl.

“Then I’ll start, see? Ask him something about your lines — he likes fellows to be interested in that tripe!”

“Better stick where you are, and do your lines!”

“Beast!”

“If you get spotted

“Rotter!”

“Well, I’ll do my best, if you’ve made up your silly mind to play the silly goat,” said Bob. “But you’d better —”

“You’re wasting time, old chap!” Bunter. “You’re like a sheep’s head, know — nearly all jaw. Get a move on!”

Bob Cherry got a move on. He left the Form-room with his lines in his hand, and made his way to Mr. Quelch’s study.

Billy Bunter waited a whole minute, with his eye on the Form-room clock. Then he tiptoed to the door and peered out.

The passage was deserted.

Few Greyfriars fellows were indoors on that glorious summer’s afternoon. The House was very silent.

Bunter blinked along the passage through his big spectacles, his fat heart beating. Breaking detention was rather a risky business. But by that time, Bob was in the Remove master’s study, and there was no doubt that Mr. Quelch would rise to the bait, if Bob asked him to explain something in Virgil. His eyes would not be on his window, and Bunter needed only a very few minutes to get clear. Exertion did not appeal to William George Bunter, but once he was out of the House, he was prepared

to put on top speed to the gates.

Taking his courage in both hands, as it were, Billy Bunter crept out of the Form-room. A minute later he was blinking out of the open doorway of the House, into the blaze of sunshine.

To reach the gates, he had to pass within full view of Mr. Quelch's study window. But he had no doubt that Bob Cherry was playing up, and that the Remove master was expounding Virgil, in which case his eyes could not be on the quad.

It was neck or nothing, and Bunter chanced it. He rolled down the House steps, and started for the gates at a rapid run. Seldom did Billy Bunter put on speed, but now he fairly flew. His feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as he went.

But it was, as so often happens, a case of more haste less speed. At that terrific burst, Bunter ought to have reached the gates in a minute or so. Naturally, he had not calculated on Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, stepping into the path from under the elms, as Bunter came hurtling by like a charging rhinoceros. Naturally, he had forgotten the existence of Mr. Prout, just as Mr. Prout had forgotten the existence of William George Bunter. They were suddenly reminded of one another's existence, as they established contact.

Bunter crashed, and Prout flew.

"Ooooooh!" spluttered Prout, as he staggered and sat down.

"Yowp!" gurgled Bunter, as he reeled back from the shock.

Prout sat up, gasping.

"I — I — you — you — oooogh — what — oh — ow!" Prout's first remarks were incoherent. "Upon my word! Bless my soul! Bunter —"

"Oh! Ow! Oooooooogh!"

"You — you — how dare you?" gasped Prout. He heaved up his portly form and grasped the fat junior by the collar. "Bunter! I repeat, how dare you rush along the path like — like — like a wild Indian, and — and — ooooch? I shall take you to your Form master, Bunter! Woooooh! I shall insist upon — ooch! — the most exemplary — wooogh — punishment, for this — ugh — gug — gug — this outrageous conduct! Wooooogh!"

"I — I — I say" gasped Bunter. "I — I — I'm in a — a — a hurry"

"Come with me!" boomed Prout.

"Oh crikey!"

In the lowest of spirits, Billy Bunter was led back to the House, with Prout's plump hand on his collar. Prout gasped as he went. Billy Bunter groaned. He was marched into the House, still with the plump hand on his collar; and his spirits were down to zero when they arrived at Mr. Quelch's study door. Prout tapped and opened the door. ". . . per noctem plurima volvens." Mr. Quelch was speaking in the study in his kindest tone.

Seldom — very seldom — did a fellow bringing lines to Mr. Quelch display any personal interest in those lines. Quelch was not in the best of tempers that day, but this naturally had an ameliorating effect on him.

"By night revolving many things, Cherry, you will see — why — what — Mr. Prout — what —"

Mr. Quelch broke off, staring at Prout and Bunter. Bob Cherry stared at them, too. Evidently Bunter had made his dash for freedom — and, equally evidently, he had had no luck. Bob had done his best; he had kept Quelch's eyes off the window, but in vain.

"Mr. Quelch," boomed Prout, "I have brought this boy to you —"

"Bunter, what are you doing out of detention?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "What have

you to say, Bunter?"

"Oh crikey!"

That, apparently, was all Bunter had to say!

"Detention!" repeated Mr. Prout. "Ah, no doubt that was the reason why this boy — this reckless young rascal — was racing down the path like — like a wild Hottentot! I have been knocked over, Mr. Quelch; I have been felled — felled to the earth by this boy —"

"This boy will be punished most severely, Mr. Prout. You may leave him in my hands!"

And Prout rolled away, leaving the unhappy Owl in Mr. Quelch's hands.

Mr. Quelch eyed him like a basilisk.

"So you have broken detention, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! I — I — I —"

"You will bend over that chair, Bunter."

"Oh lor'!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow ow-ow!"

"Silence! As I cannot trust you to remain in the Form-room, Bunter, you will remain in this study and write your lines under my own eyes."

"Ow!"

"You may sit at the table, Bunter. And now, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch with a change of manner, "*per noctem plurima volvens* —"

Really, it was unnecessary for Mr. Quelch to go on expounding Virgil; it was no longer any use, in the circumstances. But Mr. Quelch, being happily unaware why he was expounding Virgil, went on with it; and Bob Cherry listened with as much interest as he could muster for five long minutes. Then he was very kindly dismissed. He gave the fat Owl a commiserating look as he went — receiving in return a doleful and dismal blink. There was no more breaking detention for Bunter! Under his Form master's gimlet eye he was safe!

The hapless Owl settled down to lines; and Bob Cherry left the House, went down to the gates, and started on his way to Pegg.

CHAPTER FOUR LORD MAULEVERER IS WANTED!

TAP!

Mr. Quelch gave a slight grunt, apparently not pleased by the tap on his door.

Billy Bunter, on the other hand, looked up hopefully.

Mr. Quelch was engaged on a pile of papers, and he did not want an interruption.

Billy Bunter was engaged on a pile of lines, and he did want an interruption.

The Remove master was working busily on one side of the study table. Billy Bunter was working busily on the other. If his pen slacked down, a lift of Quelch's eyebrows across the table was sufficient to set it going again. Under Quelch's gimlet eye, even the champion slacker of Greyfriars could not slack.

Bunter could have groaned. He had turned out a hundred lines. The remaining three hundred seemed to stretch in an endless vista before him. Really, it was more than flesh and blood could stand — Billy Bunter's flesh and blood, at all events. Almost was Bunter tempted to make a sudden, reckless dash from the study, regardless of consequences. But not quite. Such a proceeding required more nerve than dwelt within the extensive circumference of William George Bunter.

But a tap on the door was welcome to Bunter's fat ears. Even a minute's interruption was worth something. And if Quelch, by some stroke of fortune, was called away from the study, there was no doubt about what Billy Bunter was going to do. He was going to bolt!

It was Trotter, the House page, who entered, and he brought in a card for Mr. Quelch. Bunter blinked hopefully at the Remove master as he glanced at it. If this meant a visitor for Quelch, it meant a chance for the Owl of the Remove.

"Kalizelos!" Mr. Quelch read the name on the card aloud, evidently surprised to read a Greek name there. Mr. Quelch had an extensive acquaintance among the ancient Greeks, but he was not acquainted with any modern Greeks.

"I've showed the gentleman into the visitors' room, sir," said Trotter.

"Very good," said Mr. Quelch. "But why have you brought this card to me, Trotter, instead of taking it to the headmaster?"

"The gentleman asked to see Lord Mauleverer's master, sir," answered Trotter, "and his lordship being in your Form, sir —"

"Oh, quite so!" said Mr. Quelch, evidently puzzled, however. "Very well, Trotter, tell Mr. Kalizelos I will be with him in a few minutes."

"Yessir!"

Trotter retired.

Mr. Quelch laid the card on the table and proceeded to finish the paper on which he had been engaged when the interruption came. Mr. Kalizelos, whoever he was, had to wait a few minutes.

Billy Bunter blinked inquisitively at the card.

He had never heard of Mr. Kalizelos before, as obviously Mr. Quelch never had; and that gentleman's visit did not concern the Owl of the Remove in the very least, but Bunter was always inquisitive.

K. KALIZELOS.
Dealer in Antiques.

That was the inscription on the card,

What on earth a dealer in antiques could want with Lord Mauleverer, of the Greyfriars Remove, was rather a mystery; but it was clear that his business must be with Mauly, as he had asked for Mauly's Form master,

Mr. Quelch rose from the table at last and picked up the card again. He turned to the door and then turned back to Bunter. The fat Owl scribbled industriously, wondering whether the beast guessed his secret thoughts.

"Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"You will not leave this study during my absence, Bunter."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"I shall be absent a very short time, Bunter. I shall expect you to have made due progress with your lines when I return."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch gave him a rather grim look and left the study. He walked away to the visitors' room. In that apartment he found his unexpected visitor awaiting him.

A slim, olive-skinned man was seated by the big window that looked on the quadrangle. His dark face was handsome in its own foreign way; his eyes, of an intense black, fixed keenly on the Form master. He was a total stranger to the Remove master and to Greyfriars, though, as it happened, there were four Greyfriars juniors

who had seen him. It was the man who had landed from the yacht in Pegg Bay, and spoken to Harry Wharton & Co. on the old pier.

“Mr. Kalizelos?” asked Mr. Quelch, with a glance at the card in his hand and another at the olive-skinned yachtsman.

“Precisely, my dear sir!” said the man from the yacht. He spoke in excellent English, in a low and melodious voice. “I beg a thousand pardons for this intrusion —”

“Not at all, sir,” said Mr. Quelch. “If you will kindly state your business I —”

“I desire to see Lord Mauleverer, who, I understand, is one of your pupils, sir,” said Mr. Kalizelos.

“I am Mauleverer’s Form master,” answered Mr. Quelch; “but I must inquire what business you may have with a Greyfriars boy, sir, as you are a stranger to me.”

Mr. Kalizelos smiled, showing a gleam of dazzling white teeth under his little black moustache.

“Perfectly, sir! I quite understand that! My card tells you that I am a dealer in antiques. I am chiefly interested in Egyptian antiquities.”

“No doubt. But —”

“The late Lord Mauleverer, sir, your estimable pupil’s father, was, as perhaps you are aware, a distinguished Egyptologist, and made many explorations, years ago, in the tombs of the ancient kings of Egypt.”

“I have heard so. But —”

“His late lordship’s collection of Egyptian relics is now at Mauleverer Towers,” continued Mr. Kalizelos. “By the kindness of Sir Reginald Brooke, Lord Mauleverer’s guardian, I have been enabled to see them — a very great pleasure to me, sir.”

“Quite, but—”

“It was my desire, sir, to take photographs of certain articles in the collection,” explained Mr. Kalizelos. “Sir Reginald Brooke had no objection, but he considered, very properly indeed, that Lord Mauleverer’s permission should be given.”

“Oh!” said Mr. Quelch.

“I can scarcely doubt, sir, that his lordship will give me this permission,” said Mr. Kalizelos. “If I may speak a few words to him, I am sure that he will have no objection to make. Sir Reginald Brooke, indeed, has assured me that making the request is merely a matter of form, and that his ward will give me permission at once for the photographs to be taken of the articles at his magnificent home, sir.”

Mr. Quelch smiled.

“I have no doubt of it,” he answered.

“You are very kind,” said Mr. Kalizelos. “I apologise a hundred times, sir, for taking up your valuable time.”

“Not at all, Mr. Kalizelos,” said the Remove master. “But as to-day is a half-holiday, it is possible that Lord Mauleverer is not within gates. If you will wait, I will ascertain whether the boy is in the House, and, if so, you may certainly see him.”

“I can only thank you, sir!” said Mr. Kalizelos, in his musical voice, and Mr. Quelch left the visitors’ room, leaving Mr. Kalizelos with a smile of polite satisfaction on his olive face.

But as soon as the door closed behind the Greyfriars master the expression on Mr. Kalizelos’ face changed very much.

The smile disappeared, as if wiped away by a duster; the lines of the olive face hardened, and a glitter came into the deep black eyes. The Greek breathed hard and deep.

“At last!” he muttered, half-aloud, a remark that certainly would have astonished Mr. Quelch had he heard it, and might have caused him to suspect that the handsome

Greek was something else as well as a dealer in antiques — and that he had business with Lord Mauleverer that he had not stated to Lord Mauleverer's Form master. The Greek did not sit down again. He stood with his eyes on the door, watching it for the expected schoolboy to enter — and the look on his face was that of a watching tiger.

CHAPTER FIVE BUNTER THE NOBLEMAN!

BILLY BUNTER put a bullet head out of Mr. Quelch's study doorway, and blinked along the corridor through his big spectacles.

Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way — and there was no man! For the second time that afternoon Bunter was going to "chance" it. He hoped for better luck at the second attempt.

With that beast, Quelch, jawing to somebody in the visitors' room, it seemed probable that the coast would be clear. Billy Bunter waited in the doorway, watching and listening, with his fat heart thumping. But he screwed up his courage at last and rolled out.

This time he did not go at a rush. He almost tiptoed his way down the long corridor. Neither did he intend to leave by the door on the quad. The fat Owl's idea was to scuttle up to the Remove passage, and leave by the box-room window at the back of the House. Hoping that Quelch was still safe with his unexpected visitor, Bunter reached the stairs and started up.

Then he halted.

On the next flight of stairs above he sighted a familiar form. It was that of Mr. Quelch, going upstairs. Fortunately, his back was to Bunter, and he did not think of glancing round. Billy Bunter gave one horrified blink at his Form master's back, and gasped, and turned, and fairly flew.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He had supposed that Mr. Quelch was still in the visitors' room. Apparently, however, the Remove master had already got through with Mr. Kalizelos, and Bunter concluded that that gentleman was gone.

But for the fact that Quelch, for some reason, was going up to the Remove studies, Bunter might have met him face to face!

He shuddered at the thought.

The fat junior blinked at the open doorway of the House. In the quad, only a short distance from the steps, the portly figure of Mr. Prout was in sight, in conversation with Mr. Wiggins.

Bunter backed hastily away from the door. Prout knew that he was detained — and he did not want to catch Prout's eye again.

"Oh lor'!" murmured Bunter.

Quelch, above, cut him off from the Remove passage; Prout, outside, cut him off from the quad. And any minute Quelch might come down, or Prout might come in.

Moments were precious.

In sheer desperation, the fat junior crossed to the door of the visitors' room.

That apartment had windows on the quad, and it would be easy to watch for an opportunity, when the coast was clear, and drop from one of the windows, as the room was on the ground floor. And if Quelch missed him from his study, he would not be likely to look for him in the visitors' room — at least, Bunter hoped so.

It was a case of any port in a storm. Bunter hesitated, with his fat paw on the door-

handle. A portly shadow fell across the sunlight from the quad — Mr. Prout was coming in.

That decided Bunter. A few moments more, and Prout would see him — and the game would be up! Swiftly he turned the door handle, opened the door of the visitors' room, stepped inside, and closed the door after him.

“Lord Mauleverer!” said a musical voice.

Bunter jumped.

As he had seen Quelch going up to the junior studies, he had taken it for granted that Quelch's caller was gone. It had not occurred to his fat brain that Mr. Kalizelos might be waiting alone in the visitors' room for any reason. He had no doubt that the room was empty.

But it was not empty.

A slim, lithe, olive-skinned man stood looking at Bunter, bowing, with a smile on his face. The tiger's look with which Mr. Kalizelos had watched the door vanished as the door opened, and he was instantly the polite, smiling antique dealer again.

Bunter blinked at him.

He was too startled to speak for a moment.

Mr. Kalizelos bowed with foreign grace, his black eyes on the fat junior.

“I thank your lordship for giving me a few minutes of your lordship's time,” he said.

Bunter blinked.

His fat brain was not quick on the uptake; but he remembered, from what had been said in Mr. Quelch's study, that Mr. Kalizelos had called in reference to Lord Mauleverer.

It dawned on him that the foreign gentleman was waiting for Mr. Quelch to send Mauleverer to him, or bring him to the visitors' room.

The Greek's mistake was natural. He was waiting there for Lord Mauleverer, and when a schoolboy entered he naturally supposed that it was Mauleverer. The room obviously was not one that was used by junior schoolboys, except to see visitors in. Bowing and smiling, the Greek came nearer to Bunter.

His keen black eyes scanned the fat face, as if with the intention of memorising his supposed lordship's features.

“Oh!” ejaculated Bunter. “You — you're waiting to — to see —”

“I am waiting to see you, my lord!” said Mr. Kalizelos, with another bow. “I have not had the pleasure of seeing you before, but — you are Lord Mauleverer, my lord?”

Billy Bunter opened his fat lips — and closed them again. He was about to tell the foreign gentleman that he was not Mauleverer; but second thoughts — not always the best — supervened.

Bunter's fat brain was working at full pressure. He had to keep in cover — Prout was in the Hall outside the door. Bunter could not possibly walk out of the visitors' room, with Prout outside. He had to stay where he was, and certainly he could not confide to this foreign gentleman that he was a young rascal under detention, dodging the masters.

Truthfulness had never appealed to William George Bunter. He had no use for it.

Indeed, Remove fellows declared that Bunter never told the truth if he thought that a “whopper” would do. That might be an exaggeration; but undoubtedly Billy Bunter, in moments of difficulty, was prepared to roll out whoppers to any number and any extent. If this merchant thought he was Lord Mauleverer, at least he could stay in the room till the coast was clear. That was enough for Bunter.

“I” began Bunter. “Yes! Of — of course! I — I suppose you're Mr. Kalizelos!”

The fat junior's confused manner caused the Greek to eye him sharply. But if he had

any doubt, it was removed at once by Bunter mentioning his name. Lord Mauleverer, certainly, had never heard of Mr. Kalizelos, and he could only have heard the name from his Form master, who had gone to find him. It was scarcely likely that any other boy at Greyfriars had heard it. Mr. Kalizelos knew nothing, of course, of the fat Owl having been in Mr. Quelch's study when his card was taken in.

"I — I'm glad to see you, Mr. Kalizelos," hurried on Bunter. "N-n-nice afternoon, isn't it?"

The Greek, whose face had hardened and sharpened for a moment as he eyed the fat schoolboy, was all smiles again.

"Oh, quite, my lord!" he said. "We have very warm weather — almost as warm as in my own country."

"What's that?" asked Bunter, not so much from his usual inquisitiveness as from the necessity of saying something.

"Egypt, my lord."

"Egypt!" repeated Bunter, blinking at him. Bunter had a hazy belief that all the inhabitants of Africa were black. "But you're not a darkey."

Mr. Kalizelos stared for a moment. Then he smiled.

"I am a Greek, my lord — an Egyptian Greek. There are many Greeks in Egypt."

"Are there?" said Bunter.

"Descended from the Grecian colony planted in that country by Alexander of Macedon, my lord."

"Oh!" said Bunter. Bunter had heard of Alexander the Great; though the less he learned about that ancient monarch, or any Other, the better Bunter liked it.

"But to come to business, my lord —"

"Oh! Ah! Yes," said Bunter.

He moved across to the window. It was open, and near at hand the quad looked deserted. In the distance Bunter could hear shouting on the cricket ground; but close at hand the coast was clear.

"I took the liberty of calling," said Mr. Kalizelos, following his supposed lordship to the window.

"Oh, yes!" Bunter was in terror every moment of the door opening to reveal Mr. Quelch or Lord Mauleverer. "But the fact is I'm sorry, and all that, but I've got to speak to a chap —"

"But, my lord —"

"He's just gone out of gates!" gasped Bunter. "I — I shall have to cut after him, or — or I shall lose him. Sorry, you know — awfully sorry — can't stop a single moment. With that the fat junior plunged out of the open window and dropped into the quad, under the astonished eyes of the Greek.

Mr. Kalizelos made a swift stride to the window, and watched the fat figure scudding across to the gates.

His black eyes glittered.

What Mr. Kalizelos might think of his peculiar conduct Bunter had no time to consider. The coast was clear, and it was a chance to escape, and that was all that mattered to Bunter.

Only for a moment Mr. Kalizelos stood watching him.

Then he crossed to the door, quitted the room, and walked quickly out of the House.

The taxi in which he had arrived stood on the drive. The Greek spoke a sharp word to the driver.

"You see that fat boy? I wish to speak to him. Follow him!"

"Yessir!"

The Greek stepped into the taxi, and the chauffeur put it in motion at once. Billy Bunter reached the gates and scudded into the road. A moment later the taxi turned out of the gates after him. The Greek's black eyes scintillated with triumph as he looked from the window at the fat figure plugging along the sunny road.

CHAPTER SIX AMAZING!

LORD MAULEVERER yawned. "Don't come in, fathead!" he called out. It was a tap at his study door that drew that remark from his lordship. Lord Mauleverer's elegant form was stretched on his study sofa. Mauly was lazy at the best of times, and on a blazing afternoon in July he was at his laziest. Strenuous fellows like Harry Wharton & Co. might sail on the bay, or knock the ball about on the cricket field. But Herbert Mauleverer preferred his study sofa. Stretched at full length, with his hands clasped behind his noble head, Mauleverer was taking it easy.

The only fly in the ointment was the possibility that some fellow might butt in and disturb his comfortable repose.

Hence his remark as the tap came at his door.

The door opened.

"What?" ejaculated a voice that seemed to have an edge on it.

"Oh, begad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer in dismay.

He leaped from the sofa.

A moment before Lord Mauleverer had looked as if he could hardly move if the alarm-bell rang to announce that the House was on fire. But at the voice of Mr. Quelch he moved like a Jack-in-the-box.

"Oh, sir!" gasped Mauleverer, his cheeks crimson as he blinked in dismay at his Form master.

"I — I — I didn't know it was you, sir."

"I presume not!" barked Mr. Quelch.

"I — I'm awf'ly sorry, sir" stammered the schoolboy earl.

"You should not be idling in your study in this glorious weather, Mauleverer," said Mr. Quelch severely.

"Oh, n-no, sir!" stammered Mauly, "I — I wasn't exactly idlin', sir; I—I was thinkin' out a—a problem, sir."

"Indeed," said Mr. Quelch, his brow clearing. "I am glad to hear that, Mauleverer. I have heard from Mr. Lascelles that your mathematics are far — very far — from satisfactory."

"I — I mean."

"If you are in a difficulty, my boy, I will find time to help you with the problem to which you refer," said Mr. Quelch kindly.

"Oh! Ah! I—I mean, it was the problem of the hols, sir!" gasped the unfortunate slacker of the Remove.

"The what?"

"The holidays, sir. I — I haven't decided about the holidays, and as we break up in a few days I was thinkin' —"

"You are a foolish and absurd boy, Mauleverer!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"You should not be idling indoors. However, it is fortunate, in a way, as someone has called to see you, that I have found you in the House," said Mr. Quelch.

“Is it nunky, sir, I — I mean Sir Reginald Brooke?” asked Mauleverer.

“No; it is a Greek gentleman, named Kalizelos,” answered Mr. Quelch.

“Never heard of him, sir.”

“Very probably. It appears, Mauleverer, that this gentleman has been allowed to see your late father’s collection of Egyptian antiquities at Mauleverer Towers, and he desires your permission to take photographs of some of them.”

“He’s very welcome, sir,” answered Lord Mauleverer.

“You may see him, Mauleverer. The man appears to be a respectable antique merchant, but as he is a total stranger here it will be best for you to see him in your Form master’s presence.”

“Very well, sir!”

“You may follow me to the visitors’ room, Mauleverer.”

“Yes, sir.”

Mr. Quelch walked out of the study, and Mauleverer, casting what the poet describes as a “longing, lingering look behind” at his sofa, followed. Lord Mauleverer was more than willing to oblige the Greek gentleman, or any other gentleman, but he was not willing to leave his study sofa for the purpose, but there was no help for that, and he followed the Remove master down the stairs.

They arrived at the visitors’ room, and Mr. Quelch opened the door and walked in, followed by Mauleverer.

“Here is Lord Mauleverer, Mr. Kalizelos!” he said. “Why — what — where Goodness gracious!”

Mr. Quelch stared round the room as if he could hardly believe his own gimlet-eyes — as indeed he hardly could.

The room was empty.

He had left the Greek gentleman waiting there. He had not been gone more than six or seven minutes. But during that short space of time, the Greek gentleman had vanished.

It was amazing, indeed, inexplicable. Mr. Quelch was both astonished and annoyed. Mr. Kalizelos had seemed to him a gentleman with very courtly manners. But this abrupt and inexplicable departure was really shocking bad manners —

“Extraordinary!” said Mr. Quelch. He stared round the room, as if he half-expected to see the Greek gentleman emerge from some corner.

“Is — is he gone, sir?” asked Mauleverer, as astonished as his Form master.

“He certainly appears to be gone, Mauleverer! I cannot understand this at all!” snapped Mr. Quelch.

He whisked out of the room, very much annoyed indeed. Prout was in the offing, and the Remove master called to him.

“Prout! Have you seen anything of a gentleman — a foreign-looking man — who was waiting here?”

Mr. Prout glanced round.

“Certainly, Quelch! He left the visitors’ room a few minutes ago — and went out to his taxi.”

Mr. Quelch stepped to the open door of the House. The taxi was gone. He turned back, frowning.

“This is very remarkable,” he said. “The man called, stating that he had a reason for speaking to Mauleverer; and he seems to have left while I was fetching the boy. It is extremely odd.”

“Very odd, indeed, sir!” said Mr. Prout in surprise. “If you are not acquainted with the person —”

“Not in the least; he was quite a stranger.”

“Then it would be as well to ascertain that nothing is missing — such as the umbrellas —”

Mr. Quelch shook his head, and Mauleverer grinned. The Remove master could not suspect a man of Mr. Kalizelos’ wealthy appearance of nefarious designs on the umbrellas! But he was very puzzled, and very perturbed.

However, there was nothing to be done, and Mr. Quelch was anxious to get back to his study and his pile of papers.

“As the man appears to have left, Mauleverer, you may go,” he said.

“Yes, sir!”

Lord Mauleverer travelled slowly and laboriously back to the Remove passage, and sank down on his study sofa with a sigh of relief — no doubt turning his noble mind once more to the problem of the holidays.

Mr. Quelch, with his lips set, returned to his own study.

There another surprise awaited him.

He fully expected to find that Bunter had been slacking, and had done nothing while he was out of the study. He was prepared, in that case, to give Bunter the keenest edge of his tongue. But Bunter’s chair was vacant, and his pen lay in a sea of blots on his unfinished lines. Bunter was gone!

“Upon my word!” gasped Mr. Quelch.

His face set grimly.

He made a step to the door — and stopped! He realised that the fat truant was likely to be far enough away by that time. Having taken the risk of breaking detention, he was not likely to linger.

Mr. Quelch sat down to his pile of papers again, with an expression on his face that might have curdled the fat Owl’s blood if he could have seen it. Fortunately, William George Bunter could not see it.

CHAPTER SEVEN THE SPIDER AND THE FLY!

“MY lord!”

Billy Bunter blinked round in surprise.

Once safe out of the school gates, Bunter had started down Friardale Lane as fast as his fat little legs could carry him. He heard the buzz of a motor behind him and drew to the side of the lane to let the vehicle pass. But it did not pass; it slowed down, and a musical voice from the window addressed the panting fat junior.

“Oh!” gasped Bunter, as his big spectacles turned on Mr. Kalizelos at the window of the taxi.

For a second, he wondered why the foreigner had followed him. He was at the school to see Mauleverer; and he had not yet seen Mauleverer. But Kalizelos, of course, supposed that Bunter was Mauleverer, as the fat Owl remembered at once. Apparently his business with the schoolboy earl was so urgent that he had followed on from the school.

The olive face of the Greek was smiling. There was no doubt that he was surprised and puzzled by the extraordinary behaviour of the supposed Mauleverer; but he had his own reasons for being pleased by the turn of events. He smiled and bowed from the taxi window.

“I — I say, I — I’m in a hurry,” gasped Bunter, with an anxious blink back towards the school gates. “I — I’ve got to speak to a — a — chap —”

“May I offer your lordship a lift?” asked the Greek.

At that stage in the proceedings, Bunter would have told the Greek that he was not Lord Mauleverer, simply to get rid of the man.

But the offer of a lift banished that thought from his fat mind.

A lift was exactly what Bunter wanted. Whether Mr. Quelch would look for him when he missed him, he did not know; but it was quite possible that he would, or that he would request a Sixth Form prefect to do so. Bunter was anxious to put a safe distance between his fat person and the school. Later, he had to face the music for breaking detention and getting away. That was bad enough. But it would be altogether too bad, if he was hooked back with a hand on his collar, to face the music without having got away at all. The offer of a lift was a windfall to the podgy truant.

“Oh! I say, that’s jolly decent of you,” gasped Bunter.

“Your lordship would like a lift?”

“I’d jolly well like it no end,” said Bunter, with great sincerity, “Just what I’d like! I — I’m in a fearful hurry.”

“Pray step in, my lord.”

Kalizelos opened the taxi door.

Bunter stepped in; hardly able to believe in his good luck! The door closed, and the taxi rolled on again.

“You are looking for a friend, I understand, my lord?” asked the Greek, his keen, black eyes on Bunter’s flushed, podgy face.

“Oh! Ah! Yes!” Bunter had almost forgotten that “whopper” already. “Yes! Quite! But — I — I think I’ve lost him — the fact is, I want to get to Pegg — if you’re going that way

The black eyes glistened.

Even Bunter, obtuse and unobservant as he was, could see that the Greek was glad to hear that he wanted a lift to Pegg. Why, it was a mystery; unless the antique merchant was glad of a chance to oblige a nobleman.

“I am now returning to Pegg, to my yacht there, my lord!” said Kalizelos. “It will be a great pleasure to have your lordship’s company.”

“Oh, good!” said Bunter.

His assumption of Lord Mauleverer’s identity was turning out a better speculation than he had dreamed.

Obviously, this foreign gentleman, polite as he was, would never have offered a lift to a young rascal dodging out of detention. He was happy to offer it to Lord Mauleverer! Bunter sagely resolved to continue to be a peer of the realm, at least, until the seaside village was reached. In the taxi, he was likely to arrive there before Bob Cherry, who was walking. He would be in ample time for the trip in the Remove boat — and what was more important, for the tea in the Remove boat! Billy Bunter was feeling quite elated.

The taxi sped down Friardale Lane towards the village. At the stile on the footpath, a sturdy schoolboy was about to clamber over, to take the path through the wood, a short cut to Pegg. Billy Bunter grinned as he saw Bob Cherry. He had twice as far to go, by road, but he had no doubt of arriving first in the taxi.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” Bob Cherry glanced round and stared at the sight of the fat face in the taxi, “Bunter!”

Bob stared blankly at the fat junior as the taxi came up. He had left Billy Bunter safe under Mr. Quelch’s gimlet-eye, and he was amazed to see him careering along Friardale Lane in the taxi. Bunter grinned at him.

Mr. Kalizelos frowned, for a moment. For reasons of his own, as yet unimagined by

Bunter, the Greek did not want Lord Mauleverer to pick up a friend en route. To his relief, Bunter did not ask him to stop. He waved a fat hand to Bob, and the taxi whizzed on.

Bob stared. He turned from the stile and shouted to the fat Owl.

“Hold on! If you’re going to Pegg, give a fellow a lift, old fat man.”

Bunter did not seem to hear.

The taxi whizzed on.

If Bob Cherry had entered the taxi it would not have been many minutes before Kalizelos discovered that “Lord Mauleverer” was not Lord Mauleverer at all; and the lift to Pegg would have been a thing of the past.

So Bunter judiciously turned a deaf ear to Bob Cherry.

“Hold on, you fat sweep!” roared Bob.

Bunter grinned. The taxi swept on towards Friardale.

“My hat! The fat worm!” growled Bob Cherry, in disgust. And he turned back to the stile, clambered over it, and proceeded by the short cut through the wood at a rapid trot.

Kalizelos glanced curiously at his “lordship.”

“That was a schoolfellow of your lordship’s” he remarked.

“Oh! Yes,” said Bunter. “Not the man I was — was looking for! Never mind him — he can walk.”

Billy Bunter leaned back, glad of the rest after his exertions, and taking his fat ease. He was safe from pursuit now, and safely booked for a free ride to Pegg.

Nothing could have happened better, from Billy Bunter’s point of view, at least. And now that his fat mind was at ease, Billy Bunter’s inquisitive curiosity was awakened. The olive-skinned Kalizelos was rather an unusual sort of visitor for a Greyfriars fellow, and his business with Lord Mauleverer must be rather important and pressing, as he had hurried after his supposed lordship from the school.

Everybody’s business but his own had a deep interest for Billy Bunter, and as the Greek believed him to be Mauly, he had only to ask to learn all about it. Never had a Paul Pry, in fact, had a better opportunity for satisfying his curiosity.

He blinked at the handsome olive face of the Greek, finding that the black eyes were watching him stealthily.

“Let’s see, what was it you came to see me for, Mr. Kalizelos?” asked Bunter breezily. “We can talk now.”

“Oh, quite, your lordship!” said Mr. Kalizelos. He was watching the fat, obtuse face with a calculating eye. “But we shall be at Pegg in a few minutes. My yacht is there —”

“That yacht yours?” asked Bunter, with interest. “I’ve heard the fellows talking about it. Mauly says it’s a ripping yacht.”

“Mauly!” repeated Mr. Kalizelos.

Bunter caught his breath.

Billy Bunter lived and moved and had his being in spooft; but although he belonged to the class of persons who should proverbially have good memories, Bunter had a bad one — and he was liable to give himself away at any moment.

“A — a — a pal of mine!” he stammered, thankful that he had said Mauly and not Mauleverer. “Chap named — named Maulson — we call him Mauly for short. I say, you must do jolly well out of the secondhand business if you keep a yacht on it!”

Kalizelos looked at him.

This sort of fatuous impertinence was part and parcel of Billy Bunter’s fascinating character; but it was not what was to be expected from a peer of the realm.

But it was not the Greek's cue to be offended by bad manners. Only for a second the smile faded from his olive face.

"We make our small profits, my lord," he said smoothly.

"Jolly big profits, I should think, to keep a yacht!" said Bunter. "Shouldn't have thought there was so much in secondhand furniture."

The Greek's black eyes gleamed for a moment.

"I am an antique dealer, my lord," he said. "In Cairo I have a large establishment. That is why I am interested in your lordship's collection of Egyptian relics. Your lordship's late father brought back many curious things from Egypt."

"Oh! Yes! Rather!" agreed Bunter, remembering that he was Lord Mauleverer. "Lots and lots!"

"Among other things a very interesting scarab," said Mr. Kalizelos, his eyes on Bunter's fat face.

"Dozens of them," answered Bunter, inwardly wondering what on earth a scarab was. Kalizelos smiled.

"No doubt, no doubt," he said. "Egyptian scarabs are by no means uncommon. But the one to which I refer is of very special interest. I speak of the Golden Scarabaeus."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "The — the Golden Scarabaeus! Exactly!"

"Your lordship is well acquainted with it, of course?"

"Oh! Yes! Know it like a book!" said Bunter.

"No doubt it is still in the collection left to your lordship by your lordship's late father?"

"Oh! Quite! Wouldn't part with it for worlds!" said Bunter. "We — we keep it in a special room at Bunter Court."

"Indeed! Your lordship does not keep it with the rest at Mauleverer Towers?" exclaimed the Greek.

Once more Bunter had stumbled!

"Oh! Yes! No!" he stammered. "We — we keep some of the things at — at Bunter Court — one of my country houses, you know. Hallo, there's the sea."

Bunter was rather glad to be in sight of his destination. Twice he had nearly given himself away, and he did not want to enlighten the Greek till he was safely landed at Pegg. After that he did not care how soon the man from Cairo discovered that his leg had been pulled.

"That is my yacht, my lord," said Kalizelos, with a gesture towards the handsome vessel riding at anchor in the distance. "If your lordship is at leisure, might I venture to beg your lordship to pay a visit to my poor vessel? It would be an honour and a distinction."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

With all his wily cunning the Greek could not keep a shade of anxiety out of his face. He was angling warily for this fat fish; and, so far, the supposed Mauleverer had played into his hands. But at this stage of the proceedings Kalizelos hardly hoped that fortune would continue to smile on him so benignly.

But he need have had no doubts.

It was very doubtful indeed whether Lord Mauleverer would have accepted the invitation from a total stranger. But there was no doubt that William George Bunter would.

"Well, the fact is, I was going to tea with some friends," said Bunter, blinking at the Greek. "I can't very well miss my tea."

"If your lordship would deign to accept some refreshment on my poor yacht" said Kalizelos, his black eyes glinting.

Billy Bunter blinked at the well-dressed Greek and then at the handsome and, evidently, very expensive yacht. A lordly guest on the yacht was undoubtedly likely to fare better than whacking out a basket of tuck with five fellows in a boat. And Bunter was not quite certain yet that he would be able to wedge into the Remove boat at all. That had been his intention, certainly; and he had great skill in wedging in at other fellows' spreads. Still, there was a doubt. A bird in hand was worth two in the bush!

"Done!" said Bunter.

"I thank your lordship!" said Kalizelos. "Believe me, I appreciate the honour your lordship does me!"

"Yes, I don't suppose you often get a lord on your yacht!" agreed Bunter fatuously.

"Oh! Ah! Quite!" gasped Kalizelos.

The taxi ran on into the cobbly street of Pegg, and stopped at the wooden pier, where the yacht's boat was waiting. Kalizelos paid off the taxi, and walked on the pier, with Billy Bunter rolling by his side. It was settled now, in Bunter's fat mind, that he was going to be Lord Mauleverer till after tea on the yacht!

CHAPTER EIGHT CUT!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. rose from the rail where they were seated. In the distance they spotted Bob Cherry, emerging at a rapid trot from the wood into Pegg Lane. Bob was still at a distance when the taxi came whizzing up from the direction of Friardale, and, to their astonishment, Billy Bunter stepped out and came on the pier, with the olive-skinned man they had seen land from the yacht.

"That fat chump!" said Johnny Bull.

"The fathead must have broken detention," said Harry Wharton. "Asking for trouble, as usual!"

"That yachting sportsman must have given him a lift," said Frank Nugent. "Bunter's in luck — and we're not!"

"He said he was going to Greyfriars to see Mauleverer," remarked Wharton. "He must have got through pretty quick to be back so soon. Trust Bunter to stick him for a lift, if cheek would do it!"

"Now we're landed with the fat frog, I suppose!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Are we letting him come in the boat, or kicking him across the beach?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It's the last half-holiday of the term," he said. "Let the fat boulder wedge in."

"In the esteemed circumstances the kickfulness is not the proper caper," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Better get in some more grub, then!" grunted Johnny Bull. "We've only enough for five. We shall want enough for ten now!"

The chums of the Remove made up their minds to it. Evidently Bunter had broken detention, and booked himself for a licking, to join the boating party; and it was, after all, the last half-holiday of the term, and there was the happy prospect before them of not seeing William George Bunter again till next term. So, though the addition of the fat Owl to the party did not exactly have an exhilarating effect on them, they resolved to grin and bear it with fortitude.

They were quite unaware, so far, that Bunter's plans had changed since he had scooted out of Greyfriars.

The picnic-basket in the boat had no temptation for a fellow who was going as a

wealthy man's guest on a magnificent yacht. Billy Bunter was prepared to turn up his fat little nose at that picnic-basket in his new and peculiar circumstances.

So far from being pleased to see the juniors waiting on the pier, not yet started on their trip, Bunter was annoyed and alarmed.

Tea on the yacht depended on Kalizelos continuing to believe that he was Lord Mauleverer. One careless word from these fellows would knock the whole thing on the head.

Bunter would have been glad had the chums of the Remove given him the "marble eye" as he passed them on the pier. But having nobly made up their minds to give him as cordial a welcome as possible, the juniors gave him quite pleasant looks.

"Oh, here you are!" said Harry. "You've turned up, after all."

Bunter trembled inwardly. Another word might spoil the whole thing. These irritating beasts had to be got rid of.

Instead, therefore, of answering, Bunter turned up his fat nose, and walked on with Mr. Kalizelos, little dreaming how relieved the Greek was that he showed no desire to join up with them.

The four juniors stared after him blankly. It was the cut direct.

The yacht's boat was waiting farther along the pier, and Bunter was anxious to get into it and push off. He hastened his steps.

"What on earth" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"Hasn't the fat idiot come here to land himself on us, after all?" exclaimed Nugent, in astonishment.

"Making out he doesn't know us!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, in deep wrath. "Turning up his silly nose. Why, I'll go after him, and rub his nose on the pier!"

"Fancy being cut — by Bunter!" gasped Wharton. "What is the fat chump's game? Cut — by Bunter! My hat!"

"The cutfulness was terrific and preposterous," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The juniors stared blankly after Bunter. It was a relief, so far as that went, to find that the fat Owl did not want to join the boating party, after all. But what Bunter's new and remarkable manners and customs might mean was a deep mystery. He had walked past them with his nose in the air as if they were obstreperous fellows whom he did not care to know. It really was astounding.

"Let's go and bump him on the pier!" growled Johnny Bull, deeply incensed.

"Oh, let him rip!" said Harry. "We'll kick him later. He seems to have landed himself on that yachting man somehow — goodness knows how! Let him rip, and a good riddance!"

"The goodfulness of the riddance is great, but the cheekfulness of the idiotic Bunter is preposterous!"



Bunter turned up his fat nose and strolled past his schoolfellows.

Billy Bunter blinked back rather uneasily when he reached the yacht's boat. He was relieved to see the Greyfriars fellows remaining where they were. Mr. Kalizelos gave him a hand into the boat, and Bunter plumped down in the stern.

"Let's get off," he said. "I don't want to have anything to do with that crowd — cheeky lot of rotters, you know. They think they can glue on to a chap, just because they belong to the same school. I get a lot of that sort of thing."

"No doubt, my lord," said Kalizelos.

"Oh, exactly! Being a lord, you know said Bunter.

The boat pushed off. Mr. Kalizelos had his own excellent reasons for desiring to get afloat as soon as possible. The two foreign-looking seamen bent to the oars, and the boat shot away across the bay towards the anchored yacht.

Billy Bunter, safe now from awkward revelations, grinned back at the juniors on the pier, and waved a fat hand. He had no doubt that they were envying him.

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton. "The fat chump's going out to the yacht! How on earth has he wangled it?"

"Beats me hollow!" said Johnny Bull.

"The hollowfulness is terrific!"

Surprised and a little curious, the juniors watched the boat pulling for the yacht. Billy Bunter's fat face was looking round at them, growing smaller and smaller in the distance, his spectacles flashing back the rays of the sun. Somehow or other — how was a mystery — the fat Owl seemed to have "wangled" an invitation to the yacht.

They watched the boat reach the anchored vessel, and saw the accommodation ladder let down, and watched Bunter heaving his weight up it. His spectacles gleamed at them from the yacht's deck, and they saw a fat hand waved. Then Bunter disappeared from sight, and the boat was swung up to the davits, which looked as if Bunter was not leaving again soon.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry came trotting on the pier, breathing hard.

"Oh, here you are!" said Harry. "All ready!"

"Isn't Bunter here?" asked Bob.

Wharton pointed to the yacht.

"Bunter's there!" he answered.

"What on earth is he doing there?" exclaimed Bob.

"Goodness knows!"

“Well, my hat! He passed me in Friardale Lane in a taxi with a foreign-looking chap,” said Bob. “The fat villain refused to give me a lift. I’ve run all the way!”

“And he cut us when he got here,” grinned Nugent. “Cut us dead!”

“I’m going to kick him when we get in!” growled Johnny Bull.

“He’s palled on to that yachting chap somehow, and given us the go-by,” said Harry Wharton, laughing. “More power to his giddy elbow! Let’s get the boat out now you’re here, Bob.”

And dismissing Billy Bunter and his mysterious proceedings from their minds, the Famous Five stepped the mast in Trumper’s boat, and ran cheerily out of the bay before the wind.

CHAPTER NINE IN DEADLY PERIL!

KONSTANTINOS KALIZELOS smiled as he trod the deck of the yacht Zeus. The Egyptian Greek was full of satisfaction. He looked, indeed, like a man who could hardly believe in his own good luck, Billy Bunter could not help observing how pleased the Greek seemed to be, and he attributed it partly to his own engaging manners, and partly to the fact that Kalizelos believed him to be a lord. He was soon to discover that the Greek had other reasons.

Bunter blinked round at the yacht with interest, and several dark-skinned seamen looked at him curiously, and an officer, to whom Kalizelos spoke in his own tongue, grinned openly as if entertained.

Bowing and smiling, Kalizelos requested the fat junior to accompany him below, and Bunter, in a state of fat satisfaction, rolled down into a handsome saloon. There were evidences of wealth on every hand, and Bunter wondered how a Greek dealer of Cairo made it all. He could have no doubt that the “grub” on such a vessel would be superb, and he felt that he was in great luck. This was rather better than a whack in the picnic-basket among a lot of hungry schoolboys in a dashed old fisherman’s boat. At all events, it seemed better—as yet.

In the saloon Kalizelos waved Bunter to a seat, and closed the door by which they had entered. The smile on his dark, handsome face had developed into an ironical grin.

From the porthole near at hand Bunter had a glimpse of the Remove boat dancing out from the pier. But he gave it only a careless glance. Bunter was feeling very superior to a mob of schoolboys in a hired boat. By this time, indeed, the fat Owl almost believed that he really was a lord.

“Not a bad little turn out,” said Bunter patronisingly, blinking at the grinning Greek. Lofty patronage was Bunter’s idea of a nobleman’s manners and customs. “Not at all bad.” He blinked at the door, wondering why Kalizelos had closed it so carefully. The next item on the programme, from Bunter’s point of view, should have been the steward with tea — a large and substantial tea. “I say, if you don’t mind my mentioning it, I’m a trifle peckish. What about tea?”

“I will give orders, my lord,” said Kalizelos. “But first let us have a few minutes of conversation. We may talk more at our ease here than at the school, I think.”

“Oh, all right!” said Bunter, feeling for the first time a faint feeling of uneasiness as the black eyes scintillated at him.

He wondered what the Greek was looking at him so queerly for, and whether he was suspecting that his leg had been pulled.

“Your lordship is the present owner of the Golden Scarabaeus,” said the Greek. “It is only lately that I have learned that this precious scarab was taken from the tomb of A-

Menah by the late Lord Mauleverer, and brought by him to England. It is for that reason, Lord Mauleverer, that I left Cairo, and came to this country in my yacht.”

“W-w-was it?” asked Bunter.

He would rather have discussed tea, than scarabs, especially as he did not know what a scarab was. He felt that he was on delicate ground. If old Mauly had inherited that scarab, whatever a scarab was, from the late Lord Mauleverer, no doubt Mauly knew what it was; but Bunter didn’t, and he was rather afraid of giving himself away.

“I desire to possess the scarab of A-Menah,” explained Kalizelos, “and I have already seen your guardian, Sir Reginald Brooke, on the subject.”

“Oh!” said Bunter.

“But your guardian has no power to part with it, and he explained that until your lordship comes of age, neither have you the power to sell it.”

“Oh! Yes! Exactly,” agreed Bunter. “No good talking about it, is it?”

“I think so, my lord,” said Kalizelos smoothly. “I have not made so long a journey for nothing; and I do not intend to return to Egypt without the Golden Beetle.”

“The — the what?” ejaculated Bunter.

“I think you understand me, my lord.”

“Nunno! You were speaking about scarabs or something — what’s that got to do with beetles?”

The Greek stared at him.

“Come, my lord,” he said, “you are very well aware that the Golden Scarab, now in your possession, represents the sacred beetle of ancient Egypt.”

“Oh!” gasped Bunter. “Does it? I — I didn’t know a scarab was a beetle! What the thump do you want a beetle for?”

“I see that you are getting on your guard, my lord, though hitherto you have played into my hands like a child,” said the Greek. “But it is too late — you are now on board my yacht — in my hands and at my mercy.” Billy Bunter jumped.

“Wha-a-t?” he ejaculated.

“Be assured, my lord,” said Kalizelos, “I have no desire to harm you, if you accede to my wishes. I must have the golden scarab and I would not allow a hundred lives to stand in my way.”

“Oh lor’!” gasped Bunter.

He blinked at the Greek in terror through his big spectacles. There was no smile on Kalizelos’ face now. It was as hard as if carved in bronze, and the black eyes had a glitter that sent a cold chill down Bunter’s spine, warm as the July day was.

“Your guardian, the old man Brooke, may have had some suspicion of me,” went on Kalizelos. “At all events, he would not allow me to see the precious scarab, and would not reveal where it was kept. He may have had, from your father, some hint of its value. Once the scarab was in my hands, I should have kept it, even if I had had to drive a knife to his heart to do so. But he gave me no chance.”

“Oh!” gurgled Bunter.

Evidently there were drawbacks to being a peer of the realm, a millionaire, and possessor of a unique collection of Egyptian antiquities. Billy Bunter began to wish that he was back in Quelch’s study writing lines! The Greek’s glittering black eyes almost froze his blood.

“I came to your school, my lord,” resumed Kalizelos, “to see you — merely in order to know you by sight. That was all I hoped to accomplish by my visit, and I had a tale ready to tell to account for desiring to see you. Once I knew you, I should have taken measures for you to be seized, and sooner or later you would have fallen into my hands. By a singular chance, you have walked into the trap of your own accord — I

never hoped for such good fortune.”

“Oh!”

“Now you are here,” said Kalizelos, “on this ship, every man is at my orders and devoted to me. Your life is in my hands, my lord.”

“Oh crikey!”

Bunter was not thinking of tea now.

He blinked at the Greek in terror, it dawned upon his podgy brain that he was like a fat fly in a spider’s web. His only consolation was that he was not, after all, Lord Mauleverer, as the Greek believed. But he was fearfully dubious how Kalizelos might receive that information, when he imparted it. The man did not look the kind of man to be trifled with, with impunity.

The terror in his fat face evidently afforded the Greek satisfaction. Had Bunter really been the Earl of Mauleverer, that nobleman would have been, in the Greek’s hands, like clay in the hands of the potter.

Bunter staggered from his seat.

“I — I — I — I want to go ashore,” he stuttered. “My — my friends will be waiting for me —”

“Sit down, my lord.”

“I—I’d rather go ashore now!” mumbled Bunter.

“Sit down!” rapped the Greek, in a tone that made Bunter jump. The fat junior fell rather than sat.

“Now let us talk business,” said Kalizelos.

“I am here to obtain the scarab; you understand that. You, my lord, know where it is kept — you will give me the most precise information, to enable me to lay my hands on it. Once it is in my possession, you will be released, unharmed. But do not seek to deceive me — your life depends on it,”

“Oh crikey!”

“Until I lay hands on the Golden Scarab of A-Menah, you remain a prisoner on my yacht at sea. Yet I will deal with you fairly,” went on Kalizelos. “The intrinsic value of the scarab, as a piece of gold, is little — perhaps twenty — thirty pounds in your English money. I know not, as I have not yet handled it. But I will pay one thousand pounds for the scarab, my lord, willingly. Is it a bargain?”

“Oh crumbs!”

“Is not that a good offer?” asked Kalizelos. “The scarab has a value to me — that is my own secret. To your lordship, it is only one of the many curios that the late Lord Mauleverer brought from the land of Egypt many years ago. To you it has no special value. But there are those in Egypt, my lord, who would wade in blood to possess it.”

“B-b-but” stammered Bunter.

“You will give the scarab into my hands,” said the Greek. “Sell it if you wish, at the price I have named. Hand it to me, and take a thousand pounds in English money as compensation. But the scarab I must and will have — and if money does not tempt you, my lord, — I have heard that you are very rich — I offer you your life in exchange for the Golden Beetle.”

“I — I — I say ——”

“Is it a bargain, my lord?”

Bunter’s teeth chattered.

Had he been Lord Mauleverer, or had he even known where the mysterious scarab was to be found, no doubt it would have been a bargain. Billy Bunter was not of the stuff that heroes are made of.

But it was not in Bunter’s power to make it a bargain, as he knew nothing about the

scarab, and had never even heard of it till Kalizelos spoke of it.

“Your answer, my lord?”

“I — I can’t!” stammered Bunter, “You — you see ”

“Think again, my lord,” said the Greek, in a low tone of deadly menace. “If you refuse to part with the sacred scarab of A-Menah, the next heir to the Mauleverer estates may part with it. Think again!”

Kalizelos stepped to the wall and took down a curved Oriental dagger that hung there as a decoration. Bunter’s heart thumped. It seemed almost incredible to the fat junior, but there was no doubting it. Had Lord Mauleverer fallen into the Greek’s hands, his life would have been in dire peril at that moment. And now it was Bunter’s life that was in peril — unless the revelation that he was not Mauleverer would save him. His teeth chattered, and his little round eyes goggled at the Greek through his big round spectacles.

The bright Damascus steel flashed before his eyes, and Bunter gave a squeal of terror. “Your answer, my lord!” said Kalizelos, with a snarl that showed his gleaming white teeth. “Life or death depend on your word. The scarab — or you will not live to see the sun set.”

“I — I can’t!” gasped Bunter. “You see, I — I Oh lor’! I — I say, I ain’t Lord Mauleverer! I’m Bunter! Oh lor’!”

CHAPTER TEN DESPERATE COURAGE!

THE man from Cairo stared blankly at the terrified fat junior. The curved dagger, catching the sunlight, flashed in his hand, and his jetty eyes flashed over it. Whatever he had expected from the fat schoolboy certainly he had not expected that announcement. And, for the moment at least, it was plain that he did not believe it. His dark face grew more savage and threatening.

“Oh dear!” groaned Bunter. “I wish I hadn’t bunked out of Quelch’s study! I wish I was back at Greyfriars! Oh crikey! I say, I ain’t Lord Mauleverer — I — I ain’t anything like him! Oh crumbs!”

“It is useless to lie to me, my lord!” said the Greek. His well-cut lip curled in a sneer. “I did not expect a nobleman to lie to save his skin.”

“I — I ain’t a nobleman!” groaned Bunter. “Any Greyfriars man could tell you that I ain’t Lord Mauleverer. I don’t know anything about his beastly scarab! I don’t even know what it is. Oh crikey!”

The Greek eyed him doubtfully now.

It was Billy Bunter’s fond belief that any stranger might have taken him for a nobleman on account of his aristocratic looks, But, as a matter of fact, the Greek had been rather surprised to find that Lord Mauleverer was this podgy fellow, evidently a fool, and obviously a funk. Billy Bunter’s denial that he was Mauleverer began to carry conviction to his mind.

A flash of rage came into his black eyes that made Bunter squeak with fear.

“You are not Lord Mauleverer!” exclaimed the Greek, at last, in a hissing voice. “You have deluded me!”

“I — I was only pulling your leg!” groaned Bunter. “You see, I was detained this afternoon, and I was dodging out, and — and it was really only a — a — a joke, you know. Oh dear!

I was getting away from old Quelch, and Oh lor’!”

“If you are not Lord Mauleverer, who are you?”

“Oh dear! I’m Bunter!”

Kalizelos gritted his white teeth.

The rage in his dark face made Billy Bunter quake.

“Then where is Lord Mauleverer now?” he snarled.

“I — I suppose he’s at the school. Slacking in his study, most likely. He’s jolly lazy —”

“Then if I had waited I should have seen him! And you deceived me, deluded me.

Fool! I, Konstantinos Kalizelos, have been deluded, deceived, by a fool of a schoolboy — an ass — a dolt! But it is not too late!”

The Greek replaced the dagger on the wall, much to Bunter’s relief. He stood for some minutes, with his dark brows puckered in thought.

Billy Bunter watched him in terror.

The Greek believed him now; he could see that. The plotting rascal realised that, while he had supposed that he was trapping Lord Mauleverer, he had only been helping a fatuous, unreflecting duffer to escape detention. It was a bitter pill for the wily Greek, who prided himself upon his keenness and cunning, to swallow; but he could see that the terrified junior was telling the truth, and he was quick to grasp how matters stood.

After the first few moments of savage rage and disappointment, he was cool again, thinking the matter out.

It was not too late.

His sudden departure from Greyfriars, without seeing the boy he had called to see, must have seemed strange and unaccountable to the master he had interviewed there. But he could invent some plausible explanation. The cunning Greek was at no loss for trickery. The fat fool was safe on the yacht, and could give no warning. It was easy to return to the school and see Lord Mauleverer, as he had originally planned. Once he knew the boy by sight, he could lay plans for his kidnapping; and this fatuous trickster could be taken care of, and could not betray him.

He turned to Bunter again, with one of his swift, tigerish movements.

“It is not too late,” he said. “You will remain here, fool! You have made my task more difficult, but it is not too late. You know too much now, you fat fool! You will remain a prisoner here until Lord Mauleverer is in my hands.”

“I — I say ” stammered Bunter.

“Siopesate! Hold your tongue! If we were not in English waters I would secure your silence by dropping you into the sea, with a weight at your heels!” snarled the Greek.

“Oh lor’!”

“As soon as I have seen Mauleverer I shall return here and put to sea, and you will sail with me!” snarled Kalizelos. “You will remain a prisoner here until—— ”He broke off.

Billy Bunter shuddered.

Now that he knew the plans of the man from Egypt, and a word from him would put the schoolboy earl on his guard, it was obvious that the Greek could not afford to let him go. He was to remain a prisoner until Mauleverer was in the hands of his enemy. But it seemed to him that he could read a more terrible intention in the gleaming black eyes of the Egyptian Greek.

“Remain here, fool!” said Kalizelos, between his teeth. “I shall order my men to throw you into the sea if you quit this room.”

“Oh crikey! I — I want to stay here! I — I like being here!” gasped Bunter.

“Fool!”

The Greek hurried from the saloon.

“Oh crikey!” groaned Bunter.

He heard the boat lowered, and the splash of oars.

Kalizelos was gone.

Bunter knew where he was gone. He was bound for Greyfriars to see Lord Mauleverer there. He could have no hope that Mauleverer would fall into his hands as Bunter had done. That would come later, once he knew the schoolboy earl by sight. Sooner or later he would succeed, there could be no doubt about that, as Mauleverer was totally unconscious of danger. Probably the Greek’s chance would come when the school broke up for the holidays, and Mauly was on his way home. In the meantime ——

In the meantime, obviously, Bunter had to be kept from putting the schoolboy earl on his guard. The yacht would put to sea immediately Kalizelos returned, and then ——

Once out of sight of English land on the wide waters, with no eyes to see, was the man from Egypt likely to keep the fat junior a prisoner on the yacht, or to make sure of his silence by a more deadly method? It seemed to Bunter that he had read a fearful intention in the black eyes of the Greek, and he shuddered with terror at the thought that it was not his liberty, but his life, that would be in danger, once the yacht was out of sight of land.

But there was no escape for Bunter.

It was clear that the crew of the yacht were men picked for the Greek’s service. He had nothing to hope from them. He had not the slightest doubt that they had orders to deal with him drastically if he ventured to go on deck, and that they would carry out the orders.

The yacht was anchored half a mile out. When he blinked from the porthole the shore was merely a blur to him. There was no hope of help from the shore.

Harry Wharton & Co. knew that he was on the yacht, and if he did not return to school they would say so; but long before calling over at Greyfriars the yacht would be far out to sea.

Bunter groaned dismally.

He blinked from the porthole. The yacht’s boat, with Kalizelos in it, was already out of sight. The Greek had landed, and was on his way to the school.

“Oh lor’!” groaned Bunter.

From the bottom of his fat heart he wished that he was back in Mr. Quelch’s study, writing lines. But it was rather too late to wish that. Alternatively, as the lawyers say, he wished that he had joined the Famous Five, after all, in the sailing-boat. He wished, in fact, that he was anywhere but where he was at the present moment. Billy Bunter had often had cause to repent of his trickery, but never had he repented so deeply and sincerely as he did now.

A brown, patched sail glancing on the sunny waters caught his eyes as he stood blinking dismally shoreward.

Five figures could be seen in the boat.

Billy Bunter’s heart gave a jump.

Harry Wharton & Co., unconscious of the eyes — and the spectacles — that watched them from the yacht in the distance, were sailing merrily on the bay. The Greek had given no thought to the schoolboys he had seen on the pier. Bunter had given them no thought till now. Now his fat heart thumped at the sight of them. If they came near enough for a yell to be heard ——

But they did not look like passing within hail of the yacht. And Bunter realised, too, that a yell from the porthole, whether it was heard by the Removites or not, would

certainly be heard by the crew on deck, and they would take instant care that it was not repeated. His fat mouth opened and closed again.

He watched the sailing-boat with haggard eyes behind his big spectacles. It was passing within easy view, and he saw several of the juniors glancing towards the yacht, doubtless remembering that the fat Owl was on board her, though little dreaming in what circumstances.

The boat was drawing nearer; but it would not pass close, and in a few more minutes it would be gone! Bunter opened his mouth once more, and once more he closed it. But he was making up his fat mind to a desperate resolve now.

Whatever courage Billy Bunter might have possessed had oozed out at his fat fingertips. He was in a state of palpitating, shuddering funk. But from the extremity of fear he drew a kind of desperate courage. Once the Greek came back and the yacht put to sea he was lost! That most peaceful of animals, the sheep, is the most desperate of animals once in a state of desperation. So it was with Billy Bunter. He was so frightened that he dared not be afraid. There was one chance for him, and he knew it; the Remove boat was all that stood between him and the merciless plotter from Egypt. From sheer terror Billy Bunter acted as a courageous fellow would have done.

He did not stop to think; he dared not think! He tore open the door and tore on deck. Four or five dark-skinned men were close at hand, and they ran at him at once. Had Bunter intended to wave or call to the passing boat he would have had no chance. But that was not his intention. Before a hand could be laid on him the fat junior bounded to the rail and flung himself into the sea.

CHAPTER ELEVEN REMOVITES TO THE RESCUE!

“HALLO, hallo, hallo!”

Bob Cherry stared.

He stared in amazement, his eyes almost bulging from his head at what he saw. “Great pip!” gasped Harry Wharton.

“Bunter ——”

“What ——”

“Good heavens!”

The juniors in the boat stared at the yacht blankly. Harry Wharton was at the tiller, and even as he stared in utter amazement at the sight of Billy Bunter pitching over the rail into the sea, he gave the tiller a twist, and the sailing-boat shot towards the yacht.

“Bunter!” gasped Johnny Bull. “Is he mad? He didn’t fall — he jumped from ——”

Bob Cherry grabbed a boathook. Nugent dragged at the sheet. The boat shot like an arrow towards the yacht’s side.

The rail was lined with dark faces, staring down. Some of the yacht’s crew were already rushing to lower a boat.

But the Famous Five were first in the field. Billy Bunter was swimming desperately. Bunter was about the worst swimmer at Greyfriars, but he had reason to be glad just then that “ducker” was compulsory at the school. Had Bunter been able to dodge learning swimming, undoubtedly he would have dodged it. His swimming, according to Bob Cherry, was enough to make the fishes sit up on their tails and laugh. Still, he could swim after a fashion. After the first plunge he came up, spluttering wildly, and swam, and was at least able to keep himself afloat, in calm waters, for a few minutes. A few minutes were not needed, however; in considerably less than one minute the Remove boat was rushing down on him and Bob was hooking at him with the

boathook.

“Groooooogh! Ooooch!” spluttered Bunter.

“Got him!” gasped Bob.

“Get him in!”

Frank Nugent leaned over as the boathook hauled Bunter to the gunwale, and gasped the fat junior by the collar, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh lent a prompt hand, and Bunter was dragged, dripping and spluttering, into the boat.

There was shouting from the yacht; excited, dark faces staring at the schoolboys.

Bunter sat up streaming with water.

“Ow! Help! I say, you fellows ——”

“What’s this game, you potty ass?” yelled Bob Cherry. “What do you think you are up to? Trying to commit suicide, or what?”

“Help! Keep them off! Quick!” yelled Bunter frantically. “They’ll be after us! Help! Murder ——”

“Mad!” gasped Johnny Bull.

“Quick!” shrieked Bunter, “Get away before they can get after you. They’ll murder the lot

of you ——”

“What the thump——”

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Bunter and stared at the yacht. That the fat junior could have been in any danger on board that vessel was amazing to them. But there was no mistaking the frantic terror in his face, or his desperate act in leaping into the sea.

A boat dropped from the yacht’s davits, and half a dozen dark-skinned men were in it, and already it was pulling swiftly towards the Remove boat.

Wharton gave a twist to the tiller and the sailing-boat shot away before the wind.

Amazing as it was, well-nigh incredible, the juniors could see that the foreign seamen were coming as enemies; that they were after Bunter! Why, was an utter mystery; but there was no mistaking the fact. Only in time the sailing-boat shot away, and as the sail filled with wind the yacht’s boat was dropped astern. But the seamen, with set, dark faces, pulled hard in pursuit.

“They’re after us!” almost babbled Bob Cherry. “They’re after us, and Bunter! What the jolly old thump ——”

“What the dickens ——”

“Keep her before the wind,” said Harry Wharton quietly. “They won’t get near us with oars! You’re all right now, Bunter.”

“Oh crikey!”

“But what the thump ” gasped Nugent.

“Oh dear! G-get ashore, you fellows, stuttered Bunter. “I say, you fellows, run ashore as fast as you can, and —— Oh dear!”

“They won’t get near us, old fat bean! We’re sailing three or four lengths to their one,” said Harry reassuringly.

“Get to the shore, you beast!” howled Bunter. “I’m not to be murdered to please you!”

“Wha-a-at?”

“I say, you fellows Oh crikey!” Harry Wharton glanced back. The yacht’s boat was pulling in pursuit, but it had no chance against the sailing-craft. The Remove boat danced away from it. Even Billy Bunter was a little reassured as he blinked back and saw how fast the distance was widening.

“Well, if this doesn’t beat the band!” said Bob Cherry blankly. “If Bunter’s not mad, and they’re not mad, what does it mean, you men?”

“Ask me another!” said Harry.

“I say, you fellows, they’re after Mauly!” groaned Bunter.

“Mauly!” repeated Wharton.

“Oh dear! You — you see, I — I got a lift from that beast by pretending that I was Mauly ——”

“You spoofing sweep!”

“How was I to know that he was after Mauly and looking for a chance to kidnap him!” groaned Bunter. “I — I thought I was going to have a jolly good tea on that yacht. Oh dear!”

“Kidnapping Mauly!” repeated Wharton. “What on earth ——”

“He’s gone back to Greyfriars after Mauly now ——”

“Who has?” yelled Wharton.

“That Greek beast — Kalizelos, he calls himself! He’s after some beastly Egyptian rubbish that Mauly’s pater brought home from Egypt. Oh dear! I say, you fellows, get ashore. If they get steam up on the yacht they’ll run us down!”

“Oh, my hat!”

“They’ve chucked it!” said Johnny Bull, looking back at the pursuers. “But if they up anchor and follow us by steam we’re done! Better run ashore, you men.”

“Yes, rather!”

The yacht’s boat was swinging up to the davits again in the far distance. There was no doubt that if the steam-yacht got under way it would not take long to run down the sailing-craft, and the juniors headed for the shore. The Famous Five handled a sailing-boat well, and they ran close to the wind, heading for the beach at its nearest point. Minute followed minute as the boat raced through the water. Billy Bunter blinked back at the yacht with scared eyes through his spectacles. But the sailing-boat ran on swiftly and bumped on the sandy beach a mile along the circling bay from the pier. Billy Bunter rolled out in hot haste, heedless of water up to his fat knees, and plugged up the sand, gasping and spluttering. Harry Wharton & Co. stayed only to drag the boat above high-water mark and then followed him.

“Now, you fat duffer, let’s know what it’s all about,” said Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter did not answer. He needed all his breath for running. He plugged desperately on till he reached Pegg Lane and the beach was left behind. There at last he halted, and staggered against a tree, gasping for breath. He was feeling safe at last. Even Bunter realised that the crew on the yacht could not venture to land and pursue the schoolboys inland.

“Oh! Ow! Wow!” gasped Bunter. “I say, you fellows, I — I’m winded! Oh dear! I wish I’d stayed in Quelch’s study! Oh crikey!”

“Tell us what’s happened, you fat chump!” exclaimed Wharton. “If old Mauly’s in any danger ——”

“He jolly well is!” gasped Bunter. “That Greek beast thought I was him, you know, and he bagged me! Oh dear!”

“Cough it up, fathead!”

Billy Bunter spluttered out his story, the chums of the Remove listening in amazed silence. But for the fact that they had seen, with their own eyes, Bunter’s desperate escape from the yacht, it would have been incredible to them. Now they could not doubt.

“So that scoundrel — Kalizelos, as you call him — has gone back to the school after Mauly!” exclaimed Wharton. “He must be there by this time, or very nearly, in a taxi ——”

“We’ve got to get after him!” exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Wharton shook his head.

“No time! But we can get Quelch on the phone from the Anchor, at Pegg, That will be in time to put a spoke in his wheel. I’ll cut off and get Quelch on the phone.”

And without wasting another moment the captain of the Remove started at a run for Pegg, covering the ground at a speed he had never exceeded on the cinder-path.

CHAPTER TWELVE A TIMELY WARNING!

BUZZZZZZ!

Mr. Quelch uttered a sound which — if Form masters could be supposed to snort — would certainly have been taken, by any hearer, for a snort.

He was annoyed.

Already, that afternoon, there had been interruptions and annoyances. There had been Bunter’s bolt from the Form-room, and Prout’s complaint of the fat junior barging him over in the quad; then the visit of the antique merchant from Cairo, and his mysterious and inexplicable departure after wasting Mr. Quelch’s time; then the vanishing of Bunter from the study.

It had been quite an annoying afternoon, and Mr. Quelch was feeling that end-of-the-term feeling more than ever. Now, as he laboured through his pile of papers, the buzz of the telephone bell came as the last straw.

Buzzzzzz!

The Remove master laid down his pen, and crossed over to the telephone, and jerked the receiver from the hooks. He barked into the transmitter rather like a ferocious mastiff.

“Well?”

“Is that Mr. Quelch? Wharton speaking?”

“Wharton!” Quelch growled this time instead of barking. “Really! Why have you rung me up, Wharton? Are you not aware that you should not interrupt your Form master and waste his time? I see no reason why ——”

“It’s important, sir — awfully important!” came the breathless voice of the captain of the Remove. “Mauleverer is in danger, sir!”

“What? What?”

“Mauleverer, sir — danger ——”

“Nonsense!”

“I assure you, sir ”

“Rubbish!”

“Please listen, sir! Has a man — a Greek — named Kalizelos, called to see Mauleverer?”

“That is the case, Wharton, though I fail to see how you can be aware of it!” snapped Mr. Quelch.

“Is he at the school now, sir?”

“No! He is not! I fail to see how it concerns you, Wharton, but the man left without waiting to see Lord Mauleverer.”

“Then he hasn’t come back yet, sir?”

“Come back?” repeated Mr. Quelch acidly. “I do not suppose that it is his intention to come back. Certainly I shall speak to him very plainly if he does so. What do you mean, Wharton?”

“He is Lord Mauleverer’s enemy, sir, and looking for a chance to kidnap him ——”

“Do not be absurd, Wharton!”

“He came off a yacht now anchored in Pegg Bay, sir. Bunter somehow made him believe that he was Lord Mauleverer, and he got hold of Bunter.”

“Bunter has broken detention — have you seen Bunter?”

“Yes, sir. The Greek took him on the yacht, thinking that he was Lord Mauleverer, and Bunter jumped into the sea to escape, and we picked him up in our boat.”

“Goodness gracious!”

“According to what Bunter says, the man left him on the yacht to keep him from giving warning, while he went back to the school to have another try for Mauleverer. If he has not reached Greyfriars yet, he is on his way. I’ve rung you up to warn you, sir! For goodness’ sake, sir, don’t let him get at Mauleverer.”

“This is a most extraordinary story, Wharton!”

“I know, sir! But Mauleverer is in danger. The man is a desperate villain from what Bunter says happened on the yacht ——”

“Bunter is a foolish, untruthful, exaggerative boy, Wharton. Have you any reason, from your own knowledge ——”

“We saw Bunter jump into the sea to escape, sir, and a boat from the yacht chased us after we picked him up.”

“Bless my soul! I can hardly believe that the man will return here, Wharton, but I shall certainly take measures ——”

Tap!

The study door opened. Mr. Quelch looked round at Trotter.

“The foreign gentleman, sir,” said Trotter. “He wishes to see you again, sir. I’ve showed him into the visitors’ room, sir.”

“Upon my word! Mr. Kalizelos?”

“Yessir!”

Mr. Quelch’s jaw set grimly.

“Tell Mr. Kalizelos that I will be with him in a few moments, Trotter.”

“Yessir.”

The page departed and closed the door.

“Wharton!” Mr. Quelch spoke into the transmitter again. “Are you there, Wharton?”

“Here, sir!”

“The man, Kalizelos, has just arrived, and I am about to see him,” said Mr. Quelch.

“So far Bunter’s statements appear to be borne out. Return to the school at once, Wharton, and bring Bunter with you.”

“Very well, sir.”

Mr. Quelch put up the receiver and left the study. His face was grim as he made his way to the visitors’ room. In that apartment the Greek was waiting, and he rose from a chair and bowed with lithe grace to the Remove master.

The Greyfriars master eyed him grimly. Obviously, Kalizelos was unaware of Bunter’s escape from the yacht, and did not dream that the Form master had been warned. There was a surprise in store for Konstantinos Kalizelos.

He addressed Mr. Quelch smoothly, in his musical voice, with a deprecating smile.

“I have to beg a thousand pardons, my dear sir,” he said. “No doubt you were surprised by my leaving so abruptly, without having seen.”

“I was!” interrupted Mr. Quelch curtly.

“You will, I feel sure, excuse my apparent discourtesy, when I explain the matter,” said Kalizelos.

“I shall be very glad to hear your explanation, sir, of so very singular an action!” said Mr. Quelch.

“I was deceived, sir, by a foolish schoolboy’s prank. The boy entered this room while

I was waiting, made me believe that he was Lord Mauleverer, and asked for a lift in my car.”

“Indeed!”

“Later he confessed to this foolish prank, sir, and so I lost no time in returning herewith a thousand apologies for taking up your so valuable time ——”

“What has become of the boy you mention?”

“I left him at the village of Pegg, my dear sir, which we had already reached before I discovered the facts ——”

“You did not take him on your yacht?”

Kalizelos started violently.

His black eyes narrowed, gleaming with suspicion and alarm.

“My yacht?” he repeated mechanically.

“I understand that you landed from a yacht in Pegg Bay, Mr. Kalizelos.”

“I did not know that you were aware of that circumstance, sir. But it is the case, certainly.”

“Did you take the boy on the yacht?”

“Certainly not!”

“You did not do so, still under the belief that he was Lord Mauleverer?”

“No!” muttered the Greek. “Why should you suppose ——”

“You did not, still believing him to be Lord Mauleverer, threaten him on board your vessel, and put him in a state of fear?”

The Greek breathed hard. Unless this dry-looking, stern-featured schoolmaster was a magician, Kalizelos could not guess how he knew all this. But he scented danger now.

“You did not leave him on your yacht, and return here to make another attempt to see the real Lord Mauleverer, with the object of attempting to kidnap him?”

“My dear sir ——”

Kalizelos broke off. With all his coolness and nerve, he was utterly confounded. He cast a hunted look towards the door. But Mr. Quelch was standing between him and the door, and evidently had no intention of moving.

“It may interest you to hear,” said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice, “that the boy Bunter escaped from the yacht after you left ——”

“What?”

“That he was helped by some schoolfellows, and that I have been apprised, sir, by telephone, of all that has happened.”

Kalizelos almost staggered.

“You have chosen to come here, sir,” said Mr. Quelch. “You will remain until you have been questioned by the police. You spoke falsely, sir, in stating your reason for desiring to see Lord Mauleverer — and most certainly you will not be allowed to see him. I shall take every care, sir, that the boy does not come into your presence.

Whether you can be charged with kidnapping for your action with regard to the boy Bunter I do not know — but this I know, sir, that you will be detained here until you have explained yourself to the police.”

The Greek made a stride forward, his hand slipping under his coat. The Remove master eyed him, with icy contempt.

“There is ample help at hand, sir, to secure you!” he snapped. “Attempt to leave this room, and you shall be detained by force.”

The Greek’s eyes blazed. His dusky hand came out from under his coat without the weapon he had obviously thought of producing. He stood facing the Remove master, panting.

“You will remain here till the boy, Bunter, reaches the school, and you will be

questioned by a police-inspector in the boy's presence!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "I have no doubt that I shall be able to give you into custody, and I shall certainly do so, Mr. Kalizelos."

Kalizelos gave him a black, bitter look. Then, with a sudden swiftness like the spring of a tiger in the jungle, he reached the open window and leaped out into the quadrangle.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Quelch. He rushed to the window.

Kalizelos, with the swiftness of a deer, was running for the gates. The taxi was waiting on the drive, but the Greek did not attempt to reach it. He had not a second to lose.

"Stop him!" Mr. Quelch shouted from the window. "Stop that man! Wingate — Coker — Price! Stop that man!"

There were a dozen fellows in sight in the quad, and they stared round in amazement. Mr. Quelch pointed after the fleeing Greek.

"Stop that man! Seize him!" he shouted.

There was a rush after the Greek. But Kalizelos had too good a start, and his feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as he fled. He darted out of the open gates and vanished.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

And he hurried back to his study to ring up the police station at Courtfield.



Kalizelos raced across the quadrangle toward the gates!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN THE LAST OF THE GREEK!

"I SAY, you fellows ——"

"Come on, fathead!"

"But, I say ——"

"Get a move on!"

"Shan't!" roared Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton had rejoined his chums after leaving the Anchor. The sail on the bay that afternoon was a thing of the past; it had been briefer, though much more exciting, than the Famous Five had anticipated. Mr. Quelch had instructed the captain of the Remove to return to the school and bring Bunter — and that was the next item on the programme. But William George Bunter had quite other ideas.

Now that the danger was over, Billy Bunter was himself again. No man had landed from the yacht; the foreign crew evidently did not venture to carry the pursuit ashore.

Bunter was at leisure now to remember that he was hungry — and to remember what awaited him when he found himself under his Form master's gimlet eyes again.

"Now, look here, you fellows," said Bunter, blinking at the chums of the Remove, "I'm not going back till call-over, see? I've cut detention, and old Quelch will lick me. You know that."

"Serve you jolly well right!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Beast! I'm hungry!"

"Get a move on!"

"You've got a basket of grub," said Bunter. "Well, let's have a picnic in the wood, see? We shall be safe from those foreign beasts there! I'm fearfully hungry ——"

"Are you coming?"

"No!" roared Bunter. "I'm not coming! I've got a licking coming for breaking detention. Think I'm going to have the licking and detention, too? Don't be a silly ass!"

"You fat Owl! Quelch told me to bring you back ——"

"That's all right," said Bunter. "You can tell Quelch you lost sight of me, and were looking for me till call-over ——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Now, what about the picnic?"

"Nothing about the picnic, old fat man! Come on! You walk behind him, Bob, and help him."

"Yarooooh! Leave off kicking me, you beast!" yelled Bunter. "I'm coming, ain't I? I — I want to come! If you kick me again, you beast, I'll Yarooop!"

And Billy Bunter started — quite in a hurry! Johnny Bull carried the basket of tuck — still unopened. Wharton had left word at the Anchor for Mr. Trumper, and the boat was left where the juniors had dragged it up the beach for the old fisherman to collect. The Famous Five were anxious to get back to the school to learn what had happened since Wharton had telephoned.

Billy Bunter was by no means anxious about that. What Bunter was anxious about was the contents of the picnic basket. Likewise, he was anxious to postpone seeing Mr. Quelch until the latest possible moment. But there was no help for William George Bunter. With Bob Cherry walking behind him, ready to give his assistance at any moment, Billy Bunter rolled on to the school and did not even dare to lag. His only consolation was to tell the chums of the Remove what he thought of them as he went. What he thought of them was not at all complimentary; but the cheery juniors did not seem unduly perturbed.

With an occasional lift from Bob Cherry's foot to keep him going, the fat Owl rolled along the path through Friardale Wood— every now and then casting a longing blink at the picnic basket.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob suddenly.

The juniors halted.

There was a sound of swiftly running feet on the footpath under the shady branches.



The boys spied Kalizelos fleeing through the woods!

A dark-skinned man, running hard, burst into view. His olive face streamed with perspiration as he ran.

Billy Bunter gave a squeal of terror.

“Ow! Help! Keep him off!”

The fat junior dodged behind Bob Cherry, his eyes almost bulging through his spectacles at the sight of the Greek.

Kalizelos halted, panting.

“It’s the man from the yacht!” shouted Bob. “Collar him!”

But it was only for a second that the juniors glimpsed the Greek. He turned from the footpath and plunged into the wood, dashing away among trees, and thickets and brambles with the swiftness of a wild animal. He was gone almost in the twinkling of an eye.

“I say, you fellows, keep him off!” howled Bunter.

“You fat chump! He’s gone!” snapped Wharton.

“Oh crikey!” gasped Bunter. “I — I say, you fellows, let’s get back to Greyfriars! Oh dear! Hurry up, for goodness’ sake! Oh crumbs! If that beast comes back — Oh lor’!”

Billy Bunter started again, without waiting for assistance from Bob. The juniors resumed their way. For once they had to hurry to keep pace with Billy Bunter. The sight of the Greek had revived all the fat Owl’s terrors, and he was yearning to find himself safe within the walls of Greyfriars — even if Mr. Quelch’s cane awaited him there! He plugged on as fast as his fat little legs could whisk, panting for breath.

“Looks as if that sportsman has been to the school and left in rather a hurry!” grinned Bob. “I suppose he’s making for his yacht before the police can get hold of him.”

“I say, you fellows, hurry up —”

“Fathead! The man’s on the run,” said Harry. “He wants to get out to sea before he can be stopped.”

“Hurry up, you beast!”

The juniors chuckled, and hurried on after Bunter. They had no doubt that Kalizelos was making for his yacht, to get to sea at the earliest possible moment. But to Billy Bunter, it seemed that the Greek’s fierce black eyes were gleaming from every shadow in the trees and thickets; and he plunged on desperately, panting and gasping — without even a blink at the lunch-basket. The fat Owl did not slacken speed till the wood was left behind, and they came out into Friardale Lane. Even then he kept on at a gasping trot till the school gates were reached. He rolled in, gurgling for breath. There was an excited crowd in the quadrangle when the juniors came in. Fellows were discussing the escape of the man who had leaped from the window of the visitors’ room in great excitement. Harry Wharton & Co. learned what had happened by the time they reached the House.

"I say, you fellows." Bunter came to a halt at last. "I say — groogh — I'm winded — I say, I'm not going to see Quelch! If he asks about me, tell him you couldn't find me, see? If you're going to see the beast, I'll mind that basket for you while you're gone, see?"

"Come on, fathead!"

"Look here, you beast — leggo my ear — wow! I'm coming."

The Famous Five proceeded to their Form master's study. Billy Bunter rolled in reluctantly with them. To his surprise and to his great relief, Mr. Quelch took no particular notice of him. Billy Bunter did not, as he supposed, fill his Form master's thoughts to the exclusion of all other matters. Mr. Quelch gave his attention to Wharton.

"Please tell me exactly what occurred, Wharton," he said.

He listened quietly, while the captain of the Remove told him of the rescue of Bunter and the flight from the yacht's boat. Then he turned to the fat Owl. Bunter quaked. But the Remove master did not refer to his "bolt" from the study. He told Bunter to give him a succinct account of what had happened while he was with the Greek. He made no comment till the fat junior had finished. Then he came to the subject which was uppermost in Bunter's mind, if not in everybody else's.

"You have broken detention this afternoon, Bunter, taking advantage of my absence from the study

"I — I didn't ——"

"What?"

"I — I mean, I — I wasn't ——"

"Be silent, Bunter! I shall not punish you, as it has turned out so very fortunately," said Mr. Quelch. "your disrespectful, unthinking, foolish and absurd conduct has had the unexpected result of giving us warning that another boy in the Remove is in danger; and that danger can now be guarded against. For this reason, I shall pardon you."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Good! I — I mean ——"

"You may leave the study."

Bunter was only too glad to leave the study. He had feared that he would have to remain there to complete that unfinished imposition. He rolled away with fat satisfaction in his face.

"You have acted very well and very sensibly, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch graciously.

"But for the warning you gave me by telephone, Kalizelos would certainly have seen Mauleverer, and the boy's safety might have been endangered. The police will now be looking for the rascal. You may go, my boys."

The Famous Five followed Bunter from the study.

"I fancy the bobbies will be looking for that Greek Johnny rather too late," remarked Bob Cherry, as they went down the passage. "He wasn't losing any time getting back to his yacht. He's got the anchor up before this."

"Let's go up and see!" suggested Nugent; and the juniors went up to the Remove dormitory, from which there was a clear view of Pegg Bay, far away across the tree-tops.

There was no longer an anchored yacht to be seen in the bay. But far away seaward a black trail of smoke lay against the sky, and under it a speck on the sea was vanishing into the east. Even as the juniors watched, the speck disappeared from sight; and only a blur of smoke, dispersing in the wind, remained. Konstantinos Kalizelos was gone!

CHAPTER FOURTEEN UP TO BUNTER!

LORD MAULEVERER, of the Remove, the following day, was the cynosure of all eyes at Greyfriars School.

His lordship, earl and millionaire as he was, was so modest a youth by nature, that he seldom filled much space in the public eye. But that was all changed now — rather to his lazy lordship's discomfort. Mauly did not like the limelight.

But there was no help for Mauly! He had the limelight now, whether he liked it or not. Fellows who hardly knew him stopped him in the quad or the passages to ask him about the mysterious scarab, and the mysterious Greek who had, apparently, come all the way from Egypt after it.

Great men of the Sixth Form, even prefects, were interested in the matter: and Mauly was even asked to tea in a Sixth Form study that day.

In the Remove, of course, there was only one topic — Kalizelos the Greek, and his quest of Mauleverer's mysterious scarab.

Most of the fellows, probably, had never heard of a scarabaeus before; but they all heard about it now.

Billy Bunter had told his tale of adventure fifty times at least; and it grew more and more wonderful every time he told it — Billy Bunter not being trammelled by any special regard for facts.

Second thoughts are said to be best; and on second thoughts, Bunter had hit on a much better version of the story than the one he had related to Mr. Quelch in his study.

It appeared now — since Bunter had had time for second thoughts — that it was not merely to dodge out of detention that he had played his weird pranks the previous day. It was — on second thoughts — with the object of saving old Mauly from danger, that Bunter 'had, as it were, rushed into the breach. So far from being scared, or frightened, or anything of that sort, Bunter had gone into the thing with cool courage and presence of mind, regardless of peril, and entirely for Mauly's sake. And Bunter seemed quite pained when this version of the story, which really was ever so much better, evoked nothing but laughter in the Remove.

Probably a hundred times, that day, Lord Mauleverer was called upon to tell fellows about that mysterious scarab.

But Mauly had little to tell.

Like many fellows born to great possessions, Mauly was rather indifferent to those possessions. Certainly he had never given much attention, if any, to the collection of Egyptian antiquities which the late earl had brought home to Mauleverer Towers.

"Yaas, there's a scarab," Lord Mauleverer admitted. "In fact, there's a lot of jolly old scarabs. As far as I can make out, Egypt used to be stacked with scarabs, which seems to be some sort of a grasshopper"

"Beetle, ass!" said Harry Wharton.

"Is it a beetle?" asked Mauly innocently. "Yaas, now I come to think of it, it's a beetle or something of the sort. I don't like beetles myself — loathe 'em, in fact — but the jolly old Gippies seem to have been frightfully gone on beetles."

"They had sacred beetles, fathead — sort of superstitious stuff like mascots," said Bob Cherry. "They wore them as amulets."

"Did they?" yawned Mauly. "Queer taste, what? Well, there's lots of them in the Egyptian Room at Mauleverer Towers — lots and lots."

"But it's one special one that Kalizelos was after," said Nugent. "According to

Bunter, he called it the Golden Scarab — the sacred beetle of A-Menah which ——”
“Yaas, I believe I sort of remember it,” said Mauly. “An ugly little beast of a thing, made of gold, though, with queer marks on it. Worth a few quid, very likely — and that Greek johnny must be off his rocker if he’s really willing to give a thousand pounds for it, as he told Bunter.”

“It must be worth more than a few quid, fathead,” said Bob, “if that sportsman is trying to kidnap you to get hold of it.”

“Yaas; but I don’t see it! Anyhow, he won’t get hold of it now, or of me, either!” chuckled his lordship. “Wasn’t it jolly lucky that the Greek sportsman got hold of Bunter yesterday by mistake? Fancy Bunter comin’ in useful, you know.”

“Is that all you know about your own scarab, Mauly?”

“That’s the lot, dear men.”

“Then what the thump does Kalizelos want it for?”

“Goodness knows.”

Evidently, Lord Mauleverer knew little enough about the mysterious scarab that had brought the lawless Greek from Cairo. But what little he knew he had to repeat over and over again to curious fellows; till he was inexpressibly bored with the subject; and wished from the bottom of his heart that the Scarabaeus of A-Menah had never been in his possession at all.

Of the Greek, nothing more was heard. The yacht Zeus had steamed promptly out of Pegg Bay, and vanished into the North Sea; and it looked as if Kalizelos was gone for good. It was rather doubtful exactly how far he had rendered himself amenable to the law. He could scarcely be charged with kidnapping, as the fatuous Owl of the Remove had gone on board the yacht of his own accord, though there could be no doubt as to his intentions. And though Bunter had been threatened, he had not, after all, been harmed.

But the Greek evidently did not want to put the matter to the test. He had fled in his yacht, and so far as could be learned by the police, the Zeus was no longer in English waters.

He had failed, and his failure had put Mauleverer on his guard! It was certain that, as Mauly remarked, Billy Bunter had come in useful for once.

Mauly’s opinion was that the Greek had gone back to his own country — aware that the game was up, and going while the going was good.

That seemed probable to the other fellows, with one exception. The exception was Billy Bunter.

Billy Bunter dropped into Mauleverer’s study that evening, with a very serious expression on his fat face, after prep.

Mauly suppressed a groan. Billy Bunter had, howsoever, unintentionally and inadvertently, done his lordship a great service, and Billy Bunter was not the man to let it be forgotten. Mauly felt that it was up to him to give Bunter his head, in the circumstances. So instead of groaning at the sight of the fat Owl, his lordship contrived to smile.

“Take a pew, old bean,” he said.

Bunter sat down, blinking at him through his big spectacles with alarming seriousness.

“I’ve been thinking this over, Mauly,” he said.

“Yaas.”

“I’ve saved you from fearful danger, old chap ——”

“You’ve mentioned that before!” murmured Lord Mauleverer.

“If you’re going to be an ungrateful beast, Mauly ——”

“Oh dear!”

“There’s not a lot of fellows,” said Bunter severely, “who would let themselves be collared by a desperate, ferocious kidnapper, to save another fellow from danger, Mauly. There’s precious few.”

“Oh, quite,” said Mauly, “and you’re not one of the few, old bean!”

“Oh, really, Mauly ——”

“Is that Toddy calling you in the passage, Bunter?”

“No, it isn’t! I’ve been thinking this over, Mauly! I’ve saved you from one fearful danger, as you know. But you’re still in danger, old chap! You fancy that Greek blighter has gone ——”

“Looks like it, old fat man.”

“Well, my idea is this,” said Bunter. “He’s cleared off, to keep away from the peelers, but he’s going to hang on somewhere, on the quiet, and have another try at the scarab, see?”

“Shouldn’t wonder,” yawned Mauly. “He seems a determined sort of bloke. Is that Bob Cherry callin’ you?”

“No, it isn’t! As you’re still in fearful danger, Mauly, and as I’ve saved you once, I’m going to keep on looking after you.”

“Awf’ly good of you, Bunter!” groaned Mauly. “I say, did I hear Wharton shoutin’ to you?”

“No, you didn’t! Now, while you’re here at school, you’re fairly safe,” pursued Bunter. “I can keep an eye on you, see?”

“Oh! Yaas! Thanks!”

“But we break up for the hols. in a day or two, old chap! Once out of my sight, what will you feel like?”

“No end bucked!” said Mauly.

“What?”

“I — I mean, it’s all right,” said Mauleverer hastily. “Don’t you worry, Bunter!”

“You see, I can’t help worrying,” said Bunter, shaking his head. “When a pal’s in danger, I’m not likely to think of myself — not that I’m one of those fellows who think much about themselves, anyhow. I’m going to see you through, Mauly. I’ve had a lot of invitations for the holidays, but I’m turning them all down on your account, old chap. I’ve come here to tell you that you can reply on me!”

“Oh gad!” groaned Lord Mauleverer.

“Rely on me, old fellow,” said Bunter. “I’m coming home with you for the holidays, and keeping an eye on you all the time. You’ll be in danger — fearful danger — but with me there, you ——”

“Oh dear!”

“With me there, you will be all right. It’s up to me, and I’m going to do it,” said Bunter. “I’ve already written to a lot of people who are keen to have me for the vac, telling them it can’t be done. I’m sticking to you, Mauly.”

“Don’t!” groaned his lordship.

“Eh?”

“Stick to somebody else, old fellow—there’s a good chap.”

“Oh, really, Mauly! If that’s what you call gratitude ——”

“Oh dear!”

“I’m used to ingratitude,” said Bunter. “But, really, this is rather thick, Mauly, after I’ve saved your life and ——”

“Groan!”

“If you don’t want me to come home with you for the holidays, Mauleverer, after I’ve

saved your life ——”

“Groan!”

“I say, Mauly, what’s the matter with you?”

“You!”

“Beast!” roared Bunter. “I — I — I mean, you will have your little joke, old chap! It’s all right — I’ll come! I’m not the man to let a pal down when he’s in danger! Is it settled, old fellow?”

“I’m afraid so!” groaned Mauly dismally.

“He, he, he!” Bunter decided to take that answer as a joke. “All right, then — it’s a go, Mauly! Rely on me to stick to you at Mauleverer Towers all through the vac. It’s up to me.” Bunter rose from the chair. “I’ll cut along now and tell Smithy, and Temple of the Fourth, and Hilton of the Fifth, and Sykes of the Sixth, that I shan’t be able to accept their invitations. We’re going to have a jolly time together these hols, Mauly, what?”

Bunter rolled out of the study, leaving Lord Mauleverer blinking after him dismally — not looking like a fellow who was expecting a jolly time at all!

CHAPTER FIFTEEN WHO’S FOR EGYPT?

“EGYPT!”

“Yaas!”

It was the last evening of the term. The Famous Five of the Remove were gathered in Study No. 1. There was no prep that evening, and they were discussing the hols instead of prep, a much more agreeable occupation, till it was time for supper in the Hall. Welcoming glances were turned on Lord Mauleverer when he ambled in; his amiable lordship was a welcome visitor in any study. Wharton pulled out the armchair, and Mauly sank into it, crossed one elegantly trousered leg over the other, smiled cheerfully at the Five, and propounded the query whether they knew anything about Egypt.

The Famous Five grinned. Mauly in search of knowledge was rather a new Mauly. He had not, perhaps, quite so rooted an objection to acquiring knowledge as Billy Bunter had. But he did not like the process.

“You want to know about Egypt?” asked Harry.

“Yaas.”

“Well, we’ve had some Egypt in geography class. It’s a country in Africa, old bean, chiefly composed of the banks of the River Nile.”

“I know that much,” admitted Lord Mauleverer, “and I know that some jolly old beans named Pharaoh used to reign there, and one of them came a mucker in the Red Sea with all his giddy chariots and horses. It was colonised by — by — was it Christopher Columbus?”

“Ha, ha, ha!” yelled the Famous Five.

“Wrong?” asked Mauly.

“Just a few!” chuckled Nugent. “Egypt was conquered, and partly colonised by Alexander the Great — if that’s what you mean — a jolly old Greek.”

“Yaas, that’s it. I knew it was somebody,” assented Mauly. “I’m not bad at history, you know. Not a whale on it — but not bad!”

“Later, it was a Roman province ——” declared Bob Cherry.

“And the Arabs mopped it up ——” said Johnny Bull.

“And the Turks ——” said Wharton. “Lots of people took a turn. And the French, in

Napoleon's time. Then there were the Mamelukes, and the giddy Turkish pashas, and after them Tommy Atkins dropped in and set the place to rights."

"Oh! Yaas! Frightfully interestin', isn't it?" said Mauly, yawning. "But what I chiefly want to know is, is it fearfully hot in the summer?"

"Terrifically, my esteemed Mauly!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Like a furnace, what?" asked Mauly.

"More or lessfully."

"Dangerous animals — lions and tigers and things?" asked Mauly. "Poisonous serpents, and ferocious brigands, and things like that?"

"Not exactly," said Wharton, staring. "What the dickens — Plenty of scorpions, I believe."

"Well, scorpions are dangerous, ain't they?"

"They're not nice! But what "Frightfully hot, and reeking with scorpions!" said Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "I think I'll go."

The Famous Five gazed at Lord Mauleverer. That fortunate youth was able to spend his holidays in any country he chose to name, expense being no object. But why he should select a country because it was frightfully hot, and had scorpions in it, was rather a mystery.

"You see, my uncle, old Brooke, is going out to Egypt," explained Lord Mauleverer. "He's got a lot of land in a sort of fruity part of the country, called the What's-its-name —"

"We haven't had that with Quelch," remarked Bob gravely.

"I — I mean the what-do-you-call-it —"

"Ah! That makes it quite clear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The — the — the " Mauly made a mental effort. "The — the Fayyum! Goodness knows what the Fayyum is — I don't, and don't want to a lot. But nunky's got a big estate there, and there's some question of cutting a canal, or something, and he's going to see about it, and it occurred to him that I might like to go. Far as I know, people go to Egypt for the winter, and it's not what you'd call a summer resort. Still, a lot of people must live there all the year round—so I suppose it will be all right. After all, the hotter it is the better, in a way — if you're sure of the scorpions."

"What the thump —"

"What I mean is, Bunter's comin' home with me for the hols," said Lord Mauleverer.

"He says I'm under a fearful obligation to him, an' I suppose he knows. Think Bunter would like a fearfully hot country, stacked with scorpions?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

"I hardly think he would," said Mauleverer hopefully. "And if he wouldn't care to go, it makes Egypt seem rather attractive, doesn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If Bunter asks you anythin' about Egypt, don't forget to mention the scorpions, will you?" asked Mauly. "You might pile 'em on a bit, perhaps! Think you find scorpions in the beds at the hotels?"

"Hardly!" grinned Bob. "Chiefly in the jolly old tombs, I think."

"Isn't there a desert, or somethin' in Egypt?"

"Bags of it!"

"That's where you perish miserably of thirst, isn't it?" asked Mauly. "Well, if Bunter asks you anythin' about Egypt, put it on a bit about the desert — and fearful sufferings from thirst. Hunger, too — that will make Bunter think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

“And don’t forget the fearful heat — like a furnace in summer — and the scorpions — awful scorpions, and — and I think you might put in a lion or a tiger, or so. What?”

“Ha, ha, ha!” yelled the Famous Five.

“And plague,” said Mauly. “Bunter’s bound to hate plague — plagues are awfully dangerous.”

“But there isn’t any plague, fathead!”

“Oh, draw it mild!” said Mauly. “I may not be a whale on history, but I’ve heard about the plagues of Egypt.”

“You frabjous ass! The plagues of Egypt were more than six or seven thousand years ago.”

“There might be one left over,” said Mauly. “You never know — in the East, you know. If you mention them to Bunter you can pass lightly over the date ——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“But we shan’t be seeing Bunter, fathead,” said Harry. “We shall break up tomorrow, and we’re all looking forward to not seeing Bunter again till next term.”

“But he’s coming home with me, so he says, at least,” said Mauly, “and I’m afraid he means it. Ain’t you fellows coming to Egypt with me?”

The Famous Five stared.

“Are we?” gasped Bob Cherry.

“I hope so! Jolly country, you know,” said Mauleverer persuasively. “Lots of tombs — for fellows who like ’em — fellow who pegged out all of a sudden would find one handy ——”

“Oh, my hat!”

“And — and sunshine,” said Mauleverer. “No end of sunshine. And — and camels! And — and dates — they grow on palms, you know — are you fellows fond of dates? Succulent fruit, I believe. You’d better come.”

“But, you ass ——”

“Now look here, why can’t you fellows come with me for the hols?” demanded Lord Mauleverer.

“You haven’t asked us yet, fathead!” roared Bob Cherry.

Lord Mauleverer started.

“Haven’t I really?” he ejaculated.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I knew there was somethin’ I was goin’ to say to you fellows the other day, only I forgot ——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Sure I didn’t ask you?” inquired Mauly. “Well, I’m askin’ you now. We’ll put in a week at Mauleverer Towers, if you’ll come; and I’ll show you that jolly old scarab that the Greek sportsman was after, what? If there’s some jolly old secret about it, you may be able to spot it. Then we’ll fix it up for Egypt. Nunky rather wants me to go, and he says I can bring any friends I like. You fellows are friends of mine, aren’t you?”

“Bosom pals, if you’re standing a holiday in Egypt, old bean.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“The only drawback is that Bunter’s comin’ — but you men can stand him for a week, can’t you? And he will want to give Egypt a miss, if you pile it on about the fearful heat, and the awful scorpions ——”

“The pilefulness will be terrific.”

“Is it a go, then?” asked Mauly, detaching himself from the armchair.

“We shall have to ask our people first — but I think you can call it a go, old bean,” said Harry Wharton smiling.

“Good egg! Jolly glad you’re comin’, old things — if we don’t drop Bunter, you can help me stand him. But if you tell him a lot about the plagues and things ——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Lord Mauleverer nodded amiably, and ambled out of the study. A moment later he put his head back into the doorway.

“Wasn’t there a famine in Egypt once?” he asked. “I seem to have heard somethin’ of the sort.”

“Ha, ha! Yes!”

“Well, look here, if you could give Bunter a sort of idea that it was still on, you know ——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“And don’t forget the scorpions!”

And Lord Mauleverer ambled away, leaving the Famous Five chortling.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN OFF FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

“I SAY, you fellows

“Hallo, hallo, hallo, old fat frump!”

“You’re not gone yet?” said Billy Bunter, blinking at the chums of the Remove.

“Do we look as if we’re gone?” asked Bob. The gonefulness is not terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter,” smiled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

“Well, most of the fellows are gone,” said Bunter. “Time you started. You’ll lose your train.”

The Famous Five chuckled. Greyfriars School was breaking up for the summer holidays, and, as Bunter said, a lot of the fellows were gone already. Billy Bunter was not gone — he was not going till Lord Mauleverer went, and Lord Mauleverer was not going till the big car arrived to take him away. That tremendous car was even now turning in at the gates of Greyfriars, and gliding up to the House, and the Famous Five, standing on the steps, watched it coming.

Billy Bunter was not yet aware that the Famous Five were booked for Mauleverer Towers. The holiday in Egypt could not be definitely settled till they had communicated with home — though the chums of the Remove had no doubt about it — but, anyhow, they were going home with Mauly for a week at the Towers.

Nobody, however, had taken the trouble to mention that circumstance to the fat Owl.

“Here comes Mauly’s car,” said Bunter. “Well, I shall have to say good-bye to you fellows. Sorry I can’t take you with me.”

“But it would hardly do,” explained Bunter. “A fellow can be pally with all sort of fellows at school, but when he’s staying with a titled friend, he has to be a bit particular, you know.”

“Oh!”

“I hope you’ll have a good time in your humble homes, old chaps,” said Bunter generously.

“Thanks awfully!” said Harry Wharton gravely.

“The thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Bunter.”

“Well, you’d better be off,” said Bunter. “Where’s that ass Mauly — slacking about somewhere I suppose? Topping car, isn’t it — not like my pater’s Rolls — of course — still, a good car. Look here, you fellows, if you’re hanging about to see Mauly —

—”

“Just that!” said Bob cheerily.

“Oh, you own up, do you?” sneered Bunter. “Well, I can tell you there’s nothing doing. If you’d treated me a bit more decently this term, I’d have put in a word for you — in fact, asked Mauly to ask you. But have you treated me decently? Only yesterday you refused to cash a postal order for me, Wharton ——”

“I’ll refuse again to-day, if you like, fatty.”

“You kicked me the day before yesterday, Bull ——”

“Like another?” asked Johnny Bull.

“Taking you all round, you’re an ungrateful lot,” said Bunter. “Now, look here, cut off! Fishing for invitations for the holidays is rather rotten, you know.”

“You ought to know!” agreed Nugent.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“It’s rather thick, hanging on to see Mauly, like this,” said Bunter scornfully. “I must say I despise fellows who grease up to a wealthy chap, and fish for invitations, and all that. Not the sort of thing that I could do myself.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Look here, here comes Mauly — now, the sooner you fellows clear off the better. If you fancy you’re going to stick on to Mauly, you can wash it right out. I’m looking after my pal Mauly, and I can jolly well tell you that I’m not going to let a blessed Bank Holiday crowd glue on to him ——”



Bunter bumped down the steps arms and legs flying in every direction.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here’s the jolly old car, Mauly!” roared Bob Cherry.

“Yaas, old bean!”

Lord Mauleverer came out of the House. “For goodness’ sake, cut off, you fellows!” snapped Bunter. “Go and catch your train — and take your third-class tickets — he, he, he! Leave old Mauly alone. If you fancy you’re sticking on to us, I can only say Yaroooooooooooooop!”

Billy Bunter made that final remark unintentionally, as Johnny Bull gave him a gentle push, which tipped him off the steps.

Bump, bump, bump, bump!

Billy Bunter negotiated the House steps rather like a barrel, roaring as he rolled, and he landed in the quad spluttering.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Yooooooooop!”

Billy Bunter sat up.

“Ready, you men?” asked Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. “Baggage on, what? Get the baggage on, Watson!”

Bunter scrambled to his feet. He set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and gave the Famous Five a devastating blink, as they came down to the big car.

“I say, Mauly ——” howled Bunter.

“Yaas, old fat bean.”

“If you’ve asked these fellows ——”

“Yaas.”

“Well, look here, I see enough of them in the term — too much, in fact, and I don’t want to see anything of them in the hols, see?” hooted Bunter.

“Yaas.”

“And if they’re coming I’m jolly well not!”

“You don’t mean that, old chap?” asked Mauly.

“I do!” said Bunter firmly. “Leave them out, or leave me out. I mean it, Mauly!”

“Good! You fellows can’t possibly desert me now,” said Mauleverer. “Tumble in! Good-bye, Bunter!”

“Wha-a-t?”

“Good-bye! Pleasant hols, old man! See you next term.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Lord Mauleverer and the Famous Five packed themselves into the car. Billy Bunter glared at them, with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

“Why, you — you beast!” he gasped. “I — I — I mean, my dear old chap, I wouldn’t let you down for worlds! I say, you fellows, make room for a chap!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Comin’ after all?” asked Mauly.

“Yes, old fellow, I’m not the man to let you down,” said Billy Bunter affectionately.

“Is it likely?”

“Fraid not,” agreed Lord Mauleverer. And William George Bunter was in the car as it rolled away from Greyfriars; though had William George been able to foresee the wild adventures that were in store for him, it is probable that he would have let his pal Mauly down, with a bump!

