



CHAPTER I

"I SAY, BILLY!"

Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form at Greyfriars, squeaked his loudest squeak.

Billy Bunter, of the Remove, certainly heard that squeak.

But he did not heed it.

Billy Bunter was just emerging from the tuck-shop at Greyfriars when Sammy's eyes, and spectacles, fell on him. Under a fat arm he had a parcel of considerable bulk.

That parcel, obviously, contained tuck of some kind. It looked, to Sammy, like a big cake. Which looked, also, as if Billy Bunter was in unusual funds. No doubt he had been exercising his skill as a borrower in the Remove. Anyhow there he was, with a parcel, probably a cake, under his fat arm, rolling out of the tuckshop, and rolling on, heedless of the fraternal squeak.

"Billy!" howled Sammy.

Still Billy did not heed. Neither his eyes nor his spectacles turned on his minor. Indeed, so far from heeding Sammy as an affectionate elder brother might have been expected to do, he accelerated. He rolled on, and like Iser in the poem he rolled rapidly.

Sammy was left blinking after him with an indignant blink. Billy Bunter disappeared into the House, leaving him indignantly blinking.

Sammy Bunter breathed very hard.

This was the limit.

Sammy had been looking for his major. Sammy was in a state not uncommon among fags of the Second-form, which he would have described as "stony". In such circumstances it was seldom of any use to apply to his major. Billy seldom had any money, and when he had any, it always went without delay to the tuckshop. But, as it happened, the morrow was Sammy's birthday. Sammy remembered that, whether Billy did or not. At such an auspicious time, Sammy considered, Billy might have been good for a "bob" at least—possibly half-a-crown, if he chanced happily to be in funds.

Instead of which, there was Billy, heedless of Sammy and of the anniversary on the morrow, rolling off with a big cake under his arm: not even asking his minor up to his study to share it with him!

Brotherly love was not highly developed in the Bunter clan. But this really was the limit. At that moment, Sammy Bunter would have been quite pleased to smack the fattest head in the Remove!

CHAPTER II

"**B**ILLY, OLD chap!"

The fact that he would rather have liked to smack the fattest head in the Remove, could hardly have been guessed from the affectionate tone in which Sammy Bunter spoke, as he blinked into No. 7 study in the Remove passage.

"I say, you know, it's my birthday to-morrow, and—"

Sammy broke off at that. He discerned that he was addressing empty space. Billy Bunter was not in his study.

Sammy had followed him up, after thinking the matter over. He expected to find his major dealing with that cake: and a reminder that the morrow was Sammy's birthday might have its effect. It was a surprise to find that Billy was not there.

"Oh, crikey!" ejaculated Sammy.

He rolled into the study.

On the table lay the parcel he had seen under Billy Bunter's arm. He blinked at it with keen interest. On closer inspection, there was no doubt that it contained a cake. From a large cardboard box, wrapped in paper and tied with string, a faint but delightful aroma was perceptible. It was a cake—a large cake—a luscious cake!

Sammy's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles, and his extensive mouth watered.

That cake was at his mercy!

Why Billy Bunter had not started on it yet was quite a puzzle. Sammy had taken it for granted that Billy had conveyed it to his lair to devour it without

delay. But he had not even unpacked it. There it was, still tied up in the box, as when he had carried it out of the tuck-shop. Possibly he was going to call other Remove fellows to the feast. If so, his minor evidently was not to be included—he had passed his minor by like the idle wind which he regarded not.

Such unbrotherly conduct naturally moved Sammy's indignation. He was still more deeply moved by the cake! In about a hundredth part of a second, Sammy's mind was made up. He was going to snoop that cake! Billy Bunter, in the Remove, was well known as a snooper of tuck. For once he was going to be, so to speak, the snoopee instead of the snooper! Serve him jolly well right, was Sammy's opinion.

In a matter of moments, the string was untied, the paper unwrapped, and the cardboard box opened. Sammy's eyes danced behind his spectacles, as he gazed at a large, luscious, scrumptious cake. Shillings and shillings must have been expended on that cake: Billy Bunter must have "touched" three or four fellows in the Remove for small loans to make up the sum! And he had been going to keep it all for himself, regardless of fraternal claims, caring nothing for Sammy's imminent birthday! Not if Sammy knew it!

Fat fingers lifted the cake from the box.

Sammy was about to roll doorward with it, but he paused.

He did not want that cake's disappearance to be discovered too soon. Billy might suspect who had been there, and follow the trail! He was welcome to do so after Sammy had disposed of the cake. But not before that.

The fat fag turned back to the table.

A dusty old hassock, on which Billy Bunter was accustomed to rest his feet when he sprawled in the study armchair, was close at hand. Sammy lifted it into the cardboard box. It weighed more or less the same as the cake. Then swiftly he wrapped up the box in the paper again, and retied the string.

That parcel now looked exactly the same as when Billy Bunter had deposited it on the table. Until he unwrapped it, he could not know, or suspect, that any change had taken place in its contents.

Sammy chuckled.

He was through now in No. 7. With a big cake under a fat arm, he rolled out of the study, and rolled down the passage to the stairs.

CHAPTER III

"HALLO!"
 "Whose cake?"
 "You fat sweep!"
 "Bag him!"

It was sheer ill-luck for Sammy Bunter, that as he rolled across the Remove

landing to the staircase, four Remove fellows came up the stairs in a bunch. Bolsover major, Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, all stared at Sammy: and closed round him promptly. A fag of the Second-form, rolling out of the Remove studies with a cake under his arm, was an object not of suspicion but of certainty.

"Whose cake?" grinned Skinner.

"By gum!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "That fat villain Bunter snoops tuck in the studies—now his minor seems to be starting on the same game. Where did you get that cake, young Bunter?"

"I—I—I—!" stammered Sammy.

"Snooped it, of course," said Skinner. "Whose is it?"

Sammy Bunter, instead of answering that question, made a wild rush to dodge Bolsover and Co. and escape. But he had simply no chance. Skinner



"Serve him jolly well right," was Sammy's opinion.

and Snoop grasped him, while Bolsover major jerked away the cake. Only too clearly and sadly Bunter minor was not going to enjoy that luscious cake snooped from his major's study.

"I—I say, you gimme my cake!" gasped Sammy.

"Yours?" grinned Bolsover.

"More ours than yours, I fancy!" chuckled Skinner.

"Much more!" said Snoop. "Boot him out! Give him a tip about snooping tuck in Remove studies."

"What-ho!"

Bolsover major, Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, all kicked together. A fat fag, yelling, fled down the staircase—minus the cake. That prize was left in the hands of Bolsover and Co.

"I wonder whose it is!" remarked Stott.

"Ours!" said Skinner, positively. "Come along to my study, you fellows, and we'll whack it out."

They went along to Skinner's study. Ten minutes later, that cake had disappeared from existence, to the last crumb and the last plum.

CHAPTER IV

"HOW MANY 'n's' in 'many', Toddy?"

Billy Bunter asked that question, the following morning. Peter Todd had come up to the study for his books. He found his fat study-mate there—standing by the table, blinking through his big spectacles at a parcel thereon, and with a label in one fat hand, a pen in the other.

"Eh! One for choice," answered Toddy.

"Sure?" asked Bunter, doubtfully. "I fancy there are two, Peter."

"Put as many as you like!" said Peter.

"Well, I want to get this right," said Bunter. "I've got to put a message on a birthday present, you know. It's my minor's birthday to-day, and I'm giving him a cake! I say, Sammy saw me getting it at the tuck-shop yesterday, but I'll bet he never guessed that it was for him! Of course I never told him—it's a surprise for him, you know. I'm going to take it down and give it to him before class. Think there's only one 'n' in 'many'?"

"Yes, ass."

"Well, if you think there's only one, I expect there's two," said Bunter. "You can't spell, old chap."

Toddy chuckled, and quitted the study with his books. Billy Bunter proceeded to write on the label:

MENNY HAPPEY RETERNS OF THE DAY.

Then he rolled out of No. 7 with the wrapped cardboard box. Many times since he had invested in that birthday cake, Billy Bunter had been tempted to unpack it, and park it in his extensive interior. But with quite unusual self-denial, he had manfully resisted that temptation. W. G. Bunter was generally chiefly concerned about W. G. Bunter: but blood, after all, was thicker than water: it was Sammy's birthday, and Bunter was going to present him with a cake. He had borrowed "bobs" and "tanners" up and down the Remove for that purpose: and he was not going back on it. This was going to be a happy surprise for Sammy: though, had Billy Bunter unpacked that box, its contents would certainly have been a surprise for Billy! Happily unaware of any change in the contents of that cardboard box, the Owl of the Remove rolled away with it, to look for his minor, and make the presentation before the bell rang for class.

CHAPTER V

"SAMMY!"
Sammy Bunter eyed his major warily.
He was ready to dodge.

Billy Bunter rolled up to him, with a parcel under a fat arm. Sammy knew that parcel. Why Billy had not yet unpacked it, and discovered a dusty old hassock within, Sammy did not know. But evidently Billy hadn't, for the parcel looked exactly as Sammy had left it the day before. But it seemed to Sammy that Billy must suspect something, or why had he come up to him with that parcel? So Sammy Bunter was wary.

"Looking for you, Sammy," said Bunter, cheerily. "Forgotten that it's your birthday to-day, old chap?"

"Eh?"

"I've got a present for you."

"What?"

"A cake!" said Bunter, beaming. "And a jolly good cake, Sammy! You know those seven-and-six cakes at the tuck-shop?"

"Oh!" gasped Sammy.

"I've spent all my pocket-money on it," continued Bunter. "I didn't borrow a bob each from Wharton and his gang, and a tanner from Smithy, and a couple of bob from Mauly—nothing of the kind. And here you are, Sammy! Take it!"

Billy Bunter handed over the parcel. Sammy Bunter mechanically took it, in his fat hands, his eyes almost popping through his spectacles.

He blinked at the inscription on the label: "Menny happye reterns of the day." The dreadful truth dawned on him. The cake he had snooped in his major's study, and which Bolsover and Co. had long since devoured had been

intended for him—a birthday cake! If he hadn't snooped it, it would have been still in that box, presented to him by his major!

Sammy could have groaned. If ever a snooper of tuck repented him of his snooping, Sammy Bunter did at that moment.

"Oh, crikey!" he said, faintly.

"Open the box, old chap!" said Bunter, encouragingly. "You'll see that it's a topping cake!"

Sammy seemed in no hurry to open the box. He was only too sadly and sorrowfully aware of the contents: and he was not interested in dusty old hassocks!

"It's really topping," said Bunter. "One of those seven-and-sixers, you know—lots of plums, and marzipan on top! Hallo! there goes the bell—I've got to cut—can't be late for Quelch."

Billy Bunter rolled away, to join the Remove fellows heading for their form-room. Sammy Bunter was left with his birthday present in his fat hands, and an expression on his face that might have touched a heart of stone!

THE END

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