

# JUST LIKE BESSIE BUNTER



## CHAPTER I

“MARJORIE—”  
“Go away!”

Bessie Bunter, in the doorway of No. 7 Study in the Fourth, at Cliff House School, addressed Marjorie Hazeldene. But it was Clara Trevlyn who answered: and her answer was short and sharp.

Three junior girls, in No. 7, were busy. Interruptions—to judge by Clara’s reply to Bessie—were not wanted.

“But I say—!” recommenced Bessie Bunter.

“Shut that door!”

“Cat!”

Bessie Bunter did not go away, and she did not shut the door. She stood blinking at Marjorie and Co, with the little round eyes and big round spectacles that were so like her brother Billy’s at Greyfriars.

“We’re rather busy now, Bessie,” said Marjorie, mildly.

“But I say—”

“Do be quiet,” said Dolly Jobling, “Clara’s got to get that translation done for Miss Bellew—”

“Never mind that,” said Bessie, “I want—”

“Go away!” shrieked Clara.

"But I want—"

"Quiet!"

Clara Trevlyn was, in fact, working against time. She had a Latin translation to do for her form-mistress, Miss Bellew. That translation might have been, and really ought to have been, done long ago. But it had been left to the last minute—and a little later! It was overdue in Miss Bellew's study. Now Clara was grinding at it.

Her friends were helping. Marjorie had an open dictionary, looking out words. Dolly had an open grammar, assisting with conjugations. But all three knew that Clara's belated effort was probably too late.

There was just a chance. Miss Bellew was in the Staff Room, where the tide of conversation always ran full and strong. She might remain talking in the Staff Room till Clara had had time to get that translation done, and conveyed down to her study, and placed upon the table there to meet her eyes. Otherwise, there was a spot of bother in store. Bellew might even come up to No. 7 to inquire after that wretched translation, if she did not find it in her study. In such circumstances, moments were precious: and Bessie Bunter, always a little superfluous, was more superfluous than ever.

But Bessie was a sticker. She had come to Marjorie's study because she wanted something, and she was not going away without what she wanted.

"I say, I want—!" Bessie began again.

Clara gave her a look that was almost ferocious.

"Do you want this inkpot at your silly head?" she demanded.

"Eh! No."

"You'll get it, if you interrupt again."

"Cat!"

"Another time, Bessie—!" urged Marjorie.

"Another time won't do," said Bessie Bunter. "Bellew's in the Staff Room now, and I've got to get through before she goes back to her study. Have you got a bottle of gum?"

"Gum!" repeated Marjorie, blankly.

"Yes. I've asked Barbara and Mabel, and they won't let me have theirs. I know you've got some in this study. I want it for Bellew. Look here, Marjorie, I know you've got a bottle of gum, and I'm in a hurry. Suppose Bellew came back to her study and caught me there, putting gum in her Latin book—"

"What?" gasped Marjorie.

"Wha-a-t?" stuttered Dolly Jobling.

Both of them stared at the fat figure in the doorway. Even Clara, for a moment, looked up from that worrying translation, to stare at Bessie. Three horrified stares were fixed on Bessie Bunter.

"Gum—in Miss Bellew's Latin book!" said Marjorie. "For goodness sake, Bessie, don't think of anything of the kind."

"Forget it, you little duffer!" gasped Dolly Jobling.

Sniff, from Bessie.

"Bellew gave me a detention this morning," she said. "I'm going to put gum in her Latin book, and stick all the leaves together. Fancy her face when the book won't come open in class! What? He, he, he!"

Bessie Bunter chuckled, a fat chuckle.

"You little fathead!" exclaimed Clara.

"Oh, really, Clara—"

"Bellew would take you to the Head! You'd get into an awful row. Forget all about it, and now go away."

"I'll watch it!" said Bessie. "How's she to know? Think I'm going to tell all about it? I say, Marjorie, do give me your bottle of gum."

Marjorie shook her head.

"You can't play such a trick on Miss Bellew, Bessie—"

"I jolly well can!" declared Bessie. "All I want is a bottle of gum. Can I have yours?"

"Not to play tricks on Miss Bellew. Go away and forget all about it."

"Shan't!"

"Now, look here, Bessie—"

"Cat!"

Bessie Bunter frowned. Evidently, she was very much taken with her idea of gumming the pages of Miss Bellew's Latin book. Not only would it be a tremendous joke on the mistress of the Fourth, but it would be tit for tat, for the detention she had given the fat and fatuous Bessie. Bellew's face, in Bessie's opinion, would be worth watching, in the form-room, when she tried to open that book, and the leaves would not come apart. Certainly, Miss Bellew was likely to be quite furious about it: but what would that matter, so long as she did not know that Elizabeth Bunter was the culprit? She would have all the Cliff House Fourth to choose from, to discover who had gummed that book.

"I say, you girls, think what a joke it will be on Bellew," urged Bessie. "It will make the whole class laugh when she can't open that book—"

"It won't make you laugh, when she walks you off to Miss Primrose!" said Dolly.

"She won't know who did it! I keep on telling you that she won't know a thing. Where's your gum, Marjorie?"

Clara Trevlyn rose from the table and stepped to the door. She grasped two fat shoulders, and twirled Bessie Bunter into the passage. Then she slammed the door, and returned to the table.

But she had hardly restarted on the translation, when the door reopened, and a fat face looked in.

"Cat!" said Bessie.

"Go away!" hooted Clara.

"I'm going to find a bottle of gum, and I'm going to gum Bellew's Latin book, and you jolly well can't stop me!" snorted Bessie. "So yah!"

And with that, Elizabeth Bunter slammed the door, in her turn, and was gone. Her plump existence was forgotten a few moments later, as three heads bent over that troublesome translation.

Minutes were passing: and minutes were precious. Clara wished that she had devoted herself to that task a little earlier. If Bellew did not find it in her study only too probably she might come up to inquire: and if she found it unfinished—

It simply had to be done, and Clara slogged on, and her friends gave all the aid they could: in dread every moment of hearing a well-known step in the passage outside.

But fortune favoured the industrious! Clara wrote her last line, and the thing was done—she threw down her pen, just as a firm—a very firm—tread was heard.

Clara gave a low whistle.

"That's Bellew!" she breathed.

And the next moment Miss Bellew's severe face was visible, as the door opened: and the form-mistress of the Fourth walked into No. 7 Study.

## CHAPTER II

MARJORIE and Co. rose respectfully.

Miss Bellew's face was often kindly. Sometimes it was severe. It was severe at the moment. It was very unusually severe.

No doubt Miss Bellew was annoyed about that translation. Clara Trevlyn should, undoubtedly, have handed it in earlier. Even yet she had not handed it in, though fortunately—very fortunately—it was finished and ready for inspection. But the three junior girls could see that there was something more than that translation, belated as it was, the matter. It was not merely annoyance that was expressed in Miss Bellew's face. It was wrath. Her lips were set, and there was a glint in her eyes.

"I—I—I've done it, Miss Bellew!" stammered Clara. "I—I was just going to bring it down to your study, Miss Bellew."

"You should have brought your translation to me long ago, Clara!"

"Oh! Yes, Miss Bellew! But—"

"I have spoken to you more than once, Clara, about leaving tasks till the latest possible moment."

"Oh! Yes! I—I—"

"It is a fault you must correct, Clara."

"Oh, certainly, Miss Bellew! Yes."

The mistress of the Fourth picked up the translation from the table. But she did not look at it immediately. She looked at the three girls, in turn: and then looked at them in turn again. Obviously, it was not merely the belatedness of that translation that brought so grim an expression to her face. Marjorie and Co. wondered what it might be.

"Clara!" came in a rap.

"Yes, Miss Bellew!" murmured Clara.

"Have you been to my study since class?"

"Oh, now, Miss Bellew. I was going there as soon as I had finished that trans. but—"

"Have you been to my study since class, Marjorie?"

"No, Miss Bellew."

"Have you, Dorothy?"

"Oh! No!" gasped Dolly Jobling.

Something, the three girls could guess, must have happened in Miss Bellew's study. Whatever it was, she had discovered it when she returned there from the Staff Room. Involuntarily, Marjorie and Clara and Dolly exchanged startled glances, as they remembered Bessie Bunter. If the plumpest member of the Cliff House Fourth had carried on with that gummy scheme—

"Has—has—has anything happened, Miss Bellew?" stammered Marjorie.

Miss Bellew's brows, already knitted, became more closely knit.

"A foolish, reckless, and disrespectful prank has been played in my study!" she snapped. "The book I use in the Latin lesson has been drenched—soaked—with gum—"

"Oh!" gasped three girls together.

"A whole bottle of gum must have been poured into it! The pages are stuck together! I doubt whether I shall be able to use the book again. Someone must have gone into my study while I was in the Staff Room, and done this."

"Oh!" Three more gasps.

Evidently, Bessie had carried on! No gum had been available in her own study or in Marjorie's. But she had found gum somewhere: and carried on. Miss Bellew's Latin book had come to a sticky end!

Three girls could only hope that Bellew would never discover who had done

it. Certainly they were not going to utter so much as a whisper to give a clue.

"Whoever has done this," resumed Miss Bellew, "will be taken to the Principal. The punishment will be severe. Such an outrageous act cannot be punished too severely."

With that, Miss Bellew, at last, looked at the translation. She crossed to the window, for a better light, and stood scanning Clara's task. Apparently she was satisfied that Marjorie and Co. had had nothing to do with the gummy exploit in her study. But she looked like examining that translation even more meticulously than usual, in her present grim mood. Clara could only hope that she had not perpetrated too many howlers.

There was deep silence in No. 7 in the Fourth, while Miss Bellew stood by the window, and Marjorie and Clara and Dolly stood by the table, looking at one another eloquently, in a hushed group.

The silence was suddenly broken: as Bessie Bunter rolled into the study, chuckling, her fat face wreathed in grins.

### CHAPTER III

"I SAY, you girls—"

"Bessie!"

"He, he, he! I've done it!"

"Quiet!" gasped Marjorie.

"He, he, he!" cachinnated Bessie. Chuckling gleefully, she blinked at three horrified faces. She did not, for the moment, observe that another person was in the study standing by the window. Her eyes and spectacles were on Marjorie and Co. "I say, Bellew will be wild! What? Barbara wouldn't let me have her gum, and you wouldn't let me have yours, but I found some in Marcia's study, and I've jolly well done it! Bellew will be hopping mad! He, he, he! I say, poured the whole bottle into her Latin book! Fancy her face when she finds it! What? He, he, he!"

Bessie chuckled explosively.

Evidently, she was tremendously pleased with her exploit.

Miss Bellew, by the window, stood as if petrified. Marjorie and Clara and Dolly could only gaze at Bessie Bunter in dumb horror.

Bessie chuckled on.

"I say, will Bellew be as mad as a hatter? What? He, he, he! I say, nearly every leaf of her Latin book stuck together, in a chunk! She won't be able to

use it in class again, I'll bet. He, he, he! I say, Clara, what are you making faces at me for? You needn't make faces at me. I say, what's the matter?" added Bessie, as it dawned on her fat mind that something was the matter.

"BESSIE!"

It was a deep voice from the window.

Bessie Bunter jumped.

In fact, she bounded.

She spun round like a plump humming-top, her eyes almost bulging through her spectacles at the unexpected figure by the window.

"Oooooooh!" gasped Bessie.

"Bessie!"

"Oh, dear! Oh! I—I didn't see you, Miss Bellew—oh." Bessie's fat brain almost swam, as she blinked at her form-mistress. She realized that Miss Bellew had heard every word.

"So it was you, Bessie—!"

"Oh! No! I—I—I haven't been to your study, Miss Bellew, and—and I never poured any gum into your book while I was there—I—I hadn't any gum, Miss Bellew—I never found any in Marcia's study—"

Miss Bellew laid Clara's translation on the table. The look she fixed on Elizabeth Bunter was like unto that of the fabled basilisk.

"You will come with me, Bessie!"

"I—I say, I—I never—"

"I shall take you to the Principal—"

"Oh, lor'!"

"Miss Primrose will deal with you. Come!"

"But—but I—I never didn't wasn't—"

"Come!"

Miss Bellew swept from No. 7. Bessie Bunter gave Marjorie and Co, one dismal, dolorous blink, and followed.

"Poor Bessie!" sighed Marjorie.

"Just like Bessie!" said Dolly.

"Just!" agreed Clara.

And they smiled. Really, they could not help it. They sympathized: but really and truly, it was just like Bessie Bunter!

THE END