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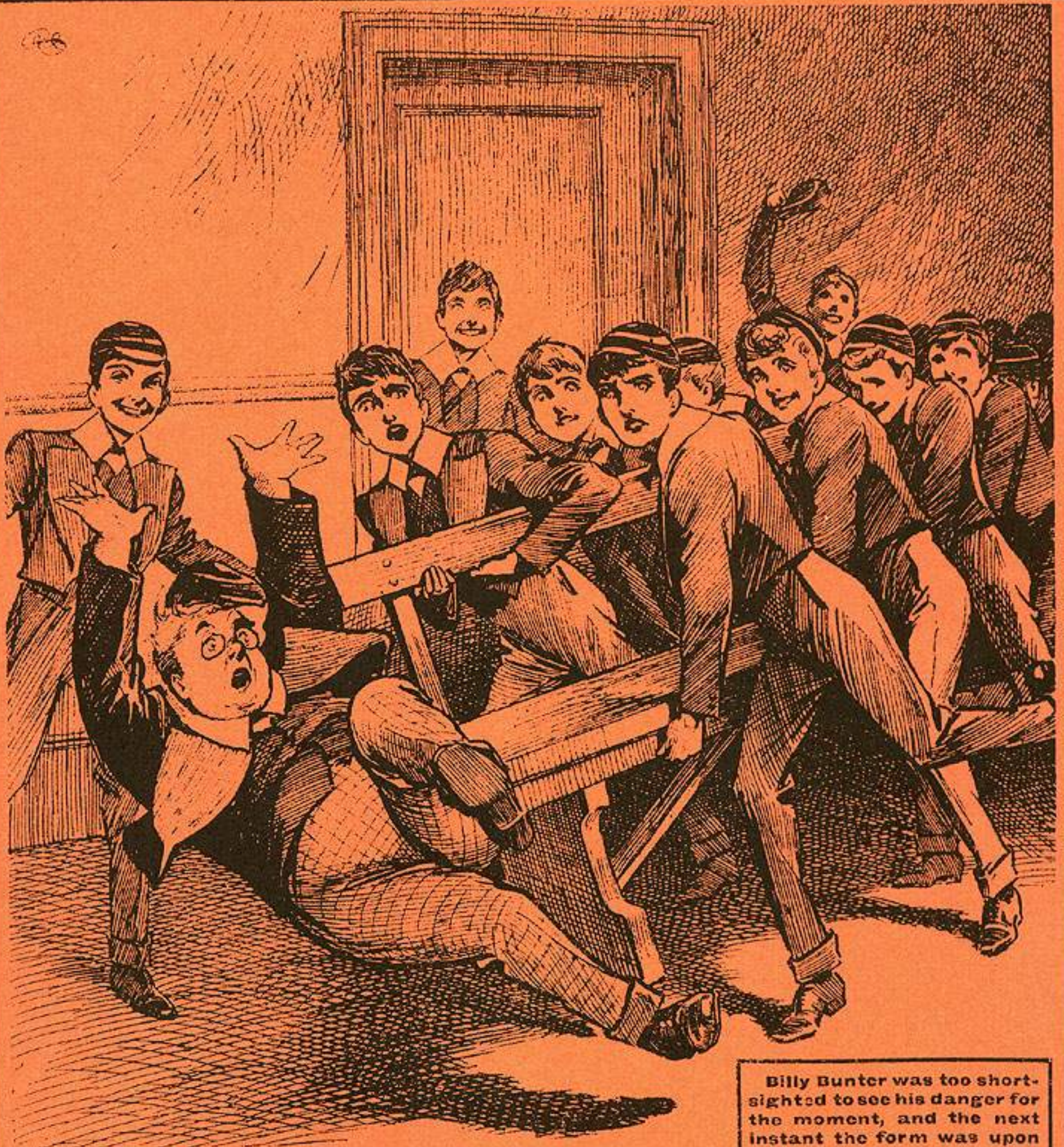
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NO. 108
VOL. 4

The Greyfriars Plot.

A Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.



Billy Bunter was too short-sighted to see his danger for the moment, and the next instant the form was upon him, and he was knocked over. "Ow! Ow!" he shouted.

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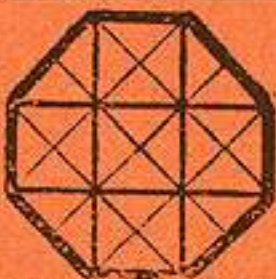


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The Greyfriars Plot!

A Special Double-Length
School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.
BY
FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
An Overflow Meeting.

TAP!
Thump!
Bang!
Thump, thump, thump!
There was a knocking, loud and continuous, at the door of Harry Wharton's study in the Remove passage at Greyfriars. The door of No. 1 Study was generally open to all comers; but on the present occasion it was locked, as Micky Desmond had discovered when, the first to arrive, he reached the door with a double sheet of foolscap rolled in his hand. Then came Ogilvy, and then Tom Brown, and then

Morgan, and then Russell. They all had papers or books in their hands, and they all looked suspiciously at one another. They all tapped at Harry Wharton's door, and then tried the handle, and then thumped, and then kicked at the lower panels.
And all in vain!
The door did not open!
"Faith, and they must be out," said Micky Desmond, considerably puzzled. "Phwy doesn't the omadhaun open the dure?"
"He wouldn't go out and lock the door after him," said Ogilvy, bestowing a kick upon the lower panels that made even the stout oak ring.
"Wharton! Wharton!"

"Nugent!"

"Inky!"

There was no reply from within the study.

The juniors looked at one another in great exasperation.

Several more fellows came along the passage. Some of them had little volumes in their hands, and some of them rolls of paper, large or small. They looked curiously, if not suspiciously, at the fellows already outside No. 1 Study.

"There may be grub in the study, and he may have locked the door to keep Bunter out," Russell suggested.

"Oh, really, Russell," said a fat, spectacled junior, coming up the passage, "I hope you don't mean to imply that I cannot be trusted with grub."

Russell sniffed.

"You can be trusted to eat it, I suppose?" he replied.

"Do you fellows want to get into the study?"

"Yes! Yes! Yes!"

"Then why don't you go in?"

"Door's locked, idiot!"

"I'm jolly well going in," said Billy Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to be kept out of my own study."

And he banged at the door.

But there was no reply from within, and the fat junior banged and banged again, without eliciting any response.

"Wharton must be there!" exclaimed Skinner, coming along the passage with a roll of paper in his hand. "It's past the time for the meeting he mentioned in his notice."

"Yes, of course! He's there!"

"Then, faith, why doesn't he open the door?"

"They can't be deaf or asleep," said Hazeldene.

"Bunter belongs to the study, too. Call out to them, Bunt."

Billy Bunter put his mouth to the keyhole.

"I say, you fellows!" he called out.

A voice came at last from within the study.

"Hallo!"

"Let me in!"

"Can't!"

"Why can't you?"

"Busy."

"Look here, Wharton, I'm not going to be kept out of my own study!" shouted Billy Bunter, through the keyhole. "I suppose you're having a feed in there, and you want to keep me out. It's not fair. I don't call it manly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it a feed?" yelled Bunter, exasperated.

"Ha, ha! No!"

"What is it, then?"

"A meeting."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Skinner pushed Bunter away from the keyhole, and took his place there. The fat junior expostulated warmly, but that did not matter to Skinner.

"Hallo, in there!" called out Skinner. "It's time for the meeting!"

"That's all right, the meeting's here!"

"But we've come to it."

"Bosh!"

"We've brought our parts."

"Rats!"

"Look here, Wharton—"

"Buzz off!"

"We'll jolly well smash in the door if you don't open it!" roared Skinner. "Do you think we're jolly well going to be kept out of the meeting in this way?"

No reply!

"Wharton!"

Silence!

"Nugent! Inky! Bob Cherry!"

Still silence.

Skinner kicked wildly at the door, and half a dozen other feet joined his, and the door rattled and shook. But the oak was thick, and the lock was strong. There was no chance of getting into the study that way.

"My only hat!" said Ogilvy, in wrath. "The frightful cheek of those bounders, holding a committee meeting all by themselves!"

"The nerve!"

"Have the blessed door down," said Bulstrode. "There's a form up the passage, and we could biff the lock off with a bang or two."

"Good egg!"

"Go it!"

Half a dozen excited juniors jammed their books and papers into their pockets, and ran for the form. It was a heavy oak settle, under a window at the end of the passage. It was heavy, and needed three or four juniors to get it along.

Six or seven lent their aid, and the form was rushed along the passage to the door of No. 1 Study.

"Now, then," said Bulstrode. "This way—here you are! Rush it along! Get out of the way, Bunter!"

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The fat junior blinked at him. He was too short-sighted to see his danger for the moment, and the next instant the form was upon him, and he was knocked over. He yelled as he rolled on the linoleum.

"Ow! What was that? Ow! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! I say, you fellows—"

"Do get out of the way, Bunter!"

"I'm hurt!"

"You'll be hurt some more if you don't clear off!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "Shift, you ass, or I'll tread on you!"

"Ow! Ow!"

Billy Bunter squirmed along the passage with wonderful quickness, considering his girth. The excited juniors brought the form round to No. 1 Study door. The passage was wide, and took in the length of the form, and gave them room to draw it back far enough to give a heavy blow upon the door.

Bulstrode knocked at the door.

"Wharton!"

Silence within the study, only broken by a faint sound suspiciously like a chuckle.

"Wharton! Open the door, or we'll biff it in!"

Another faint chuckle.

"Oh, all right!" said Bulstrode. "Go!"

The juniors rushed the form forward.

It crashed upon the door, and the crash was terrific. The door held fast, and the form recoiled, and the jerk sent its bearers staggering to the floor. They rolled over one another on the linoleum, and there were loud yells as the form bumped on them.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Billy Bunter, from along the passage. "I'm jolly glad! Ha, ha, ha!"

Ogilvy scrambled up. He was hurt, and at a time when he was hurt, it was not judicious for Billy Bunter to state that he was jolly glad.

Ogilvy made a rush for Bunter, and Bunter made a rush for the stairs. He reached them first, fortunately for him, but unfortunately missed his footing in his haste, and rolled down instead of running.

Ogilvy burst into a roar on the landing.

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm jolly glad!" he shouted, in his turn.

Bunter clung to the banisters and stopped his flight, and gasped and groaned. Ogilvy ran back to the door of No. 1, and joined the juniors who were raising the form again. Billy Bunter crept up the stairs to the landing, rubbing his aching bones as he went, his eyes gleaming behind his spectacles.

It was surprising that the noise in the passage had not brought a prefect upon the scene. The juniors were too excited to think of prefects.

But Bunter, the ventriloquist, could imitate any voice in Greyfriars, and a scheme for getting "his own back" was working in his brain.

Crash!

The form bumped on the door again, and this time the assailants were more careful, and did not fall down in the recoil.

The door groaned ominously.

There was a voice from within the study. Harry Wharton & Co. were evidently disturbed at last by the methods of the assailants.

"Hold on, you asses!" shouted Wharton, from within. "There'll be a row if you smash that lock, you howling duffers!"

"Open the door, then!"

"Can't be did!"

"Then we'll burst it in!" said Bulstrode

"Look here, Bulstrode—"

"Rats! Are you going to open the door?"

"No!"

"Then here goes!"

Crash!

"Boys!"

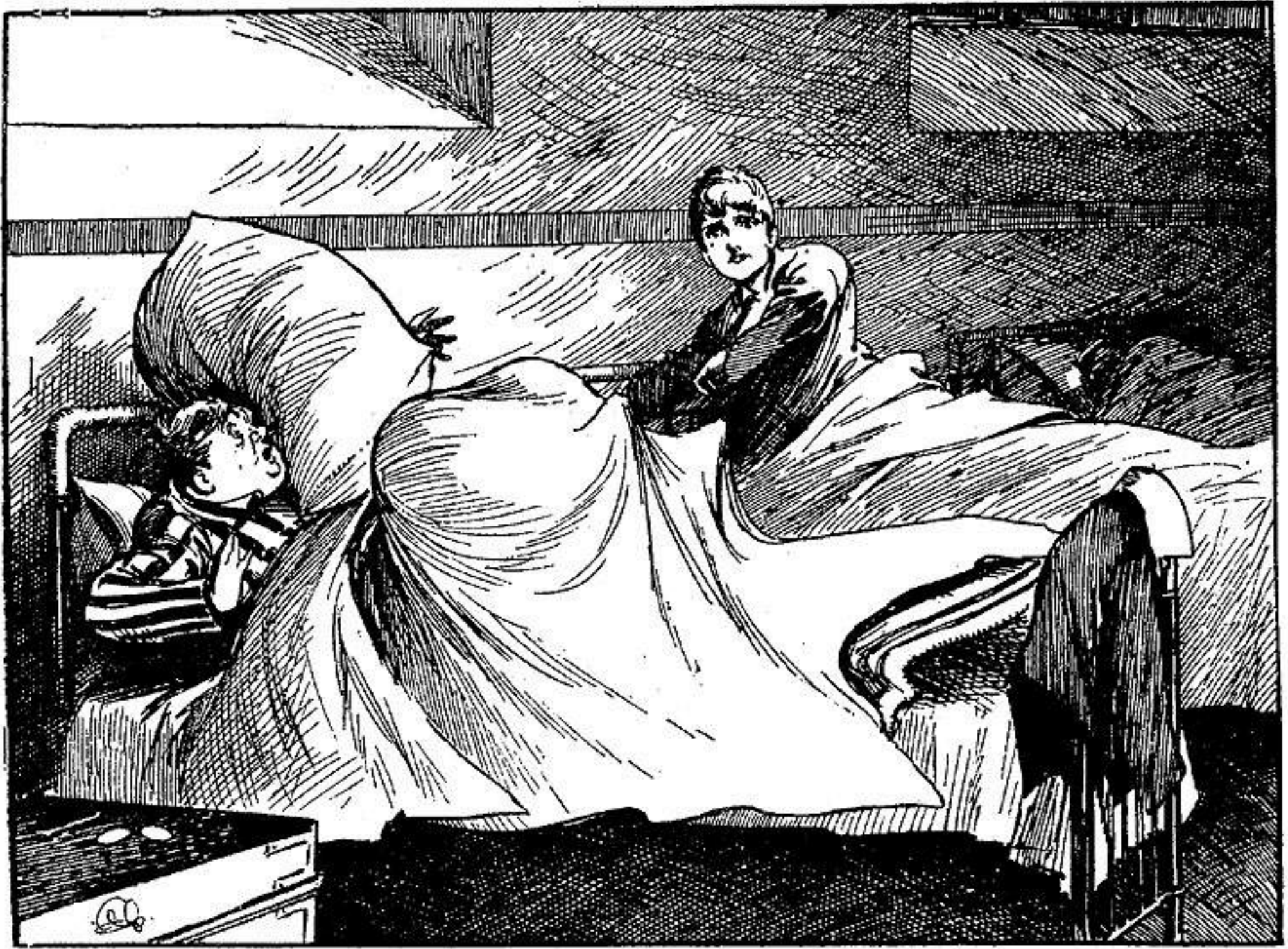
It was a deep, stern voice from the direction of the stairs, and as the well-known tones of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, fell upon their ears, the juniors simply jumped.

"Boys! What does this mean?"

The Removites did not stay to explain. They didn't want to argue the point with their Form-master. They dropped the form, and bolted helter-skelter up the passage. The form lay in the middle of the corridor, and in about a second that, and the bruises on the door, only remained to tell of the attack on No. 1 Study. The attacking party were gone!

Billy Bunter blinked along the passage, with a grin.

Mr. Quelch, as a matter of fact, was absent from Greyfriars at that particular moment, but the Greyfriars ventriloquist had imitated his well-known tones with effect. A dead silence reigned in the passage which a few seconds before had been so noisy; and the juniors, scattered in the passages, were stealing quietly away.



A pillow whizzed through the air, and Billy Bunter suddenly collapsed into his bed with a gasp. "Now go to sleep!" roared Bob Cherry.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Amateur Dramatists.

HARRY WHARTON grinned in the study as he heard the departing feet of the Removites. He had not heard the effort of the Greyfriars ventriloquist, but he guessed that some master's voice had interrupted the siege of No. 1 Study. Blessed silence settled upon the room, as the besiegers ceased to hammer and the door to rattle.

There were four juniors in the study—Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, to whom the study belonged, and Bob Cherry, from No. 13. The four were very busy, and they were not likely to allow their labours to be interrupted by the obstreperous members of the Lower Fourth.

"Thank goodness those duffers are gone!" exclaimed Wharton. "I wonder how they can expect us to admit the whole Form into a meeting in a study this size."

"The absurdness of the expectation is great," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, in his beautiful English.

"Brown, Linley, and Hazeldene might have come in, but we can't have the whole blessed Form," Wharton remarked. "We've got to talk the matter over and settle the parts. The play is to come off next week, and we've got plenty of rehearsing and learning up lines to do."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"I don't see that we can do better than choose Shakespeare," Harry went on thoughtfully. "Shakespeare's all right. It's a modern custom to run down Shakespeare, but there's no getting away from the fact that Shakespeare wrote some jolly good stuff."

"There's 'Hamlet,' for example," said Nugent. "The part of Hamlet would suit me down to the ground. I come out specially strong in the soliloquy. I'll tell you how it goes—"

"Oh, don't trouble now!"

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE CAD OF THE SIXTH."

"No trouble at all. 'To be or not to be, that is the question.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings are harrows of outrageous fortune—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"The harrows," said Wharton, grinning. "They were arrows when I last read the play."

"Rats! It means harrows—such as harrowing the feelings, and so on," said Nugent. "If you heard a chap say arrows, he was a chap who dropped his h's."

"Rats!"

"Well, I think I ought to know, when I always keep a Shakespeare in my box, quite new, and with the blessed pages uncut," said Nugent warmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle! As I was saying—"

"You had finished," said Bob Cherry.

"I hadn't! I was just getting into the swing of it when Wharton interrupted me. It goes on like this."

"Never mind how it goes on, so long as you don't go on."

"Look here, Bob Cherry—"

"This is a meeting not a Shakespeare selection competition," said Bob Cherry. "If it comes to giving selections of Shakespeare, I can give you some rattling things from 'King John.' There's the Prince Arthur scene—"

"Blow Prince Arthur!"

"Heat me those irons hot!" said Bob Cherry obstinately.

"And look thou standest within the arras.

When I strike my foot upon the bosom of the ground
Rush forth and find the boy—I mean, bind the boy—
whom you shall find with me,

Fast to the chair. Be heedful! Hence, and watch!"

"How long have we got to listen to that?" demanded Nugent. "Is this a meeting of the Amateur Dramatic Society, or a spouting match?"

"It's a meeting," said Wharton. "Do shut up, both of you! We might as well have admitted all those duffers to

A Double-Length Tale of Harry Wharton
& Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

spout. I know jolly well they were all bringing copies of 'Julius Cæsar' along with them, and that they were all wanting to play either Brutus or Mark Antony. I know 'em! Now, bless 'King John' and 'Hamlet,' we've settled that 'Julius Cæsar' is to be the thing."

"The settlefulness is terrific. However, if my worthy chums will deignfully lend the polite idea to my suggestfulness, I should like to make an honourable proposal."

"Ask mamma!" said Bob Cherry.
"Oh, don't be funny, Cherry! Go ahead, Inky! What is it?"

"It is the wish of my worthy chums that I should take part in the representation of the esteemed play of the honourable Shakespeare, is it notfully so?" asked the nabob.

"Yes, rather!"
"But the colourfulness of my honourable complexion is not suitable for the parts of the esteemed white sahibs," explained the nabob. "I could not successfully take the part of the Sahib Julius Cæsar, or the esteemed Mark Antony, or the honourable Brutus."

"To say nothing of his giddy English," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Therefore I suggestfully propose the playful tragedy of 'Othello,'" said the nabob. "The title role would suit me down to the groundfully. I should not have to disguise my honourable complexion, as Othello is a dark gentleman. And I have made a study of the honourable works of Shakespeare, under the good master in Bhanipur, who instructed me in the esteemed English language, and I knowfully acquaint myself with the part."

"H'm!"
"I can speak the speechfully of the esteemed Othello from memory," said the nabob modestly.

"More specimens," murmured Nugent.
"Of antres vast and honourable idle deserts,
Roughful quarries, rocks, and hills whose headfulness reaches to the esteemed heavens,
It was my hint to speak."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"She loved me for the dangerousness I had passfully escaped,
And I regarded her lovefully for she did pity them," said the nabob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"The laughfulness of my honourable chums is terrific, but I do not quite perceive the honourable cause," said the nabob gently.

"My dear kid," said Wharton, laughing, "your English is ever so much more poetical than ours, but it isn't quite suited to a Shakespearian role."

"We'll play you in the title role when we're doing the 'Dumb Man from Manchester,' or something in that line," said Bob Cherry.

"'Julius Cæsar' is the thing," said Harry Wharton. "Inky will have to have a part, but I think the Soothsayer will do for him, as the Soothsayer might be supposed to be a—dark gentleman."

"I shall be very happy to be the honourable Soothsayer," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh peacefully.

"Good! Now, I've ear-marked Brutus for myself."

"I don't mind, so long as I'm Mark Antony," said Bob.

"Here, I like that!" exclaimed Nugent indignantly. "What sort of a part am I going to have, then?"

"You can be Julius Cæsar."

"Blow Julius Cæsar! Why, he's killed almost in the beginning," exclaimed Nugent.

"Yes, but that's all right: you can come on again as Octavius Cæsar," explained Wharton. "You get two whacks that way."

Nugent grunted.
"That's all very well, but I think Mark Antony is my little bit. Why, I could do the oration to the mob on my head."

"Well, that wouldn't be any good; Mark Antony has to do it right end up."

"You know what I mean. Just listen——"

"Look here, Nugent——"

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears——"

"Sha'n't; your own are long enough."

"Look here, Cherry——"

"Look here, Nugent——"

Crash!

The amateur dramatists ceased their dispute, which was growing excited, suddenly. A terrific crash proceeded from the window. Fragments of glass flew into the room, scattering all over the carpet, as the end of a ladder suddenly jammed in through the window.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Turned Out!

WHARTON sprang to his feet. For a moment he could scarcely believe his eyes. But there was the broken window, with the fragments of glass scattered on the carpet inside; and there was the end of the ladder sticking through the gap.

"My only hat!"

"It's those duffers again!"

The next moment a face appeared at the gap in the window. It was the face of Skinner. Behind him there was a roar of voices.

"Go it, Skinner!"

"Get the door open!"

"Have 'em out!"

"You ass!" shouted Wharton, springing towards the window.

But he was too late to stop Skinner.

The junior flung the window up, and hurled himself headlong into the room. He rolled on the floor, and crashed against the legs of the table, and sent that article of furniture whirling.

There was a roar from the juniors as the table crashed over, Nugent getting a lapful of pens and papers and ink, and Bob Cherry a crack across the legs from the table edge.

Wharton seized Skinner, who grappled with him and yelled desperately for help.

Stott and Hazeldene appeared at the window one after another, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh rushed to repel boarders.

But he could not hurl the besiegers forth without danger of breaking their necks, while they had no hesitation in clambering in.

Both of them came plunging desperately into the study, and as they rolled on the floor Hazeldene seized Hurree Singh by the leg and yanked him over.

"Oh!" yelled the nabob.

He bumped on the carpet, and Hazeldene rolled over him, and Stott sprang to grapple with Wharton, who was springing towards the window.

They closed and fell on the floor, crashing upon Hazeldene and Inky, eliciting painful yells from both of them.

Meanwhile the window was darkened with head after head, as the exasperated Remove poured to the attack.

The assailants were in deadly earnest. It must have cost them a shilling at least in the form of a tip to obtain the loan of that ladder from Gosling, the school porter, and they evidently meant to get their money's worth out of it.

Ogilvy and Bulstrode rolled over one another in at the window, and Russell, Trevor, and Tom Brown came hurtling in.

The study was getting crowded now.

The Famous Four made a desperate effort to stem the tide of invasion, but in vain. There were long odds against them already, and more juniors were pouring in.

And now knocking could be heard at the door again. Ogilvy rushed across the study, unlocked the door, and threw it open.

A crowd of juniors poured in.

Harry Wharton & Co. drew together, with a hopeless sort of grin. The meeting was "busted up" with a vengeance now. The study was crammed, and excited juniors were trampling over the books and papers on the floor.

"Here, hang it all, get out!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"This isn't a blessed bear-garden, you know!"

"Here we are!" exclaimed Bulstrode triumphantly. "I knew my wheeze of getting the ladder would work out all right."

"Hurrah!"

"Well, now you're here, what do you want?" demanded Nugent.

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ONE HALFPENNY.

"We've come to the meeting," shouted a dozen voices.
 "It's a private committee meeting—"
 "Private committee rats—"
 "Look here!"
 "Bosh! We're going to take part in the meeting. Why, the blessed play comes off next week!" exclaimed Russell.
 "Yes, we're assigning the parts—"
 "And that's where we come in," said Ogilvy, with emphasis. "We're jolly well not going to have the parts assigned in a private committee meeting."
 "Not much!"
 "Hear, hear!"
 "I know jolly well you'll be keeping all the fat for yourselves," said Ogilvy. "Now, I'm going to be Mark Antony."
 "Oh, rats, Ogilvy!" exclaimed Elliott warmly. "I'm going to be Mark Antony. That's the part that just suits me. 'Friends, Romans, countrymen—'"
 "You're both talking out of your hats," said Tom Brown of Taranaki. "I'm Mark Antony. Why, I'm perfect in the part. 'Friends, Romans, countrymen—'"
 "I've played Mark Antony in private theatricals at home," Morgan observed. "Of course, Wharton was going to give that part to me."
 "Of course I wasn't," said Wharton.
 "Now, look here, Wharton—"
 "Oh, shut up, Morgan! I don't say I think much of Wharton's brains as a rule, but I must say I agree with him there."
 "Faith, and so do I!" exclaimed Micky Desmond. "Sure and it's for me that Wharton's reservin' the part intirely!"
 "No good, Micky—Mark Antony hadn't a brogue."
 "Faith, and sure I—"
 "Look here—"
 "I'm jolly well going to be Mark Antony!"
 "You're jolly well not!"
 "Look here, Ogilvy—"
 "Oh, shut up, Trevor!"
 "I'll jolly well shut you up—"
 "I'd like to see you do it!"
 "Here goes!"
 "Ow! Take that!"
 "My only hat! They're turning this affair into a dog-fight!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as Trevor and Ogilvy reeled to and fro in deadly combat; an example speedily followed by Micky Desmond and Morgan.
 "Go it, Micky!"
 "Faith, and sure I—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Get out of our study!" roared Wharton. "You can fight in the passage, you giddy asses! Outside!"
 "Yah!"
 "Chuck them out!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Let's get to business. Now, then, outside with all those silly asses!"
 "Yah! Rats!"
 "Let's chuck them out, and hold a meeting ourselves!" exclaimed Bulstrode. The suggestion was greeted with a shout of approval.
 "Hurrah!"
 "Hear, hear!"
 "Chuck them out!"
 "Hold on!" shouted Wharton. "What do you mean? This is our study! Why, of all the cheek— Chuck it! Leggo! My hat! Oh!"
 The Famous Four hit out in deadly earnest, but there was little room for hitting, and the odds against them were enormous. The rival claimants to the part of Mark Antony left off their private tussle, to join in kicking the Famous Four out of No. 1 Study. Harry Wharton & Co. resisted desperately, but in vain.
 Fighting valiantly, one after another they were hurled forth, and rolled helplessly on the linoleum in the passage.
 They leaped up again and rushed to the attack, but forth they went spinning again, and then Ogilvy slammed the door and locked it on the inside.
 "My hat!" roared Bob Cherry. "Of all the cheek! I'll have the blessed door down! Kick it in!"
 The chums of the Remoye kicked and hammered, but the door resisted all their efforts, as it had previously resisted those of the besiegers. They were still in the midst of their excited attack, when a cane swished through the air, and Nugent gave a roar as it thwacked on his back.
 Wingate, of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, was on the scene, looking very red and angry. It occurred to the juniors—rather late in the day—that they had been making a great deal of noise.
 "Ow!" roared Nugent. "Stop that!"
 Swish! Swish!
 "Ow! Yow!"
 "Cut off, you noisy young sweeps!"
 "We're trying to get into our own blessed study—"
 "I don't care what you're trying to do." Swish, swish!
 "Cut off!"

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NEXT WEEK: "THE CAD OF THE SIXTH."

EVERY TUESDAY, **The "Magnet"** LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

And the Famous Four had to cut off, and Wingate followed them up the passage, accelerating their departure with lashes of the cane. The enemy were left in possession of No. 1 Study, and they proceeded to hold their meeting there undisturbed by the Famous Four.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Bunter Causes Trouble.

"UGH!"
 Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, gave that grunt as he put his nose out from under the bed-clothes.
 It was a chilly winter's morning. The rising-bell had ceased to clang, and the Remove were slowly and unwillingly turning out of bed.
 "Ugh! It's cold!"
 "That's on account of the weather," Bob Cherry remarked. "It's often cold at this time of the year."
 "Oh, really, Cherry!"
 "Tumble up, lazy-bones!"
 "It's so jolly c-c-cold!"
 "Well, it won't get warmer," said Nugent. "Tumble up, or you won't have time to wash!"
 "That won't worry Bunter," said Bulstrode, with a disagreeable laugh. "He doesn't trouble soap and water very much."
 "Oh, really, Bulstrode—"
 "I think something ought to be done," said Bulstrode. "No. 1 Study is a disgrace to the school."
 "Eh! What's that?" exclaimed Wharton.
 "I say your study is a disgrace to the school," said Bulstrode. "Blessed if it's healthy to have a fellow in the school who never washes!"
 "Oh, really, Bulstrode—"
 Wharton was silent. He was rather susceptible on that point; and the chums of No. 1 Study were extremely annoyed with Bunter themselves. Billy Bunter was, as the Removites said, opposed to soap and water on principle. Even in summer his ablutions were more or less of a farce. In winter he dabbed his nose with soap, and hastily rubbed it off again, and he was finished. Though generally the last out of bed, he was frequently ready to go down with the quickest, because he spent so very few minutes at the washstand. There was sometimes a rush for the bath-rooms, and fellows would stand waiting, towel on arm, for five or ten minutes for their turn. But Billy Bunter never joined in any of those rushes.
 Wharton glanced at him with great disfavour as he slowly put one leg out of bed, like a swimmer feeling the depth of the water before he plunged in.
 "Ugh! It's cold!"
 "Oh, get up!" said Harry crossly. "Don't be a cowardly slacker!"
 "Look here, Wharton—"
 "Get out of bed!"
 "It's c-c-cold!"
 Wharton grasped his bath-sponge, and sopped it with water. The fat junior blinked at him, and made one bound out of bed.
 "It's—it's all right, Wharton; I'm getting up."
 "You're only just in time, you oyster."
 Billy Bunter grunted discontentedly, and began to put on his clothes. He had nearly finished dressing when Wharton spoke again.
 "Aren't you going to wash, Billy?"
 "Of course I am," said Bunter peevishly. "Don't bother!"
 He turned to his washstand.
 Some of the Removites watched him with interest. He dabbed the sponge on his nose, and then squeezed it out and dabbed it again. Then he commenced a tremendous rubbing with the towel.
 "My only hat!" said Skinner. "That's a wash!"
 "Oh, really, Skinner—"
 "Dirty beast!" said Bulstrode.
 "You see, I'm in rather delicate health," explained Bunter. "I'm afraid of the effect too sudden a shock might have on me—"
 "Oh, then it won't do for you to start washing in the morning!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I didn't mean that, Bulstrode. I mean that the sudden contact of the cold water might give me pneumonia, or consumption, or something. I'm an awfully clean chap, but I don't believe in over-doing a thing."
 And Bunter brushed his hair, and was finished.
 Bulstrode and Skinner grinned to one another as they went downstairs. Stott joined them, and the three chuckled

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over a discussion they carried on in low tones. Bunter was too short-sighted to observe them, or he might have known that mischief was afoot. Bulstrode and Skinner had schemed a scheme several days before, in connection with Billy Bunter, but had not yet had an opportunity of putting it into practice.

During morning lessons in the Remove Form-room, Bulstrode whispered several times to Skinner, and Skinner chuckled. Harry Wharton glanced at them once or twice. After the morning's lessons were over, the chums of the Remove went out into the Close. They had a copy of "Julius Cæsar" with them, and they intended to find a quiet spot where they could go after the parts undisturbed.

But there was no escaping Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows!"

Wharton had just opened the book when the voice of the fat junior was heard. Billy Bunter came up blinking.

"I say, you know, I——"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter! We're busy."

"But I want to speak to you. I hear that the Amateur Dramatic Society is going to give a representation of Julius Cæsar."

"That's correct. We're busy with it now; so buzz off!"

"But I'm going to take part in it."

"Eh?"

"I think I ought to be given the part of Mark Antony," said Bunter modestly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!"

"Well, you see, we couldn't have a Mark Antony in glasses," said Wharton consolingly. "It wouldn't look the part."

"Rot! I suppose some of the greatest men in the world, besides myself, have worn glasses," said Bunter. "How do you know Mark Antony wasn't short-sighted?"

"Well, I don't know that he wasn't, but——"

"I'm going to have the part. I'm not speaking from a selfish motive, but because I want to ensure the success of the play," explained Bunter. "I'm rather a dab at acting."

"Now, look here, Bunter——"

"Listen to my doing the part. 'Friends, Romans——'"

"Rats!"

"'Countrymen, lend me your ears——'"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"You'd be more likely to ask them to lend you their money," snorted Bob Cherry. "Will you take a run, or shall I lend you my boot?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Bunk!" roared four voices together.

And Billy Bunter gave one indignant blink at the amateur dramatists, and bunked. He rolled away in a state of simmering wrath. Nugent minor, Frank Nugent's younger brother in the Second Form, passed him in the Close, and called out:

"Hallo, Bunter! What price soap?"

"Eh? What?"

"What price soap?"

"Too expensive!" said another Second Form fag.

"Bunter prefers to do without it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sniffed, and rolled away. His thick skin was impervious to most attacks. He rolled off in the direction of the tuckshop. Meanwhile, the Famous Four were having a quiet practice under the trees. But Bob Cherry's deep voice rolling out the lines of Mark Antony's part, soon attracted attention, however, and they decided to adjourn to the study.

A shout of laughter from a group of Upper Fourth fellows greeted them as they entered the house. Wharton glanced at Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth. For the moment he imagined that the Upper Fourth were amused by the amateur dramatist business. But he soon saw that it was not that.

"Here come the anti-soap merchants!" exclaimed Temple.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"I hear that the Head is going to have No. 1 Study disinfected," said Fry. "There's going to be a fumigation there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What price soap?"

The chums of the Remove strode on with red, indignant faces. The laughter of the Upper Fourth fellows followed them upstairs.

"This is all through that fat worm Bunter," growled Nugent. "I knew there would be a row sooner or later about his not washing. We ought to take the matter into our own hands, and give him a lesson. It's beastly!"

There was a shout of laughter in the Remove passage. Half the Remove seemed to be there, and they were all laughing heartily over something.

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NOW ON SALE!

"Oh, it's all round the school, now it's once started!" said Wharton.

"They're looking at the door of your study," grinned Bob Cherry. "Upon the whole, I'm rather glad that I dig in No. 13 now."

The chums of the Remove pushed their way through the crowd of chuckling juniors. They came in sight of the door of their study, and uttered a simultaneous exclamation of anger.

There was an inscription in white paint on the dark oak of the door. In big, glaring letters it stared at them in the passage.

"THE ANTI-WASHITES!"
"DOWN WITH SOAP!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Painter Painted.

HARRY WHARTON looked angrily up and down the passage. His expression only caused a fresh burst of laughter from the Removites.

"Who did this?" exclaimed Harry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent dragged his chum into the study. It was worse than useless to make a row over the joke. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh slammed the door.

They could hear the juniors laughing as they dispersed down the passage.

"It's rotten!" exclaimed Harry. "Of course, Bulstrode's at the bottom of it! It's beastly unfair! Bunter is a dirty little brute, but that's no reason to brand the whole study!"

"Oh, Bulstrode is glad of the chance of getting at us, of course!"

"Confound him!"

"Something will have to be done with Bunter."

"We must get that foolery off the door," said Harry.

"It will be a joke all over the school, soon."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

Three pairs of eyes glared aggressively at the hilarious Cherry.

"What are you cackling about?" demanded Nugent. "I can't see anything funny in this."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop that row!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Bob Cherry, if you want to imitate a cheap American alarm clock, you can go and do it in your own study!" shouted Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Ho, ho, ho!"

"Outside!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of No. 1 Study looked at one another in exasperation, and then, with one accord, they seized upon the hilarious Cherry. Bob, still laughing hysterically, was whirled to the door, and Hurree Singh flung it open.

"Now, then," exclaimed Wharton, "are you going to stop that gurgling?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you chuck it?"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Then out you go!"

With a whirl, Bob Cherry went flying into the passage, and he spun round on the linoleum, and sat down with some violence. But he did not seem to mind the bump. He sat there, and went on laughing uproariously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" shrieked the exasperated Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent slammed the door with a slam that rang along the passage like a cannon-shot. Bob Cherry picked himself up, and almost staggered away, laughing hysterically. As he was no longer an inhabitant of No. 1 Study, he naturally saw the matter in a more humorous light than Wharton, Nugent, or Hurree Singh did.

"It's beastly!" growled Wharton, throwing "Julius Cæsar" on the table with a crash. "Bunter will have to be cured!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Let's get that rot cleaned off the door now, though," said Nugent. "The sooner we tackle it, the easier it will come off!"

"Right you are!"

The chums opened the door, and started on the inscription. Fortunately, the paint had not had time to harden. They rubbed and scraped until it came off, and there were only a few white smears left to show that it had been there.

This occupied the time they had intended to spend in rehearsing, and then they had to go to dinner. Bulstrode grinned at them as they sat down at the dinner-table. They had little doubt that he was responsible for the inscription

on the door. It was funny enough, but, as Wharton had said, it was unfair. Billy Bunter certainly deserved a ragging, but Wharton, Nugent and Hurree Singh, who took their bath every morning as regularly as their breakfast, did not deserve to be included in the jape.

Bulstrode finished his dinner very quickly, and rose. "If you please, sir," he said, looking at Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, "may I go? I want to write a letter for the two collection."

"Certainly, Bulstrode, if you have finished," said Mr. Quelch unsuspectingly.

"Thank you, sir." Bulstrode retired from the dining-room. The chums of No. 1 Study exchanged glances. They guessed that Bulstrode's remark about writing the letter was what is euphonistically called a terminological inexactitude. They could guess, without much mental effort, that the bully of the Remove intended to pay another visit to No. 1 Study, while the juniors it belonged to were detained at the dinner-table.

As soon as dinner was over, and Mr. Quelch gave the signal to rise, Harry Wharton & Co. were the first out of the dining-room.

"Bulstrode's up to something," said Wharton.

"Yes, rather. Let's go up."

"The go-upfulness is terrific."

The three chums hurried upstairs. Billy Bunter made a clutch at Harry Wharton as he went, and caught his sleeve.

"I say, you fellows—I say, Wharton, have you finally decided about letting me have Mark Antony's part?"

"Get away!"

"But I say——"

Wharton jerked his arm, and the fat junior spun round and sat on the lowest stair, with a bump that shook all the breath out of him. He sat there, gasping, while the chums of No. 1 Study ran upstairs.

A smell of paint greeted them as they ran into the Remove passage.

Bulstrode was there.

He was standing at the door of No. 1, chuckling, with a paint-brush in one hand, and a pot of white paint in the other.

He had evidently lost no time, for the inscription on the door was progressing rapidly. It was nearly finished when the chums of the Remove arrived on the scene.

"NOTICE!

"No soap allowed within 10 yards of this study.

By ord——"

That was as far as Bulstrode had got.

He stopped, and looked round quickly as he heard the footsteps of the chums of the Remove. But it was too late to escape.

"Collar him!" shouted Wharton.

In a moment they had him pinioned.

Bulstrode dropped the brush and the pot of paint to the floor, and struggled violently.

"Let go!" he shouted.

"Rats!"

"Leggo! I—I'll——"

"You'll shut up," said Wharton coolly, picking up the paint-brush, while Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh jammed Bulstrode against the wall, and pinned him there by main force, a struggling prisoner. "This is what you call a jape, isn't it?"

"Well, it's a good jape, too," grunted Bulstrode, a little alarmed now. "Look here——"

"Yes, remarkably funny, I must say," said Harry, laughing. "Of course, a jape is a jape, and I've got as keen a sense of humour as anybody. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——"

"It's funny to paint our door, and it will be equally funny for me to paint your chivvy," suggested Wharton.

"What do you think?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

"I won't stand it! I—— Look here, you——"

Wharton dipped the brush into the paint, which had mostly streamed out upon the floor from the upset pot. Then he began to paint Bulstrode's face white.

The Remove bully yelled and struggled and squirmed, but Nugent and Hurree Singh held him fast, and Wharton calmly painted, till Bulstrode's furious face was covered with a ghastly white.

His aspect was very curious by the time Harry had finished. His eyes glared from a face of deadly whiteness. He was gasping with rage.

"There's still a lot of paint on the floor," Nugent remarked. "The best thing we can do with Bulstrode, is to wipe it up with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Leggo! I—— Yow!"

The Remove bully was rolled on the floor, and his head was dragged through the paint. His hair mopped up most of it, and Bulstrode was immediately transformed into a

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE CAD OF THE SIXTH."

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white-haired as well as white-faced youth. His appearance was so odd that the juniors shrieked with laughter.

"You—you beasts!" yelled Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha! Perhaps you won't be so liberal with the paint next time!" gasped Nugent.

The Remove bully was released, and he staggered away, gasping. There came yells of laughter from below as he went downstairs. Wharton, and Nugent and the nabob commenced to clean the inscription for a second time from the door of the study, but they had to interrupt their labour frequently to give vent to yells of laughter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Barred.

BILLY BUNTER looked a little nervous when he came into No. 1 Study, and found the chums of the Remove there. The latest joke of Bulstrode and his friends was all over the school now, and the chums of No. 1 were everywhere alluded to as the anti-soap merchants, and the never-washers, and so forth. Billy knew that he was the cause of the trouble, and he wondered what kind of a reception he would get from Harry Wharton & Co.

He blinked uneasily at the chums of the Remove, who were having their tea in the study. They did not look at him.

"I say, you fellows——"

They did not look up. Wharton drank his tea, and Nugent helped himself to cake, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh skinned a banana. The three of them appeared to be quite unaware of Billy Bunter's presence.

"I say, you fellows, you might have called me in to tea! If you'd like anything extra, I'm quite willing to run down to the tuckshop for you."

No reply.

"Look here!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, exasperated.

"Can't you speak?"

Silence.

"Can't you talk, you dummies?"

Still no reply.

Bunter strode towards the table, and grasped Frank Nugent by the shoulder, and shook him.

"Look here, Nugent——"

Frank rose to his feet, took Billy Bunter by one fat ear with his finger and thumb, and led him squealing to the door.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Bunter was led into the passage, and then Nugent retired into the study again and closed the door. He had not spoken a word.

The fat junior stood blinking in the passage for some moments. Then he hurled the door of the study open again and rushed in.

"Look here, you fellows——"

Harry Wharton rose from his seat, took the fat junior by the hair, and jerked him into the passage again. He whirled Bunter round, gave him a gentle kick that sent him half a dozen steps along the passage, and went into the study.

Bunter staggered along in great surprise, and stopped himself by clutching at the wall.

"They're mad!" he murmured. "Mad as blessed hatters! I'm blessed if I'm going to be shut out of my own study in this way! I'm not going to stand it! And I'm jolly hungry, too! I'm going in to have some tea!"

He opened the door of No. 1 once more, and blinked in wrathfully.

Biff!

A cushion, hurled by a steady hand, smote the fat junior fairly on the chest, and bowled him over.

Back he went into the passage, and crashed on the opposite wall, and slid down to a sitting position.

He sat there for a full minute, gasping to recover his breath.

When he regained his feet he was red with rage, but he made no further attempt to enter No. 1 Study. It was evident that he was barred there.

The fat junior was in a state of simmering indignation. No. 1 Study was his study, as well as Harry Wharton's, and it was high-handed in the extreme to exclude him from it in this way. Bunter knew the reason, but the reason did not appeal to him as an adequate one.

He rolled down the passage towards No. 13. He guessed that Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, and little Wun Lung would be having their tea about that time, and there might be a chance for him at the tea-table of No. 13.

He blinked in at the open door of the study. Sure enough, there were the three chums of No. 13, but they did not seem glad to see Bunter.

"I say, you fellows," said the fat junior, with an ingratiating smile—"I say, I thought I'd give you a look in."

If you'd like any cooking done, or anything fetched from the tuckshop, you've only got to say so."

Bob Cherry rose from the table. He held his nose with a finger and thumb, with one hand, and picked up the poker with the other.

He came towards Bunter, who eyed him dubiously.

"I say, Cherry, you know—Ow!"

Still holding his nose, Bob Cherry jabbed at the fat junior with the end of the poker, keeping up an appearance of not wishing to come too near him.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Oh!"

Jab, jab, jab!

"Ow! Yow!"

He skipped out of the study, and Bob Cherry closed the door. He flung the poker into the grates with a clang, and burst into a laugh.

Bunter did not feel like laughing. It might be funny, but it did not appeal to his sense of humour. He drifted down the passage in an almost frenzied state of mind. It was too late for tea in Hall, and if he did not discover some provender in the Remove passage, he would have nothing to eat till bread-and-cheese were served out for supper. And what was bread-and-cheese to Billy Bunter? If he had had any money, he could have obtained supplies at the school shop, of course; but Bunter never had any money. And it was evidently useless to attempt to borrow any in No. 1 Study—his usual resource.

In desperation, Bunter looked into Bulstrode's study. Bulstrode was there, with Tom Brown and Hazeldene, who shared the study with him. They were having tea, and they all stared at Bunter.

Bulstrode pointed to the door.

"Outside!" he said briefly.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Outside!"

"I'm hungry! I've been turned out of my own study by those beasts! I—"

Bulstrode picked up an egg. Bulstrode was not in the best of tempers. In spite of all his washing and scrubbing, there were smears of white paint still over his hair and his ears. He took aim at the fat junior, and Billy Bunter promptly dodged out of the study.

The egg was not thrown, and Bunter took courage to peep into the room again after about a minute of hesitation and doubt.

He put his head cautiously round the door.

"I say, Bulstrode—O-o-o-och!"

Plop!

The egg smashed on Bunter's nose.

It spread on his face in a shower, and the fat junior gave a choking gasp.

"Ow! Yow! Groo! O-oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter did not look into the study again. He scuttled away to the dormitory, and tried to clean off that smashed egg.

It took him ten minutes to clean it off, and change his collar, which was splashed, too. He was bursting with wrath when he quitted the dormitory. The persecution to which he was subjected would have tried a patient nature, and Bunter was not patient. He had brought it all on himself, but that made no difference to the Owl of the Remove.

He came down from the dormitory, and met Skinner and Stott in the Remove passage. He came up to them with a wheedling smile.

"I say, Skinner, old chap, I'm expecting a postal-order this evening. Would you mind lending me a couple of bob of it in advance?"

Skinner made no reply.

He grasped his nose with finger and thumb, with a dramatic gesture, and walked away, followed by Stott, in a similar attitude.

Bunter blinked after them furiously.

"Beasts!" he muttered.

He made his way along to Bulstrode's study. He peeped in at the open door, and saw Tom Brown standing on the hearthrug, Hazeldene reading a book, and Bulstrode pouring out a final cup of tea.

Bunter's eyes glistened. The Greyfriars ventriloquist was not to be pelted with eggs with impunity.

"For goodness' sake, do finish, Bulstrode! What a pig you are!"

It was Tom Brown's voice, or seemed to be so. Bulstrode jumped, stopped pouring out the tea, and glared at the New Zealand junior.

"What's that?" he roared.

"Eh? What?"

"Pig, am I? You can have the tea, then!"

"I—I never said—Gro-o-och!"

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Bulstrode swept the teacup through the air, and flung the contents full in Tom Brown's face. Tom was not likely to take that "lying down." In a second he had rushed at Bulstrode, his face streaming with tea, and he had the Remove bully's head in Chancery.

They tramped round the study, struggling furiously.

"Here, hold on!" yelled Hazeldene. "Look out!"

But it was too late. The furious combatants lurched against the table, and sent it rocking, and there was a terrific crash as the tea things shot off on to the floor.

"Yah!" grunted Bulstrode. "Take that!"

"Br-r-r! Take that!"

"Cad!"

"Rotter!"

Tom Brown stumbled over the teapot, with destructive results to the teapot, and fell, dragging Bulstrode down with him. They rolled among the broken crockery and upset milk and tea and sugar, fighting furiously.

In the passage, Billy Bunter gave a soft, unholy chuckle, and quietly retreated from the spot.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Famine.

"OH dear! Oh dear!"

It was the plaint of Billy Bunter.

He had avenged himself upon Bulstrode, and revenge is said to be sweet. It might be sweet, but Billy Bunter would have found a tart or a bun sweeter at that moment. He was hungry, and hunger was a serious matter with William George Bunter.

He was excluded from his own study, kicked out of every other; he was stony broke, and could get no credit at the tuckshop. He had even missed tea in Hall. He had the prospect before him of several hours of famine.

It was appalling. Bunter was generally ready for a meal just after finishing one. And to actually miss a meal—in keen, winter weather, too! Appalling was hardly the word for it.

"Oh dear!" moaned the Owl of the Remove. "I'm beginning to understand how they get to cannibalism in open boats at sea now! It's fearful! I simply must have a good, square meal; there's nothing else for it! Where is it to come from?"

He spotted Wun Lung in the hall, and bore down upon him.

"I say, Wun Lung, could you cash a postal-order for me?"

"No savvy."

"Well, lend me a couple of bob of it."

"No savvy."

"I've missed my tea."

"Do Buntee good; bling down fatce!"

"I'm hungry."

"Velly plenty good!"

"Look here, you beastly yellow heathen—"

"No savvy."

And Wun Lung walked away.

Billy Bunter drifted out to the school shop. He found Mrs. Mumble in an uncompromising mood, and very annoyed at being called out of her little parlour by a customer who wished to obtain credit, and had no cash to show. She said some very candid things to Bunter, and he retired defeated.

"Oh, dear—oh, dear!" he murmured.

He blinked into the dining-room next. He had a faint hope that something might be left there. But everything had been cleared away.

A few minutes later he was cautiously descending the kitchen stairs. He met the cook at the bottom of the stairs, and the cook glared at him like a basilisk.

"Well, Master Bunter, what do you want?"

Billy Bunter made no reply. He retraced his steps wearily to the upper regions. He thought for some moments, and then moved off to the Sixth-Form passage. Some of the seniors might be having a late tea, and there might be pickings for a fag.

"Ah!"

The sight of Stott, of the Remove, carrying a tray into a Sixth-Form study made Bunter utter that ejaculation. The study was that belonging to Ionides, the Greek Sixth-Former. Ionides was a bully, and no junior cared to get too near his study; but Bunter, on the scent of a feed, was reckless.

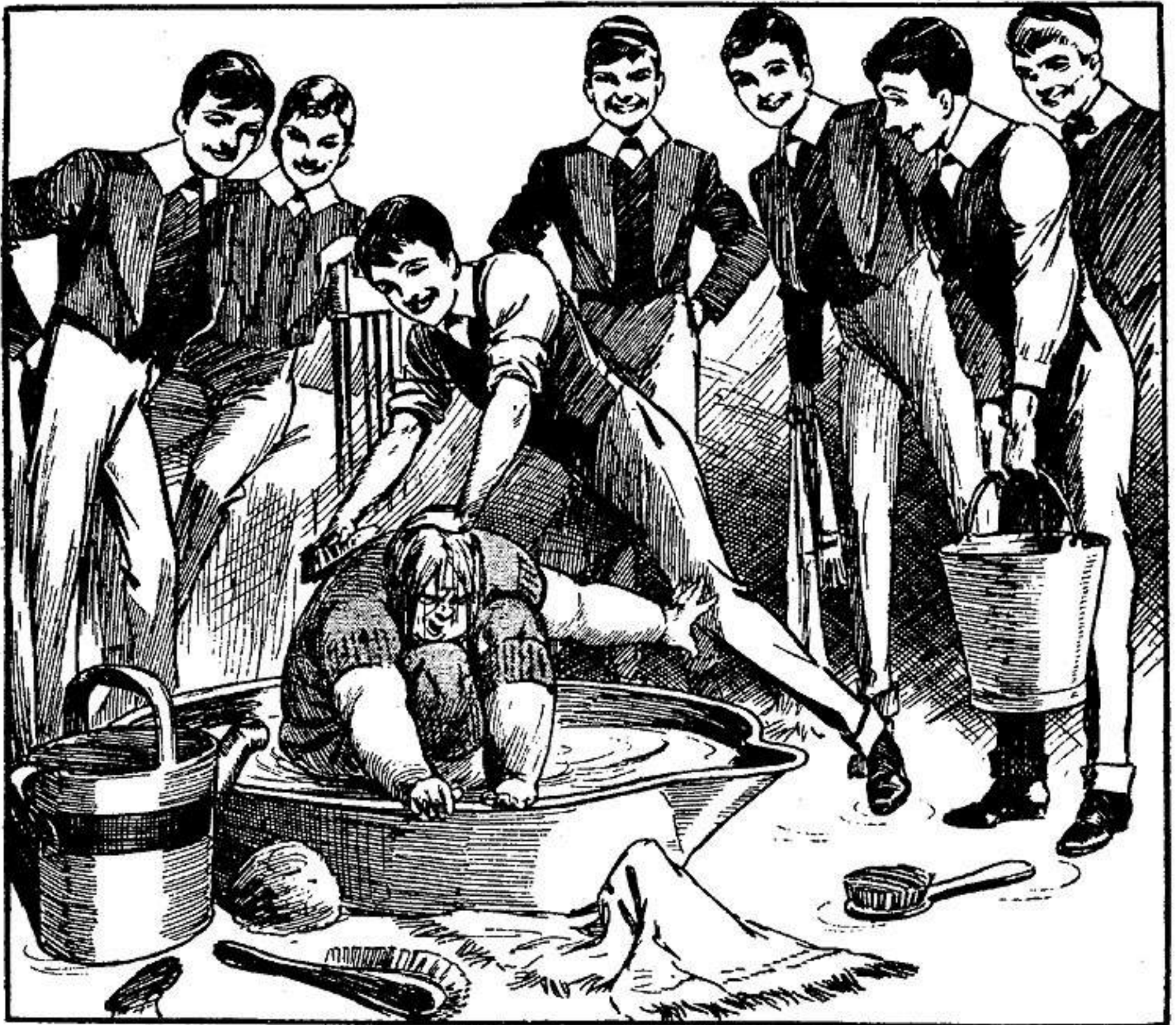
"I say, Stott, old man—"

"Oh, get away!" said Stott.

"You're fagging for Ionides, I suppose? Look here, do you want any help? I'm willing to lend a hand if you like."

"Clear out, and go and buy some soap!" said Stott.

"Oh, really, Stott!" Bunter peeped after him into the study. "What a lot of grub! I suppose Ionides is standing a feed?"



"Yow!" yelled Billy Bunter. "I won't be washed! I'll complain to the Head. It's unhealthy to have a bath after eating. I won't—I won't!"

"Yes, he is," said Stott. "Carberry and Loder are coming. You can get out."

"I say, you know, Ionides is a filthy bully, and he's as likely as not to give you a licking," said Bunter. "I'll fag instead of you, if you like. You know what a horrid beast that Greek chap is, and—Ow!"

Bunter left off as a vice-like finger and thumb fastened on his ear from behind, but Bunter was quite taken by surprise. He blinked in anguish at the Greek senior.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"You young cad!" said Ionides, his eyes glinting with a curious opalescent light, as they always did when he was angry. "What were you saying about me?"

"I—I was only saying to Stott that you were such a decent chap that it's a pleasure to fag for you!" wailed Billy Bunter. "Ow! Ow!"

"Get away, you lying little fat beast!"

"Oh, really, Ionides—"

"Go!"

The senior slung the fat Removite along the passage, and Bunter scuttled off, quite giving up the idea of fagging for Ionides. The Greek looked into the study.

"Are you ready, Stott?"

"Getting on," said Stott. "I've only to make the toast now, and the tea. It will take about ten minutes to make all that toast."

"Oh, very well!" And Ionides walked away.

Billy Bunter scuttled out of his sight, getting back to the Remove quarters. He peeped into No. 1 Study. Tea was

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quite over there, and a number of the amateur dramatists were gathered in the room. Bob Cherry was holding forth in deep tones to an imaginary mob of Roman citizens.

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Look here—"

The amateur dramatists made a rush at him. In a moment Bunter was hurled forth, and the door was slammed behind him. Bursting with indignation, he rushed back to the door and flung it open.

"Look here," he yelled, "I tell you—"

"Get out!"

"I'm not going to be turned out of my own study!" shrieked Bunter.

"You're barred here," said Harry Wharton. "We can't have anti-soap merchants in this study. It gives us a bad name."

"I say—"

"You can come back when you've got into decent habits of bathing every morning. Until then you're barred," said Nugent.

"The barfulness is terrific."

"Look here—"

Harry Wharton picked up a cushion, and swung it above his head. Billy Bunter made a wild dive into the passage, and Bob Cherry closed the door after him.

The fat junior moved away, hungry and furious. The way

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of the transgressor is hard, and Bunter was finding it decidedly rocky.

A kind of fascination drew him back again to Ionides's study in the Sixth-Form passage. Even if he could not partake of it, there was something gratifying in the sight of a large supply of provisions.

Bunter blinked into the room.

He started, and his eyes glittered, as he saw that it was empty. Stott had evidently left the study for some purpose, and for the moment the treasure was unguarded.

Bunter stepped quickly into the room.

On the table were plates of cold ham and beef, tongue and chicken, tarts and cakes, and jellies and meringues. Surely there was time for a hasty grasp at something before he was discovered!

There was a step in the passage even as Bunter hesitated as to which article he should grab. The fat junior turned cold all over. He understood—a little too late—that Stott had only left the study to tell the seniors that all was prepared.

To be caught there!

Bunter knew what that would mean. Ionides, Carberry, and Loder were the three worst bullies in the Sixth. They would lick him unmercifully, and kick him out of the study—he knew that.

The fat junior cast a despairing glance round in search of some place of concealment. He glanced under the table, but the cover was too short. He looked at the bed, which was in an alcove and hidden by draped curtains. That was evidently the place. In a moment the fat junior was through the curtains, and squatting on the bed. The curtains, falling back into their place, hid him completely.

He had hardly effected his retreat when the seniors entered the study. Stott followed them in. Ionides glanced at him.

"You can come back in half an hour and clear away," he said.

"Oh, all right!" said Stott. He went out and closed the door.

Carberry and Loder glanced at the table with looks of satisfaction. Ionides was the richest fellow at Greyfriars, and when he stood a feed, it was worth sitting down to. Nobody at Greyfriars liked Ionides, but few refused his invitations.

"Sit down, you fellows," said the Greek. "All ready, I think."

"Good!"

Ionides lifted a huge plate of warm, buttered toast to the table from the fender. The three seniors sat round the table, and then commenced a scene that was simply torture to Billy Bunter.

The curtains of the bed were a kind of muslin, and he could see through them into the lighted study, though he himself, in the dark alcove, was quite invisible.

He watched the three seniors at their feed, and as he saw the piles of ham and tongue disappear, he could have wept.

The toast diminished alarmingly, and Bunter watched every slice of it with hungry eyes. Then they commenced on the cakes and tarts.

Bunter could not restrain his feelings.

In spite of himself he gave a low grunt, almost a groan, and the next moment he was petrified with terror as he saw Carberry raise his head in a listening attitude.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Mysterious Dog.

IONIDES glanced at the prefect, mistaking his motion. He put his hand upon the silver teapot. Everything in Ionides's study was in the most expensive style.

"Another cup of tea, Carberry?"

"No, thanks. I thought I heard something."

"Eh! What was it?"

"Have you any animals in the study?"

"Animals! Certainly not."

"It's curious. I thought I heard a sound, something like a dog wheezing," said Carberry. "I suppose I was mistaken. It came from the direction of the bed."

"I will soon see," said Ionides.

He rose to his feet. Billy Bunter's heart stood still as the Greek came towards the bed. He was so terrified that he forgot even his ventriloquism, which might have been useful to him then.

He could only sit still, holding his breath.

The Greek came over to the bed, and, stooping, raised the coverlet to glance underneath. He rose again, and shook his head.

"Look on the bed."

"Ah, yes!"

Ionides, who was turning away, turned back and laid his hand on the curtains. Then, in the nick of time, an inspiration came to the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

Gr-r-r! Bow-wow! Gr-r-r!

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NOW
ON SALE!

It was a wonderful imitation of the growling of a dog, and it seemed to proceed from under the bed.

Ionides gave a start, and dropped his hand from the curtains. "Why, there is a dog there, after all!" he exclaimed. "I saw nothing when I looked under the bed!"

Carberry chuckled.

"Well, it jolly well sounds like it!" he remarked.

"I will look again."

Ionides bent down and looked under the bed. He looked and stared, and stared again. There was no dog there.

"I—I cannot understand it!" exclaimed the Greek. "There certainly is not a dog under the bed."

Gr-r-r!

Carberry gave a jump.

"My hat! The blessed thing's under the table!"

He jumped up, kicking back his chair. The growl had quite a savage sound, and he was in fear of feeling canine teeth in his leg.

Loder jumped away from the table too, and both of them looked under it—Loder grasping a jug, and Carberry a chair, ready to execute vengeance upon the doggy offender.

They both gasped as they failed to see any dog there.

"My word!" said Loder.

"It was growling under my blessed feet!" said Carberry, in amazement. "Hang it! What has become of the confounded brute?"

"Blessed if I can get on to it at all!" said Loder.

The Greek was looking excited. Very little was required to rouse his passionate Oriental temper, and he was in a white fury now. He caught up the poker from the grate.

"I will find it!" he exclaimed. "I will kill the brute! I will break every bone in its body!"

"Oh, hang it, Ionides, give it a kick in the ribs, and that will do!" said Loder.

"I will kill the brute!"

"Oh, please yourself!"

Ionides, poker in hand, looked round for the dog. Bunter could see his face through the curtains, and its expression made the junior shiver. Ionides would certainly have killed a dog, if he had found one. He was not likely to kill Billy Bunter, but he would make the fat junior feel sorry for himself if he found him, that was certain.

Ionides approached the bed again, and promptly a growl came from the direction of the door.

The Greek swung round in that direction.

Gr-r-r! Yapp-p-p-p.

"Hang it!" said Loder. "The beast seems to be outside the door all the time."

"Nonsense! He was in here."

"Well, I jolly well can't see anything of him."

"I will find the brute. I will smash him."

Gr-r-r-r.

Ionides was turning towards the bed again, and it was the Greyfriars ventriloquist's wish to keep him off that direction. The growl now proceeded from behind a little cabinet of Japanese manufacture that stood across a corner of the room. Ionides sprang towards the cabinet, and wrenched it away, and two or three articles fell to the floor and smashed. They were valuable pieces of china; but the Greek seemed to care for nothing in his fury.

There was nothing behind the cabinet, however.

Gr-r-r.

Ionides made a swipe with the poker in the direction of that growl, and there was a crash as a china bowl of flowers went flying into pieces.

"Ah! I nearly had it then."

"You quite had the bowl," grinned Carberry. "You'll make a wreck of the happy home if you keep on like this."

"My belief is that the dog is outside the door all the time," said Loder.

"Fool!" said the Greek passionately. "How could it be outside, when we heard it in the room?"

"Who are you calling a fool?" demanded Loder.

"You! Fool! Idiot!"

"If that's the way you talk to a guest, Ionides, you jolly well won't see me inside your study again in a hurry," said Loder angrily.

"Bah! I care not."

"Oh, all right!"

Loder opened the door, and stamped out into the passage. The feed had been very nearly finished, and Loder was able to consider his dignity without losing much. Had it been the beginning of the feed, there might have been a difference.

Ionides scowled after him. When he was in a violent temper as was frequently the case—the Greek cared nothing for anyone. He had even been known to fail in respect to the Head at such times.

"You'd better chuck it, Ionides!" said Carberry. "I agree with Loder, that the dog must have been outside the door. There's something wrong with the acoustics of the study, I suppose."

"Rot!"
"Look here!"
"The dog is in the study."
"Well, where is it, then?"

"Bah! I will find it—I will kill it! Fool! How could it have been outside the study when we heard it growl under the bed?" exclaimed Ionides.

Carberry knitted his brows

"Look here, you blessed foreign sweep, you'd better mind what names you call a prefect!" he exclaimed.

"Bah! I care nothing for a prefect."

"What!"

"Bah! Do not talk to me!"

Carberry clenched his fist. But he remembered that Ionides was the richest fellow in the Sixth, and that he owed him money. And instead of striking the blow, his fingers itched to strike, he strode in silence from the room.

Ionides scowled as he went, and resumed looking for the dog. His passionate temper was at boiling point now.

"Ah! I will find the dog—I will torture it!" he exclaimed, in a suppressed voice. "I will kill it by inches when I have found it."

"Oh, lor', the ferocious beast!" murmured Billy Bunter. "I—I wish I was out of this study. I know the horrid savage cannibal beast will find me sooner or later."

Gr-r-r-r.

The growl seemed to be unmistakably from the passage this time. Ionides sprang to the door and looked out. A yelp died away faintly

The Greek's eyes blazed.

He did not doubt any longer that Loder and Carberry had been, after all, right, and that the dog was in the passage or on the stairs. Completely bewildered, the Greek rushed out of the study, the poker in his grip, and dashed down the passage towards the corner.

Billy Bunter whipped out of his hiding-place, and darted from the study. He gasped with relief to find himself outside.

Then a dreadful thought crossed his mind. He could only get out of that passage by taking the same direction that Ionides had taken. Before he had time to think about it, the Greek's footsteps were heard returning. He had passed the corner, and had found no dog in sight either in the passage or on the stairs. Completely bewildered, the Greek was coming back, wondering whether his senses were playing him tricks, and in a state of boiling rage.

Billy Bunter skipped into the nearest study, and closed the door without latching it. He dared not make a sound. Ionides passed the study, and went on to his own. Billy Bunter hardly breathed.

The Greek re-entered his study. Bunter, in the next room, could hear him running about, evidently looking for the mysterious dog, in the faint hope of finding him and wreaking a savage vengeance upon him.

A glimmer came into Bunter's eyes. He was safe; but immediately he was relieved of fears for his own personal safety, he began to remember that he was hungry, and to think of the piles of good things left uneaten on the table of Ionides.

The fat junior was dense as a rule; but when he was hungry, his faculties were wonderfully sharpened. He stood for some minutes in deep reflection. Then he took the key out of the lock, and changed it to the outside of the door. The study he was in was Carne's, and Bunter knew that Carne was out. There was not much danger of his little scheme being interfered with; and Bunter, as usual, had a little scheme.

He stepped quietly out of the study, and crept along to Ionides's door.

That door was open, and he could see Ionides still rummaging about the study, with a face white with rage, and glinting opalescent eyes.

"He looks like a blessed tiger," muttered Bunter, and his heart failed him; but he looked at the feed on the table, and his courage revived. It was worth while running some risk for that.

Gr-r-r-r.

Ionides gave a jump, and sprang out into the passage. He glared at Bunter, who suppressed his desire to run, and smiled a sickly smile.

"Are you looking for anything, Ionides?" he faltered.

"The dog!"

"Oh, you mean Carne's dog!"

"Carne's! I did not know Carne had a dog"

"Well, as it went into Carne's study, I supposed it was his dog," said Bunter, as carelessly as he could.

Ionides waited for no more. He rushed along the passage, hurled open the door of Carne's study, and rushed into it. Bunter followed him quickly. He pulled the study door shut behind the Greek, and turned the key in it.

Ionides was a prisoner.

Bunter darted back to Ionides's study. In a second or two he was filling his pockets at the well-laden table.

There was a roar of rage from the next study, and a wild

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ONE PENNY.

hammering on the door. Ionides had discovered that he was a prisoner.

Billy Bunter only chuckled. He had the key out of Carne's lock, so that even if anybody came to the rescue, Ionides could not be released until another key had been found. Of the consequences of his reckless action the fat junior did not even think. Bunter was short-sighted mentally as well as physically, and he was constantly committing actions without reflection, and then spending hours of terror when the unforeseen, though perfectly obvious, consequences came near.

The fat junior filled his pockets rapidly. Cakes and buns, jars of jelly and heaps of meringues and puffs, disappeared into his capacious pockets.

In a few minutes his clothes were bulging out on all sides, and at the same time his jaws were working rapidly; for Billy was taking snack after snack as he proceeded.

Hammer, hammer, hammer! came Ionides' furious blows from the next study.

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage, and Bunter hastily ran out. Stott was standing outside Carne's study in amazement. He glanced at Bunter as the latter passed him hastily.

"What's all this about, Bunter?" he asked. "Is Ionides in here?"

"Sounds like it, doesn't it?"

"Is he locked in?"

"I shouldn't wonder."

Bang, bang, bang!

"Open this door! Let me out!"

Bunter scuttled off. He sought a quiet spot to enjoy his feed. Stott put his mouth to the keyhole of the door and yelled to the Greek.

"Where's the key?"

"What! The key! I do not know."

"It isn't in the lock."

"Find one, then—find one—this is a trick—it was Bunter—I will smash him! Find Bunter, and make him give you the key. Quick!"

"Bunter! My hat! All right. I'll find him in a jiffy."

And Stott rushed away in search of Bunter. But Bunter had found the quiet corner, and he was sitting hidden by trunks in the box-room, enjoying his feed. Needless to say, he had a good appetite for it. Stott sought him in vain; while in Carne's study the angry senior's blows were still ringing furiously on the locked door.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Locked In!

"FRIENDS, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Cæsar, not to— Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry broke off suddenly as the door of No. 1 Study flew open. Nugent grasped a cushion, thinking that it was Bunter back again.

The cushion flew through the air, and landed with a thump on the chest of the new-comer. He yelped and sat down in the doorway.

"Oh! Ochone! Hurroo! Faith, and phwat do ye mane by it intirely?" he roared.

"Phew! It's Desmond!"

"Sure, and I—"

"Sorry!" gasped Nugent. "Sorry—ha, ha, ha!—I thought it was Bunter."

Bob Cherry gave the Irish junior a hand up. Micky glared wrathfully at Nugent, who may have been sorry for the mistake, but certainly did not look very sorry. As a matter of fact, he was roaring with laughter. Micky looked very much inclined to commit assault and battery on the spot; but Wharton interposed with a question.

"What's the matter, Micky? What did you come rushing in like that for?"

"Faith, and can't ye hear the row?"

"Row! No."

"Sure, and I suppose ye were making too much yere-selves," said Micky, with a grin. "There's a row on in the Sixth-Form passage though, and I came to tell ye, so that you could come and see the fun."

"Good!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, throwing down his Shakespeare with an alacrity that was hardly complimentary to the immortal William. "What's on?"

"Somebody's locked up Ionides in Carne's study."

"My hat!"

ANSWERS

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"The door's locked on the outside, and nobody can find the key," chuckled Micky. "What do you think of that for a jape?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think the fellow who did it must have a jolly strong nerve, or a jolly weak head," said Harry Wharton. "Ionides will be as mad-as-a-hatter."

"Faith, and he's all that! Listen!"

At the open door of the study the juniors could hear the sound of a distant disturbance. It sounded like someone hammering on wood with a heavy implement.

"He's kaping that up," grinned Micky Desmond. "Russell says he's using the poker, and Bulstrode thinks it's a cricket-bat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come along and see the fun."

"What-ho!"

And completely forgetting the rehearsal of Julius Cæsar, the chums of the Remove tore after Micky Desmond in the direction of the Sixth Form passage. Ionides was so unpopular in the school that any jape against him was certain to be approved, and to awaken widespread interest. Bulstrode, Tom Brown, and Hazeldene were on the stairs, and they looked at the Famous Four as they passed.

"Have you seen Bunter?" called out Bulstrode.

"Bunter! Not lately."

"We're looking for him."

"I don't know where he is."

And the chums ran on.

"Oh, we'll find him!" said Tom Brown. "Everything's ready now in the dorm. I've passed the word to the fellows, and they'll all be along as soon as that row's over in the Sixth Form. I say, Bulstrode, I'm sorry about your eye."

Bulstrode grinned.

"Oh, my eye's no worse than your nose!"

Tom laughed and rubbed his nose, which certainly was swollen. There had been damage done on both sides in the tussle in No. 2 Study, caused by Billy Bunter's ventriloquism. It was not till the fight was over that it had dawned upon the juniors that it was some more of Bunter's playful ventriloquism that had caused the trouble; and then it was too late to reduce Tom Brown's nose to its usual size, or to lighten the black shadows that had gathered round Bulstrode's left eye.

Harry Wharton & Co. ran on to the Sixth Form passage. They found it crowded with fellows of all Forms, listening to the shouting and hammering from inside Carne's study, and mostly grinning and chuckling. Even in his own Form the Greek was not liked, and his absurd display of temper only made his plight seem more ridiculous. For a senior to be locked up in a study like a dog in a kennel seemed funny enough, especially to the juniors, and shouts of laughter answered Ionides's angry yells from within Carne's study.

"Open this door!" the Greek shrieked for the tenth time. "Find the key."

"Can't be done!" called back Wingate, who had been attracted to the scene by the uproar. "The lock's a new one, and the other keys in the passage don't fit it."

"You must find a key. Do you think I am going to remain here?" yelled the Greek.

"Well, it's no business of mine."

"Where is Bunter?"

"Bunter! Was it Bunter locked you in?"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"How do you know? Did you see him?"

"He was in the passage."

"How do you know he locked you in?"

"I am sure of it. I will smash him when I get out. I will break every bone in his body. I will wring his neck!"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Wingate, in disgust. "You jolly well won't touch him, unless you can prove that he locked you up here. If you didn't see him do it, I don't see how you can be sure about it."

"I am sure about it. I will smash him. Find him at once, and get the key, and unfasten this door."

Wingate flushed red. The Greek's tone was dictatorial, and Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars School, might have been a lackey by the way the Greek spoke to him.

"Do you hear me?" yelled Ionides.

"Yes, I hear you," said Wingate quietly. "And it's lucky for you there's a door between us, you foreign cad!"

And the captain of Greyfriars walked away.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Ionides was hammering on the door again. He was evidently using a poker or a cricket bat, for the blows were terrifically heavy.

The fellows in the passage chuckled gleefully. Ionides was a helpless prisoner, that was certain; and however hard he struck, it was impossible for him to break through either the lock or the door.

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And, boylike, they enjoyed the terrific din. Harry wondered how long it would be before the uproar brought a master to the spot.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here's Capper!"

"Look out!"

The master of the Upper Fourth was approaching. His face was very red and angry. He stared at the groups of grinning boys in the passage.

"What does this noise mean?" he exclaimed hotly. "The Head has been seriously annoyed by it, and has asked me to see to it and punish the disturber of the peace. What does it mean?"

Crash! Thump! Crash!

Mr. Capper tried the door of the study, and found it locked. He knocked on the door, the juniors watching him with interest. They wondered whether Ionides would talk to a master as he had talked to the captain of the school.

"Who is in here?" exclaimed Mr. Capper. "Who is making that noise? Unlock the door at once. Do you hear?"

"It is locked on the outside!" yelled Ionides.

"Nonsense! The key is not here!"

"I tell you it is."

"That is not the way to speak to me, Ionides."

"I am locked in here, a prisoner. I demand to be released. This is an insolent trick of a junior. Let me out!"

"Dear me!"

"Don't waste time chattering!" yelled the Greek. "Let me out, I say!"

"Bless my soul! I was never spoken to so before since I have been a master at Greyfriars!" exclaimed Mr. Capper, very much shocked.

The boys were indignant, too. They were unruly enough at times, but they knew that it was bad form to treat a master with disrespect, and the Greek's insolence made them angry.

"Leave him in there, sir," said Blundell of the Fifth. "The cad ought to be licked. Let him stick in there for an hour or two and cool his temper, sir."

"Dear me! The boy is outrageously insolent, Blundell," said Mr. Capper. "Perhaps your suggestion is a good one."

"Send for a locksmith!" yelled the Greek.

"I shall do nothing of the sort," said Mr. Capper angrily. "I will have inquiries made for the key. In the meantime, Ionides, you will remain quietly in this study."

"I will not—I will not!"

"Understand me, Ionides! If you shout out or strike this door once again, or answer me with insolence, you shall be publicly flogged before the whole school!" said Mr. Capper, his voice trembling with anger.

The Upper Fourth-master was in deadly earnest; but even so, the juniors half expected the passionate Greek to reply with a torrent of insolence. But some saving remnant of his voice restrained the Greek from that.

He was heard muttering to himself in the study, but there was no more shouting, no more hammering at the door. Mr. Capper strode away with rustling gown, his face still pink with indignation. Within the study Ionides could be heard striding to and fro like a caged tiger.

The juniors grinned, and dispersed. The fun was over. How long Ionides would remain in the study no one could tell. Billy Bunter was supposed to know where the key was, but no one could tell where Billy Bunter was. Stott had given up looking for him, and had gone into Ionides's study to look after the remnants of the feast. As the fag who had prepared the repast, he was entitled to the crumbs from the rich man's table; and whatever happened to Ionides, Stott was hungry.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter, in a corner of the top box-room, hidden behind the trunks, was enjoying himself.

He had turned out the contents of his pockets, and his eyes glistened behind his big spectacles at the enticing array set forth before him.

"Jolly good!" he muttered, twenty times at least, as he disposed of item after item. "This is something like! That foreign waster is a beast, but he has a good taste in grub. I should like to fag for him if he wasn't such a bad-tempered beast. This is ripping!"

It was all so good that Billy Bunter finished it up to the last crumb.

And when all was gone, and the fat junior was feeling more satisfied and contented with himself and things generally, he gave vent to a long gratified sigh.

The sound was followed by a sharp exclamation.

"He's here!"

It was Bulstrode's voice. The next moment Bulstrode, Hazeldene, and Tom Brown were looking round the trunks at Billy Bunter.



Thwack, thwack, thwack! "There!" exclaimed Aunt Matilda, a little breathlessly, "There, take that!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER. A Bath for Bunter!

BUNTER blinked at the three juniors dubiously. He wondered what brought them to so deserted a place as the top box-room at that hour. It was getting dark, and there was no attraction in the box-room that Bunter could see. Bulstrode might have come there to smoke, and possibly Hazeldene, but Tom Brown never. They grinned at the fat junior, and Bunter blinked at them.

"Here he is!" said Bulstrode.

"Were you looking for me, Bulstrode?"

"Yes, rather! We've been looking for you everywhere. And I don't think we should have found you here if you hadn't grunted," said Bulstrode. "We just looked into this room on chance."

"I'm sincerely sorry I've finished my feed; I was going to ask you fellows, only somehow it slipped my memory."

"Been robbing somebody?" asked Hazeldene.

"Oh, really, Vascline—"

"Oh, his postal-order's come!" said Tom Brown. "That's it—I don't think!"

"Oh, really, Brown—"

"Well, come on," said Bulstrode. "We want you!"

"What do you want me for, Bulstrode?"

"We've got a little treat in store for you, Bunter," said Bulstrode kindly. "We've had an eye on you for some time, and we've all felt that you deserved it, and that it will do you good. It's something quite nice, that you haven't had for a long time. Come on, and see what it is."

"I—I'd rather know what it is first, Bulstrode, if you don't mind. You see—"

"Oh, come on!"

"But—but—"

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Bulstrode inserted his fingers into the back of the fat junior's collar, and jerked him to his feet.

"Now come!" he said.

As Bulstrode retained his grip on the junior's collar, Billy Bunter hadn't much choice about coming. He trotted discontentedly along with Bulstrode, Tom Brown and Hazeldene bringing up the rear.

Bulstrode had promised Bunter a treat, but Bunter knew Bulstrode. He was in a state of nervous apprehension. As they descended the stairs from the top box-room, they came upon many Removites, all of whom greeted them with sniggers.

"Oh, so you've found him!" said Skinner.

"Yes; he's been gorging in the box-room."

"Where's the key of Carne's study, Bunter?"

"Never mind that now," interposed Bulstrode. "Ionides can wait. It will do him good to cool his heels a bit longer. Come to the dorm., Bunter."

"But, you see—"

"Come on!"

Bulstrode marched the fat junior up, and quite a procession of Removites accompanied them. They reached the dormitory, and there a fresh crowd of juniors awaited them, all of whom burst into a snigger at the sight of Billy Bunter. Bunter gave a sort of spasmodic wriggle in Bulstrode's grasp.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he began,

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"What—what's the little game? You see—"

"Lock the door, Skinner!"

"Right-ho!"

Bunter made a desperate attempt to break away. He nearly suffocated himself in the attempt, for Bulstrode did not relax his grip for a moment.

A Double-Length Tale of Harry Wharton
& Co. BY FRANK RICHARDS.

"Ow—ow! Oh! Groo!"

"Keep still, can't you, Fatty?"

"Yow! Ow! Groo!"

"He's been over-eating himself," said Skinner. "I've often noticed him grunting like this after a big feed."

"Groo! Ow! Oh! Really, Skinner—"

"Is the bath-ready?" demanded Bulstrode.

"The bath!" ejaculated Bunter.

"Quite ready!" chorused a score of voices.

"Well, here's Bunter. He's ready, too!"

Bunter was jerked forward. Bulstrode released him, and the fat junior gasped for breath, and blinked round him in great apprehension.

A huge bath stood in the dormitory, and ranged round it were six large cans of water, some hot and some cold. A collection of scrubbing-brushes, bath sponges, and cakes of soap lay round the bath, and rough towels galore.

Billy Bunter eyed these great preparations with indignant alarm.

"Look here, you fellows, is this a j-j-joke?" he stammered.

"Not at all. It's deadly earnest."

"We're going to give you a treat, Bunter."

"One you haven't had for a long time, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is," said Bulstrode, "we've determined that No. 1 Study can't be allowed to bring disgrace, and perhaps an epidemic or something, on the school. If chaps won't wash, they're to be made to. You catch on?"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"We've gone to considerable trouble and expense to provide you with a really good bath," said Bulstrode. "We hope the change won't be too violent; but, anyway, it's bound to do you good in the long run."

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Now, strip and get in."

"I won't!" yelled Bunter.

"Then we'll jolly well strip you and chuck you in!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"'Nuff said! Strip!"

"I won't!"

Bunter made a wild rush for the door. A dozen hands grasped him, and he was whirled back. Tom Brown carefully took off his spectacles and put them in a safe place. Then the juniors began to strip Bunter.

The fat junior struggled and kicked wildly. Bulstrode received a kick under the chin that sent him rolling on the floor. He jumped up in a fury, with clenched fists, and was rushing at Bunter, when Tom Brown caught him by the arm.

"Hold on!" said the New Zealander quietly.

Bulstrode glared at him furiously for a moment. Then his face relaxed, and he unclenched his fists. He knew there would be no bullying or brutality while Tom Brown was present, and he did not want to interrupt the "jape" for a fight with the boy from Taranaki.

"Oh, rats!" he said.

"Lemme go!" spluttered Bunter. "I won't be bathed! You're a set of beasts! Look here, it's—it's unhealthy to bath just after a meal!"

"It's still more unhealthy never to bath at all," said Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Yank those things off him. My hat! They fit him like a second skin! How do you get in and out of these things, Bunter?"

"Oh! Ow! Yah! Oh!"

"Now, then, he's ready!"

"Chuck him in!"

"Get into the bath, Bunter!"

"Yow! I—I won't!"

Many hands grasped Bunter, and he was plumped into the bath. He blinked round at the juniors furiously. Ogilvy began to pour in the water, and there was a yell from the hapless Falstaff of Greyfriars.

"Ow! It's c-c-cold!"

"Shove in some more hot, Russell."

Russell began to pour in from a hot-water can, and there was a still wilder yell from Billy Bunter.

"Yow-w-w-w! It's hot!"

"There's no satisfying some people," said Bulstrode.

"Shove it all in, and he'll get used to it in time."

"Ha, ha! Good!"

And the water was swamped into the bath. Bunter yelled in earnest now, as he received alternately a swamping in hot and cold water.

"Now, then, who's going to wash him?" asked Bulstrode.

"Yow!" yelled Billy Bunter. "I won't be washed! I'll complain to the Head. It's unhealthy to have a bath after eating. I won't—I won't! Yah!"

"I'll wash him," said Skinner.

And he started.

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THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Bathing of Billy Bunter.

SKINNER grasped Bunter by the hair with his left hand, and seized a scrubbing-brush with his right. He began to scrub Bunter. As the scrubbing-brush was one that the maids used to scrub a wooden floor, it was rough on the human skin, and Bunter had good cause for the yells he uttered.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

He kicked out furiously, and rolled over in the bath, sending a swamp of water over the side, and then it was Skinner's turn to yell. The water had flooded on his chest, and he was soaked to the skin.

"Oh!" he roared. "The fat beast! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you idiots cackling at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner growled and retired. He had had enough of the washing. He was nearly as wet as Bunter, and he had his clothes on, too. He retired to change. Billy Bunter sat in the soapy water and blinked round him.

"You lemme alone!" he gasped. "I'll complain to the Head! I'm not going to be bathed! You know jolly well what a clean chap I am."

"Ha, ha! We do! That's why we're bathing you!"

There was a knock at the door, and Harry Wharton's voice was heard.

"Hallo! What's on in here?"

"It's all right!" called out Russell. "We're bathing Bunter!"

"Bathing Bunter!"

"Yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rescue!" yelled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, you ought to stand by a chap in your own study, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Rotters! Cads! Rescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha! My dear Billy, I wouldn't rescue you from a treat like that for anything!" called out Harry through the door. "It will do you good!"

"Yah! Look here! Ow! Rescue! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Wharton's footsteps could be heard dying away down the passage. It was evident that he did not intend to interfere with the bathing of Bunter.

"Now, then, scrub away," said Bulstrode.

"Yah! Help!"

"Blessed if I like to get near him," said Ogilvy. "He's splashing like a blessed whale."

"Keep still, Bunter!"

"Yah! I won't!"

"Shove his head under when he struggles," said Hazeldene. "You hear, Bunter? You're going to be ducked whenever you wriggle."

"Help!"

Ogilvy seized a big bath sponge, and began to rub. Bunter splashed furiously, and Bulstrode jammed his head under water. The fat junior lifted it again, gasping and spluttering wildly.

"Oh—ooh—groo! Yaroo!"

"Are you going to keep quiet, then?"

"Yah! No! Yes, yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bunter kept a little more quiet while two or three juniors rubbed him into a lather with soap and sponge.

In a few minutes the fat junior was a mass of soapsuds, and he was spluttering and sniffing and blinking painfully as the soap found its way into his mouth, nose, and eyes.

"There, I think that will about do," said Ogilvy, who was wet to the elbows. "That's enough soap on, I think."

"Yes, that'll do."

"Now to get the soap off."

"Better roll him right under the water."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Ow! Help! Murder! Fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors swamped water over Bunter, but did not shove him underneath. The soap was washed off, and then Bunter was permitted to hop from the bath.

The fat junior certainly looked much the cleaner for his involuntary ablutions—there was no doubt on that point.

"Ow! I shall c-c-catch cold, I know!" he stuttered.

"Ow! If I expire, my death will lie at your door, Bulstrode!"

"I don't mind!"

"You—you beast! Ow!"

"Here's the towels," said Ogilvy. "He can do that part of the business himself."

"Good!"



Skinner made no reply to Billy Bunter's request, but grasped his nose with finger and thumb with a dramatic gesture, and walked away.

Billy Bunter rubbed himself dry with the towels, amid a grinning circle of juniors. He blinked and gasped furiously all the time.

When he was dry, the fat junior began to don his clothes sulkily.

"Now we've done our duty," said Bulstrode, "my opinion is that Bunter ought to stand us a feed."

"Hear, hear!"

"You beasts! I'd like to lick you all round," said Bunter, glowering. "Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mind, this is only the beginning," said Bulstrode. "If you jolly well miss your wash to-morrow morning, there'll be another bath for you to-morrow evening. You savvy?"

"Look here—"

"We're going to teach you cleanliness. It was really up to Wharton to do it, but we're attending to it for him. We're not going to have the fags of the Second and Third chipping the Remove as anti-soap merchants."

"Not much!"

"Beasts!"

"Well, just you remember."

And Bulstrode unlocked the door, and Bunter finished dressing. Ogilvy glanced at the bath of soapy water, and the swamp on the floor.

"Who's going to clean all that up?" he asked.

There was a chorus at once.

"Bunter!"

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"I won't!" roared Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to do anything of the sort. Catch me! No fear! Why—"

"Yes, you are," said Skinner. "All this trouble has been taken on your account, and it's only fair you should clean up."

"Yes, rather!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"I won't! I—I won't!"

"Duck him in the bath, then," said Bulstrode.

"Collar him!"

"Ow! I—I'll clean up, if you like!"

"Come on," said Tom Brown good-naturedly. "I'll help you!"

Bunter grunted. The juniors cleared out of the dormitory, chuckling and grinning, and Tom Brown and Bunter cleaned up after that enforced bath. Tom did most of the work, Bunter grunting and glowering all the time.

Bunter did not utter a word of thanks to his assistant. He was not feeling in a very thankful mood. He quitted the Remove dormitory, and went downstairs. As a matter of fact, he was feeling all the better for his bath, but he would not admit it to himself. As he entered the Remove passage, he suddenly halted, and gave a gasp of fright.

Ionides was just entering it from the lower stairs at the other end. The Greek caught sight of him at the same moment.

Bunter stood petrified. Ionides had evidently got out of the study. As a matter of fact, Carberry and Carne had

brought a ladder to the window, and the Greek had descended that way, and the door was still locked. Bunter, in his late thrilling experiences, had forgotten all about Ionides, and he was suddenly reminded of the fact that after the feast comes the reckoning.

The Greek's eyes were blazing.

"Ah! You!"

He ran swiftly along the passage towards Bunter.

"Cut for it, you ass!" yelled Tom Brown.

And Bunter ran.

But the Greek ran a yard to every foot of Bunter's, and he overtook the fat junior in a few seconds.

Billy Bunter heard the pattering footsteps close behind, and in sheer terror he dropped down, almost under the Greek's feet.

Ionides, who was not prepared for that movement, stumbled right over him, his knees coming upon Bunter's back. He flew headlong, with outstretched hands, and rolled over on the floor, having passed completely over Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Brown. "Cut it, Bunter! Cut, you ass!"

Bunter staggered to his feet. He gave one wild blink at the rolling Greek, and fled.

Ionides was on his feet in a few seconds. He was in time to see Bunter whisk into No. 1 Study, and to hear the door slam. The next moment the Sixth-Former was hammering furiously at Harry Wharton's door.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Chucked Out!

"BUNTER!"

"Get out!"

"Kick him out!"

"Let the kickfulness be terrific, my worthy chums. The esteemed Bunter is interruptfully spoiling the honourable rehearsal."

Bang, bang, bang!

"Hold on, you chaps!" gasped Bunter. "That beast Ionides is after me, you know. He thinks I shut him up in Carne's study, you know."

Thump, thump, thump!

Bunter had locked the door, and the Greek was assaulting it wildly.

Wharton frowned.

"Look here, we can't stand that row. I suppose you did shut Ionides up, as a matter of fact, didn't you, Bunter?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Then you'd better go out and take a licking."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You'll get it sooner or later," said Nugent. "What possessed you to be such a silly ass? Didn't you foresee that Ionides would be wild?"

Hammer, hammer, hammer!

"I—I didn't think about it," stammered Bunter. "You see, I was hungry, and there was a ripping feed in Ionides's study. It was the fault of you fellows. If you hadn't deprived me of my tea I shouldn't have wanted Ionides's grub."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Ionides is after me now. He nearly had me in the passage, but I fell down and—I mean I tripped him up with wonderful presence of mind. He can't get in here, though."

Bang, bang, bang!

"Wharton, open this door!" came the voice of the Greek, stifled with rage. "I want Bunter!"

"Oh, rats!" said Harry.

"Will you let me in?"

"No."

"I will make you smart for this, Wharton!"

"More rats."

"That's the style!" murmured Bunter. "Look here, if you fellows stand by me he won't be able to do anything. He's not popular with the prefects, you know, and they won't interfere. He couldn't hurt the five of us."

The Greek bestowed a final savage kick upon the door and retired. Billy Bunter heaved a sigh of relief.

"Thank goodness he's gone!"

"You'll see him again," said Nugent grimly. "Look here, if you're going to stay in this study—and I suppose you can stay in it now you've bathed—you'll have to be quiet. We're rehearsing."

"Oh, that's all right! I'll rehearse too. I want to take the part of Mark Antony, as I told you, when the play comes off."

"You ass!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"We can work you in as a second or third citizen, if you like," said Wharton; "that's the best we can do for you."

"Look here, Wharton, I'm a member of the 'Remove Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society,' and I'm going to stand up for my rights!"

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NOW
ON SALE!

"Bosh!"

"I'm jolly well not going to pay my subscription every term for nothing," said Bunter indignantly.

"You never do pay it."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Well, don't talk rot," said Nugent. "You know you've never paid a penny."

"I have put it down in the account," said Bunter, with dignity.

"Oh, blow the account!"

"Can't you see it's practically the same thing as money? The whole commercial world in our days is run on a system of credit. If everybody were to call for cash, the whole system would break down. I'm really surprised, Nugent, that a fellow of your intelligence should be so utterly wanting in business ability."

Nugent took the fat junior by the shoulders, marched him to the armchair, and sat him down there with a suddenness that made him gasp for breath.

"Now, you shut up!" he said. "We're going to work!"

"Oh, really—"

"Silence!" And Nugent looked so excited that Bunter thought he had better be silent. He sat blinking indignantly at the four as they rehearsed.

They were simply going over their lines now to memorise them. Most of the parts had been assigned, and a dozen or more juniors were going about with papers under their arms, or sticking out of their pockets, learning their lines. A dozen aspiring Mark Antonys and Brutuses were trying to content themselves with being tribunes of the people, or senators, or first and second citizens.

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!" declaimed Bob Cherry, for about the hundredth time.

"I think you know that pretty well," said Harry. "Get on to the quarrel scene, where we go it together, and we'll see whether you're up to it, Nugent."

"Good!" said Nugent.

Bob Cherry held his peace, conning over his lines, while Nugent and Wharton began on the famous quarrel scene between Brutus and Cassius.

Billy Bunter watched them with glowering eyes. Harry Wharton declared in thrilling tones that he had sent to Nugent for gold to pay his legions, which Nugent had denied him. Nugent forthwith proceeded to deny the soft impeachment:

"I denied you not,

He was an ass that brought my answer back—"

"Hold on—that won't do!"

"What's the matter?"

"It's all right, but it's not Shakespeare. Shakespeare doesn't call a chap an ass, you know."

"Oh, I don't believe in sticking too close to the text! A real human word gives a thing a touch of life."

"Still, it's no good making Cassius call a chap an ass," said Harry, with a shake of the head.

"Oh, rats! What was it, then—duffer?"

"Oh, no!"

"Well, I'll make it 'chump.' 'I denied you not. He was a chump that brought my answer back,'" said Nugent.

Harry laughed.

"He was a fool that brought my answer back," he explained.

"Oh, all right!" said Nugent resignedly. "Of course, you can't be expected to be letter perfect in these things. 'He was a fool that brought my answer back.'"

"I really think you are a fool too."

Nugent jumped.

"Thank you!" he exclaimed.

"Eh! What?" said Wharton, who was looking over his part for a forgotten line. "What did you say?"

Nugent's face was red. He flung his part on the table.

"If that's your opinion, perhaps you'd like somebody else to take the part?" he exclaimed angrily.

Wharton stared at him.

"What on earth are you driving at?"

"That's all! I'm going out!" And Nugent strode to the door.

"What's the matter? What have I done?"

"Oh, hang it!" said Bob Cherry. "I know a stage-manager is worried over the parts, but there's no need to call a chap names."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I suppose you know what I mean."

"I don't!" said Wharton tartly. "Can you tell me what the silly asses are driving at, Inky?"

"The honourable Wharton expressed the opinion that the esteemed Nugent was an august fool," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I didn't!"

"Oh, come off!" said Nugent. "It doesn't matter! Only

if I'm a fool I'm no good for the part, and you can jolly well give it to somebody else—that's all!"

Harry Wharton stared blankly at his offended chum. Then a sudden idea flashed into his mind, and he rushed over to the armchair, where Billy Bunter sat, looking extremely innocent.

He seized the fat junior by the collar and shook him.

"You young sweep! Is this some more of your ventriloquism?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Nugent, a light breaking upon him.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Leggo! Yow!"

"Is this one of your tricks, Bunter?"

"Ow! Don't shake me like that! You may make my glasses fall off, and if they get broken you will have to pay for them, so I tell you!"

"Did — you — play — that — trick?" demanded Wharton, giving the fat junior a hearty shake with every word.

"Ow—no—yes—yow—yes! It was only a j-j-joke!"

"Well, this shaking is a joke, too!" said Wharton.

"There, and there, and there!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

Wharton jerked the Greystriars ventriloquist to the door.

He opened it, and ejected Billy Bunter into the passage.

"Now cut," he said. "We've had enough of your ventriloquism. There's a time for all things, and a rehearsal isn't the time for a ventriloquial exhibition. Cut!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

The door slammed.

"Now, Nugent, you ass—"

"Oh, I'm sorry!" said Nugent. "That beast imitates voices wonderfully! I didn't guess—I'm sorry!"

"Oh, all right! Let's get on with the washing!"

And Wharton went on with those magnificent lines which everybody knows by heart, or ought to know by heart, and peace once more reigned in No. 1 Study.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Changes Beds.

WHERE Bunter was for the next hour or two nobody knew precisely—Ionides least of all. The Greek was keeping an eye open for Bunter. But Billy was wise in his generation. He knew that it would not be safe to get near the senior for some time to come, and he wisely kept himself out of sight.

He did not reappear in public till it was time for the Remove to go to bed, and then he joined the juniors going upstairs.

Carberry, the prefect, gave him a queer look as they went into the Remove dormitory. The prefect, though he chummed with Ionides, liked the Greek no better than others did, and he was not at all angry with Bunter for the trick he had played. At the same time, he had no objection to Ionides revenging himself if he chose, and he was certain to turn a deaf ear to any unusual disturbance in the Remove dormitory that night. Billy Bunter knew that perfectly well. Short-sighted as he generally was, the fat junior could be keen enough where his own safety was concerned. He knew as it were by instinct that there was to be trouble that night. Ionides had been unable to find him during the evening, but in the dormitory there was no escape, if the Greek chose to come there after lights out.

Billy Bunter, in great uneasiness, turned the matter over in his mind. Bunter could not be called clever, but he certainly was cunning, and he was not long in thinking of a scheme.

"I say, you fellows," he said, blinking at the Removites as they began to undress. "I say—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say," persisted Bunter, "did you ever see me do a balancing trick with a jug of water?"

"Rats!"

"I can balance a washstand-jug full of water on my chin, you know."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Skinner, his tone changing. He thought there was a fair prospect of seeing the fat junior drenched, and he was interested at once. "Let's see you do it."

"Certainly. I'll take your jug."

"Better take your own; you might break it."

"Oh, I'll stand close to the bed in case it falls, and then it will fall on the bed and it will be all right!"

"You ass!" howled Skinner. "You'll drench my bed!"

"Oh, there's no risk!" said Bunter, taking Skinner's jug from the washstand.

"You utter ass!"

"Oh, really, Skinner!"

"Get away from my bed with your silly tricks."

"There's no risk, you know. I'm a dab at balancing-tricks."

"Look here," shouted Skinner, "if you soak my bed with that blessed water, you can sleep in it, and I shall sleep in yours, so remember."

"Oh, I don't mind; it's all right!"

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NEXT WEEK: "THE CAD OF THE SIXTH."

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"All right, then," said Skinner grimly. "You can go ahead."

And Billy Bunter went ahead.

For a "dab" at balancing the fat junior certainly was very clumsy.

He lifted the jug of water, with considerable effort, as high as his chin, and it immediately toppled over upon the bed.

There was a bump, and a splash of gushing water.

The jug did not break, but it rolled over on the bed, and the foot of the bed was simply drenched with water.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Behold the balancer? Is that what you call being a 'dab' at it, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"Let's see if you can do it again, with your own bed."

"That he jolly well won't!" exclaimed Skinner wrathfully. "I'm going to have his bed to-night, and he can have mine, as he's soaked it with water."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Shut up! I'm going to have your bed."

Billy Bunter grunted, but made no objection. Harry Wharton glanced at him curiously. Bunter was so attached to his own personal comfort that he might have been expected to raise strenuous objections to giving up his bed to Skinner. But he appeared to be quite indifferent upon the point.

Bunter was much shorter than Skinner, and he was accustomed to sleep curled up like a hedge-hog, so he was able to avoid the dampness at the foot of the bed. The juniors were all in bed when Carberry came in to extinguish the lights. Bunter had covered his head with the bedclothes, so that Carberry would not have noticed that he was in the wrong bed, even if he had looked at him—which he did not.

The door closed, and the juniors were left to sleep.

Most of the members of the Amateur Dramatic Society, instead of chatting as usual before going to sleep, began to recite their lines to memorise them, and there was a curious mixture of Shakespeare to be heard, till one by one they dropped off to sleep.

Billy Bunter was one of the first to slumber.

In ten minutes or so his unmusical snore hummed and buzzed through the long dormitory. All the juniors were safe in the arms of Morpheus, when the door of the dormitory quietly opened, and a new-comer peered in in the dark.

"They're asleep," said a whispering voice.

"Good!" answered the tones of Ionides, of the Sixth.

"It is better to have no disturbance; the Form-master, Quelch, might come, and he does not like me, already."

"No wonder!" murmured Loder.

"What did you say, Loder?"

"Nothing."

"I thought you spoke."

"Oh, no! Bunter's bed is exactly opposite the door—you can't miss it."

"Very good."

"Mind, you'd better buzz off when you've larruped him," muttered Loder. "The fat beast will make a fearful row, and the masters wouldn't like this sort of thing, you know."

"The masters be hanged!"

"Yes, that's all right between ourselves, but you see they have the whip hand, so it's no good playing the giddy ox. Besides, those young rascals would think nothing of piling on you in a crowd, though you belong to the Sixth."

The Greek gritted his teeth.

"Yes, I know that."

"Well, larrup him and buzz off, then. I'll get along now, I think," said Loder, and he went quietly down the passage without waiting for the Greek to reply.

Ionides stepped silently into the Remove dormitory.

He had a strap in his hand—a thick leather strap, which was intended for the plump limbs of Billy Bunter.

He groped his way towards Bunter's bed.

It was very dim in the dormitory, only a few straggling rays of starlight penetrating at the high windows.

But Ionides knew which was Bunter's bed, and he groped his way to it with the certainty of a cat in the dark. It did not even occur to him that the fat junior might have exchanged beds with another Removite.

He reached the bed, and heard the sound of steady breathing. His eyes glittered in the dark as he gripped the strap.

Slash!

The heavy strap descended across the shoulders of the sleeper, and Skinner came out of the land of dreams with a gasp.

"Gro—ow!—yow!—ah!—ah!—oh!"

Slash, slash, slash!

"Take that, and that, and that!" hissed the Greek.

"Ow! Ah! Help! Murder! Burglars!"

"Take that!"

"Help!"

Harry Wharton sat up in bed, startled. There were wild yells, and the sound of a slashing strap, from Skinner's bed. "What on earth's the matter?" gasped Wharton.

"Help!"

The captain of the Remove sprang out of bed, and groped for a matchbox. Skinner rolled out of bed on the side opposite to that where his assailant stood, aching all over and yelling with pain.

Scratch!

Harry struck a match, and uttered an exclamation of amazement as the light showed up the dark face of the Greek.

"Ionides!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "This is why Bunter changed beds with Skinner."

"Phew! The cunning rascal!"

"I'm hurt!" gasped Skinner. "Ow! The beast! Yow! I'm hurt."

Ionides uttered a fierce exclamation.

"What! Where is Bunter? It is Bunter I meant to punish! Bunter!"

The match went out.

Nugent struck another, and lighted a candle-end. Bunter sat up in bed blinking, roused by the uproar in the dormitory.

The Greek's savage eyes fell upon him.

"Ah! You are there!"

He strode towards Bunter. With a gasp of terror the fat junior rolled out of bed, and in a twinkling he was ensconced behind Harry Wharton for protection.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Ionides.

"STAND aside, Wharton!"

Ionides rapped out the words angrily, as the young captain of the Remove stood between him and the shivering Bunter.

"Ow! Don't!" gasped Bunter. "Don't let him get at me, Wharton. You ought to stand by a fellow in your own study, you know. Ow!"

"Look here, Ionides——"

"Stand aside!"

"I won't!"

The Greek's eyes flashed with rage.

Several candle-ends were lighted now, and nearly all the Remove were out of bed. Most of them were looking decidedly angry. Skinner was groaning and rubbing his aching bones. The juniors only wanted a leader, to make things warm for the bullying Sixth-Former; and they had a leader ready in Harry Wharton. Wharton's face was flushed with anger, and he faced the Greek; he would not have stood aside, if Ionides had had a deadly weapon in his hand instead of a strap.

"You coward!" he said. "You cur! Get out of this dormitory."

Ionides gritted his teeth.

"Once more, will you stand aside?"

"No, I won't!"

The strap whistled in the air. In a second more it would have descended with a slashing cut across Wharton's unprotected shoulder. But at that precise moment a pillow whirled through the air, hurled by Bob Cherry, and it caught the Sixth-Former full in the face.

Ionides staggered back as if he had been struck by a cannon-shot, and he fell with a crash on his back.

"Hurrah!" yelled Nugent. "Clean bowled!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greek struggled to his feet. A perfect hurricane of pillows and bolsters rained upon him, and he was sent staggering again. He rolled over on the floor, his dark face convulsed with rage.

"Kick him out!" shouted Wharton.

"Hurrah!"

"Collar the cad!"

"Kick him out!"

The Removites rushed upon the senior.

Ionides tried to struggle up, but a dozen pairs of hands were grasping him, and, powerful as he was, he had no chance against so many.

The juniors rolled and hustled him along the floor to the door, and he was sent whirling out into the passage.

He bumped against the opposite wall, and lay for some moments gasping.

Then he picked himself up.

The Removites crammed the door of the dormitory, laughing and hooting, and the Greek gazed at them for a moment with a face convulsed with rage.

Then he came charging into their midst like a bull.

"Line up!" shouted Wharton.

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NOW ON SALE!

The juniors stood firm to resist the shock.

Three or four of them were sent flying, but the rest fastened upon the Greek like cats, and he was dragged down with a bump upon the floor of the passage, with the angry juniors swarming and sprawling over him.

"We'll take him downstairs this time," said Wharton, his eyes flashing. "Even the Sixth had better learn that they must not come playing tricks in the Remove dorm."

"Good egg!"

"Hurrah!"

"Let me go!" gasped the Greek helplessly. "Let me go! I will go, and——"

"Yes, you'll go," said Harry grimly. "Yank him along."

"Here goes!"

The Greek was rolled and dragged and shoved along the passage to the stairs. There he was rolled over, and he was half-way down before he could grasp the banisters and stop his descent.

He clung to the banisters, gasping for breath.

From the landing the juniors looked down at him, hooting. Clearly the Greek would have liked to charge at them again, hitting out right and left; but he had had enough of that. He glared at them savagely, muttering threats, to which the jeers of the juniors answered.

There was a sound of an opening door, and the Greek started. He was dishevelled, dusty, bruised; he had no desire to be seen in that state. He hurried away, and the Removites, too, lost no time in scuttling back to the dormitory.

"Lights out!" whispered Wharton quickly.

In a few seconds the dormitory was plunged into darkness, and the juniors were all in bed, and ready to appear buried in innocent slumber as soon as a master appeared.

A minute later the door opened, and a lamp glimmered in, and Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, looked into the room.

The juniors all had their eyes closed, and were breathing regularly.

The Remove-master shook his head slightly, and retired. He had certainly heard a disturbance, but it did not appear to be in the Remove dormitory. But Mr. Quelch knew the Remove too well to trust wholly to appearances.

When the master's footsteps had died away, the juniors ventured to sit up in bed, and there was a succession of chuckles.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "I really think we did Ionides that time! What?"

"Yes, rather!"

"He won't come back in a hurry."

"Faith, and sure it was an illigant bating," said Micky Desmond.

Skinner groaned.

"I'm sore all over, and aching in every blessed bone," he mumbled. "The beast went for me while I was asleep."

"A cowardly thing to do," said Wharton, "and dangerous, too. The shock might do a weak fellow a lot of harm. I'm jolly glad we gave that bully a good ragging."

"It was all through Bunter," grunted Skinner. "I know now why the fat beast changed beds with me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "It was funny! I never saw what the oyster was driving at, any more than you did! But we ought to know our Bunter by this time."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Ionides meant to be licking him, but he licked me instead. The fat beast! I ought to have guessed that he was up to some mean trick!" grunted Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner, you insisted upon changing beds with me! I didn't ask you to. You can't say I asked you to do anything of the sort."

"You spilled the jug on the bed on purpose, you—you worm!"

"I was performing a balancing trick——"

"Oh, don't tell lies!" growled Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner——"

"Shut up!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

And the Owl of the Remove grunted, and went to sleep. The Removites soon followed his example, with the exception of Skinner, who was still aching. It was a considerable time before sleep revisited Skinner's eyelids.

Meanwhile, the Greek had returned to his study, where he found Loder sitting in the armchair, his feet on another chair, and smoking a cigarette. Loder had heard a sound of disturbance from upstairs, but he had taken care not to get near it. He knew that the Greek's passionate, savage temper might get him into some difficulty, and he had not the slightest wish to share it. He looked up, and nodded through a cloud of smoke as Ionides came scowling in.

"Licked Bunter?" he asked.

"No!" snarled the Greek. "There was another boy in his bed, and I thrashed him by mistake."

Loder chuckled.

"He's a deep young rascal, Bunter is," he remarked. "He'll be a great lawyer, or a criminal, when he grows up. Fancy his fooling you like that! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you sniggering at?"

"Well, it's funny. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bah!" growled the Greek. "If that is all you have to say, you can get out of my study."

Loder shrugged his shoulders, and rose.

"Certainly," he said. "What a nice, pleasant-mannered fellow you are, Ionides! Good-night!"

And he left the Greek alone, aching all over, and in the vilest temper that even Ionides had never been in. But Ionides did not think of paying another visit to the Remove dormitory. He had had enough of that!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Toffee!

"THE question is, about Portia!" Harry Wharton remarked thoughtfully.

The chums of the Remove had been through another rehearsal a few days after the events we have related, and they felt extremely satisfied with themselves, and with the progress they were making in their parts.

"Portia!" said Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"Yes. I don't see how we can cut Portia. Of course, we could cut it. But Brutus without Portia would be a great deal like Hamlet with the Prince of Denmark left out."

"My sister!" said Hazeldene.

"Hum!"

The Removites looked at one another doubtfully.

They all liked their girl chum, Marjorie Hazeldene. They thought more of her than of almost anyone else in the wide world. But, boylike, they had their doubts about a girl's abilities when it came to really doing anything.

Harry had thought of Marjorie, and Hazeldene had advocated her taking the part all the time. There was no doubt that she could get permission from Miss Penelope Primrose to come over from Cliff House for the evening, to take her part in the play when it was given by the Remove Dramatic Society.

Harry was inclined to think that she could do it. Harry, as stage-manager, had the decision in his hands.

But there could be no doubt that the other members of the amateur dramatic society had strong doubts upon the point.

"Marjorie's awfully clever for a girl," Nugent admitted.

"But then—"

"You see, girls can't do things," remarked Bob Cherry.

"We couldn't have a boy take Portia's part, though," said Russell, who was a soldier in the guard of Cæsar.

"We could cut the part," remarked Tom Brown.

"What do you think, Linley?"

Linley, who was in the garb of a Roman senator, with a pair of football boots showing under the ample robe, nodded.

"I think Miss Hazeldene could do it," he said.

"Of course she could!" said Hazeldene warmly. "If a girl's own brother thinks she can do a thing, there can't be much doubt about it, I should think."

"Well, there's something in that," admitted Tom Brown.

"Of course there is. She could do it."

"We've never seen her act," said Nugent. "We all like Marjorie, but it's no good saying a girl can do things like a boy. They can't."

"Rather not."

"You see, they're not so clever as boys!" explained Nugent. "That's how it is. I wouldn't run down girls, of course; but what's the good of making out that they can do things like boys?"

"No good at all."

"Take football—or cricket."

"Of course."

"Well, if you come to that, take sewing, and knitting and things," said Hazeldene stoutly. "You couldn't knit and sew socks and things like my sister does."

"Oh, that's nothing!"

"Well, take piano, then. Marjorie plays like anything, and you can't knock out a note, except Wharton."

"That's different."

"Take croquet. Marjorie knocked you all over the ground at the Cliff House garden-party."

"That's different, too."

"Take driving. Marjorie could drive your head off."

"Of course, driving—"

"Take cycling. She could cycle rings round you."

"Very likely, but—"

"Then acting—"

"You see, acting's a different business altogether," explained Nugent. "That is where the masculine intelligence comes in."

"Masculine rats!"

"Look here, Hazeldene—"

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NEXT

WEEK:

"THE CAD OF THE SIXTH."

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY, ONE PENNY.

"Well, you're talking piffle," said Hazeldene warmly.

"You cheeky ass—"

"Rats!"

The chums looked at Hazeldene in surprise. As a rule, he played a very secondary fiddle. It was seldom, or never, that he came out in a decided fashion like this. But Hazeldene was very fond of his sister Marjorie, who had, indeed, saved him from many a scrape into which his weakness and folly had led him. Hazeldene's good qualities were limited in number, but he had the sense to be very fond and proud of his sister.

"Look here, you are out for a thick ear, I suppose," said Nugent, getting up.

"Bosh!"

"Hold on, Frank!"

"I'm jolly well not going to be cheeked in my own study, Wharton."

"Well, I think you're wrong, you know. I really think that Marjorie could take the part rippingly well, if she would. We could alter a few lines, of course, so as to make it suitable for her. I vote that we ask her."

"We haven't seen her act."

"Well, look here," said Hazeldene. "If you talked any of this piffle before Marjorie, she would refuse to take the part, anyway. I'll speak to her. I'll ask her to let you see some specimen of her acting, and you can judge for yourselves."

"That's a good idea."

"The goodfulness is terrific."

"Right-ho!" said Nugent. "Of course, you all know I should be jolly glad to have Marjorie in the cast, only I don't think it's much good relying on a girl for anything."

"Well, you'll see," said Hazeldene. "I'll cycle over to Cliff House after school to-morrow morning, and speak to Marjorie."

"Good! That's settled."

And the meeting of the amateur dramatic society broke up. They had been getting in some practice with making up, and Harry Wharton carefully put the grease-paints away. He left a stick of grease-paint on the table, overlooking it in the multitude of things he was gathering up. Billy Bunter, who had been locked out of the study during the rehearsal, in case of any ventriloquial tricks, blinked in as the juniors who did not belong to No. 1 Study went out.

"You fellows finished?"

"Yes."

"Blessed if I know when I shall get my prep. done!" grumbled Bunter. "I think you chaps ought to help me."

"Rats!"

"Blessed if I know what a school's coming to, when a chap is locked out of his own blessed study!"

"You could stay in if you would behave yourself."

"Br-r-r! I don't want to stay in. It makes me sick, all this petty, personal jealousy that's shown of a chap's superior abilities! I suppose you haven't decided to let me have Mark Antony's part?"

"Not yet," said Wharton, laughing.

Bunter grunted.

"All right; if the play's a rotten failure, don't blame me. I'm willing to take the part, and make a success of the thing."

Wharton laughed again, and took out his books. As he sat down at the table, he caught sight of the stick of paint he had left out, and he picked it up and dropped it into a drawer of the table. Bunter's eyes were following him. Those round little eyes blinked behind the big glasses: Billy Bunter was short-sighted, and he jumped to the conclusion at once that the chums of the Remove had locked him out while they ate sweets, and that this was a stick of toffee or butterscotch that had been left.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I jolly well know why you locked me out, now."

"Oh, do shut up! We want to work."

"Yes; but—"

"Ring off!" roared Nugent.

Bunter grunted, and subsided into silence. He sat in the armchair, and watched the chums of the Remove at work. His thoughts were all on that supposed stick of toffee that he had seen Wharton put in the drawer.

He was revolving in his mind various plans for getting the chums out of the study for a minute, while he raided that drawer and seized the toffee.

His ventriloquism, as usual, was his resource.

"Wharton—quick!"

It was Bob Cherry's voice, faintly, from the passage. Harry started up.

"Is that Bob calling?"

"Sounds like it," said Nugent, rising too.

"Rescue, Remove!"

"Come on!" exclaimed Wharton hastily.

He ran to the door of the study, threw it open, and rushed out. Nugent and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh quickly followed.

Billy Bunter grinned.

In a moment he was on his feet, and the drawer was opened, and he was groping in it for the stick of toffee.

He found it, and bounced back to the armchair in triumph. The next moment it was in his mouth, and his jaws were actively at work on it.

Wharton and his chums found the passage empty. They stared up and down it in blank amazement, but there was no sign of Bob Cherry.

Harry uttered an angry exclamation.

"It's that confounded ventriloquist again!"

"Bunter! We'll squash him!"

The three juniors rushed into the study. Then they stopped and stared at Bunter. The fat junior was going through the most extraordinary grimaces in the armchair, and gasping and spluttering frantically.

"Ow, ow! Oh! Groo! Yow! I'm poisoned!"

"Great Scott!"

"The great Scottfulness is terrific!"

"What on earth's the matter, Bunter?"

"Ow, ow!"

"What is it, then?"

"Yow! I'm poisoned!"

"What the——"

"Grooh!"

Bunter spat violently into the grate. Harry Wharton caught sight of the remains of the stick of grease-paint in his hand, and burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Did you take that for toffee, Bunter?"

"Ugh! Ow! I'm poisoned!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped Nugent. "This is too rich! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ugh! Groo-o!"

"The richness is terrific! The esteemed Bunter must be feeling the estimable sickfulness at the present moment!"

"Ugh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent took the fat junior by the shoulders, and swung him out of the armchair, and helped him out into the passage with a gentle tap of his boot. Billy Bunter staggered out of the study.

"You can grunt and growl outside," said Nugent. "You make me feel as if I were on a blessed Channel steamer. Cut!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—— Ugh!"

"Buzz off!"

"Ugh! Groo-o!"

Nugent slammed the door. Bunter "ughed" and "grooed" in the passage, to the accompaniment of yells of laughter from the study. That was all the sympathy William George Bunter received, or was likely to receive.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Nugent's Aunt.

HAZELDENE cycled over to Cliff House the following day, and came back, with a grin on his face, to announce that Marjorie was quite willing to take the part of Portia, when the Remove Dramatic Society gave a representation of "Julius Cæsar." And that she would first submit a specimen of her powers as an actress to the Removites, so that they could judge whether she was able to do Portia justice. The chums of the Remove were glad to hear it, but they were a little troubled also.

"I say, you didn't tell her what we said about it, I hope?" said Bob Cherry anxiously. "Of course, the discussion in the study was in confidence?"

"Of course!" grinned Hazeldene.

"I don't want Marjorie to think I'm one of those cocky asses who think girls can't do anything!" said Nugent, equally anxious. "Of course, they can't act. We all know that; but still——"

"Oh, Marjorie knows what you think!"

"You haven't told her?"

"Well, I haven't exactly told her," said Hazeldene; "but girls have ways of making chaps let things out, you know."

"Well, you are a silly ass!"

"You are a stupid chump!"

"The stupidity of his chumpfulness is terrific!"

"Oh, it's all right!" grinned Hazeldene. "Marjorie knows exactly what to expect of you, you know. She knows you haven't very much sense!"

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"You stupid worm!"

"You silly fathead!"

"You chumpful duffer!"

"Well, if that's all you've got to say, I'll bunk," said Hazeldene. And he forthwith "bunked."

The chums of the Remove were naturally a little bothered. They did not want Marjorie, of all people, to think them conceited asses. And that was just what she might think if Hazeldene had let out any details of the discussion in the study.

"Of course, we all know that girls can't do things like boys," Nugent remarked; "but it looks silly and conceited to a girl if you say so. You can't expect them to see things just as they are. If girls have as much sense as boys, you might as well give 'em the blessed vote, and have done with it."

"Of course," agreed Bob Cherry, "Marjorie is a ripping girl, and awfully intelligent for a girl; but when it comes to real work, you know——"

"Exactly."

"Of course, they're not in it."

"Not a bit."

"Bosh!" said Harry Wharton, with a laugh. "Marjorie's got more sense in her little finger than you two chaps have in both your heads."

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Of all the asses——"

"I wonder when she's coming over?" said Harry serenely.

"We ought to be ready for her."

"Hazeldene said something about tea-time."

"Good! We'll have a bit of a tea ready in the study, and make a little celebration of it."

"Good egg!"

And when tea-time came round that day, the chums of the Remove were prepared for the visit. The study presented an appearance of unwonted tidiness. There were no footballs or football-boots lying about the floor, no ashes scattered in the grate, no papers and books sprawling on the table, no ink spilt on the tablecloth, and no unwashed teacups piled on the window-seat.

All, as the poet says, "was calm and bright."

A cheerful fire glowed in the newly-cleaned grate, and a pile of buttered toast was keeping warm upon an almost aggressively-polished fender, over an immaculate hearth. Bright teacups and plates stood in array on a spotless tablecloth.

A cake, and a plate of tarts, as well as a new tin of sardines, graced the festive board.

The chums kept a keen eye on Billy Bunter, or these adjuncts to the tea would not have graced the festive board very long.

"Time Marjorie was here, isn't it?" asked Nugent, as the school clock struck six.

Hazeldene nodded.

"Oh, you never know these girls!" Nugent remarked.

"They're the same for taking a cue as for keeping an appointment. You can never depend upon them within an hour or two."

"Hallo! Here's Marjorie!"

The juniors were on their feet in a moment at the sound of a footstep outside, but it was Bob Cherry's red and flushed face that was thrust into the study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Want anything?" asked Hazeldene.

"I've come to tea!" said Bob firmly.

He walked in.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Good! You know you're always welcome, Bob, and there's no need to stand on ceremony with us. Marjorie may be here any minute."

"Good!"

"I thought I heard somebody arrive just now," said Nugent.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Oh, that wasn't Marjorie!"

"Who was it, then?"

"An old lady—a relative of one of the fellows, I think. A giddy terror, to judge by what I've seen of her. I just caught a glimpse of her in the hall. She was inquiring for somebody, and I caught the word Remove, so I suppose the unhappy relation is in our Form. Jolly glad it's not Robert Cherry, Esquire, that's all."

"Here's somebody coming along the passage."

"That must be Marjorie."

Nugent stepped to the door.

"My hat! It's not Marjorie!"

"Who is it, then?"

"A giddy terror."

The juniors looked out. A little lady of uncertain age

was coming along the passage. She had a face of a brick-red hue, and a decidedly incipient moustache on the upper lip. Her hair was pulled back tightly, and a hideous bonnet seemed to be glued down on her head. Her nose was red, and her brow lined, her eyebrows thick and black.

Her dress was of a loud greenish material, with a cut about as graceful as that of a wheat sack. Her boots were large and heavy. She wore cotton gloves, extremely old and untidy, and carried a large, bulging umbrella.

"My only hat!" murmured Harry Wharton. "Who—who can it be?"

"Any relation of yours?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, don't be funny!"

The juniors drew quickly back into the study as the old lady approached. Curious as she certainly was to look at, they had no desire to show any disrespect towards her.

But the strange lady did not pass No. 1 Study.

She stopped at the doorway, pushed the half-open door, and looked in, adjusting a big pair of spectacles.

"Is this No. 1 Study?" she asked, in a squeaky, high-pitched voice.

"Yes, ma'am," said Harry.

"In the Remove?"

"Certainly, ma'am!"

"Is Nugent here—Frank Nugent?"

"I'm Nugent," said that individual, in surprise.

"Ah! My dear nephew—"

"What!" said Nugent faintly.

"My dear nephew, how happy I am to see you!"

And the little old lady marched into the study.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Aunt Matilda.

"FRANK! My dear nephew!"

Nugent gazed at the little old lady in surprise and horror.

He had suggested, by way of a joke, that the stranger might be a relation of Harry Wharton's—that she might in reality be a relative of his own had never occurred to him.

He stared at her dumbfounded.

The old lady beamed at him over her glasses.

"How you've grown!" she said, in her squeaky voice.

"Grown!" murmured Nugent.

"Yes. Do you remember the last time you saw me?"

"N-n-n-no!"

"Then you were a tiny tot, and crying always for sugar!" said the old lady. "Are you fond of sugar now?"

"I—I—"

"How you've grown! Deary me! You will be a man soon! You must be turned twelve!"

"I'm jolly well fourteen and three-quarters!" exclaimed Nugent indignantly.

"Dear me! Aren't you going to ask your old Aunt Matilda to sit down, when she's come all the way from Yorkshire to see you?" asked the old lady.

Nugent pressed his hand to his feverish brow.

"There's some—some mistake!" he muttered. "I—I haven't an Aunt Selina—I—I mean, Matilda!"

"Franky!"

"I—I haven't—I haven't, really! You're looking for some other Nugent!" said Frank desperately.

"Is there another Nugent at Greyfriars?" squeaked the little lady, looking round at the juniors.

"No, ma'am," said Bob Cherry; "only Nugent minor, and he's Frank's younger brother."

"I knew I could make no mistake," said Aunt Matilda, with an affectionate look at Nugent. "Of course, you're glad to see me?"

"Of course!" stammered Nugent. "But—"

"You will take me round the school, and show me all your little games, and introduce me to your dear playmates."

"There's some mis—mis—"

"I have so longed to see you at your games!" said Miss Matilda sweetly. "You play marbles, of course?"

Nugent turned crimson. Such a question, put to the best winger in the Remove football eleven, was a deadly insult that could only have been wiped out in blood—from the nose, of course—if it had been from a boy. But he could hardly punch the nose of his venerable Aunt Matilda.

"Please sit down, ma'am!" said Harry Wharton, placing a chair for the old lady.

Harry was greatly inclined to smile, but Frank's distress was so acute that sympathy held back the smile.

The Greyfriars fellows liked to have relations come to the school, as a rule. A portly father, a kind mother, a pretty sister, a brother in the Army, or an uncle in the Navy gave a fellow some eclat.

But the boys, naturally, were rather particular about their relations. Any peculiarity about them was certain to be remarked upon.

Trevor, for instance, had had his life made a burden for a week or more, because his uncle had come to see him at

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NEXT WEEK: "THE CAD OF THE SIXTH."

Greyfriars in a pink-spotted tie. Bunter had never been allowed to forget that his father wore green fancy waistcoats, though it was two terms since Bunter senior had been to the school to see his hopeful son.

Nugent thought of the effect Aunt Matilda would have upon the fellows, and shuddered violently.

What would they say?

The critical eyes that had been offended by the spotted ties of Trevor's uncle and the fancy waistcoats of Bunter's father—how they would fairly start from their sockets at the sight of Aunt Matilda.

Nugent would never be allowed to forget this if he stayed at Greyfriars till he was the oldest fellow in the Sixth.

He felt that there must be some mistake—it was too terrible to be true. Yet, how could this innocent and inoffensive old lady have made such a mistake. The truth was only too plain to all the fellows in the study, even to Nugent himself—and Hazeldene whispered it aloud to Bob Cherry.

"What do you think of Nugent's aunt, Bob?" he whispered, while the old lady was rustling into the seat Wharton politely placed for her.

Bob Cherry made a grimace.

"Poor chap! He's never heard of her before," said Hazeldene. "The family have been keeping her dark, you know. That's what it is."

"Looks like it."

"Nice for Nugent, isn't it?"

"Poor old Frank!"

"I see you expected me," said Aunt Matilda. "How nice of you to have tea all ready for me! I hardly thought you would have received my letter yet, Francis. Have you had my letter, my dear nephew?"

"N-n-n-no!"

"Call me aunt, my dear little fellow!"

"Aunt!"

"Yes; I will have some tea," said Aunt Matilda.

The fellows exchanged hopeless glances.

The tea which had been prepared for Marjorie was evidently to go the way of all teas.

But was Marjorie coming? She was usually very careful in keeping appointments, and now she was very late.

Nugent hoped fervently that she would not come. He did not want her to meet Aunt Matilda.

"Pour out the tea, Franky!"

"C-c-certainly!"

Nugent poured out the tea.

The boys sat down round the table in silence.

Hazeldene was grinning, and appeared to enjoy the situation, and Nugent longed to kick him out of the study.

But the sympathy for their unfortunate chum made the rest of the fellows serious.

Aunt Matilda made a very small tea, apparently not having brought a good appetite with her from Yorkshire.

Nugent had no appetite, either.

He sat at the table, looking the picture of discomfort.

Billy Bunter, however, made up for all deficiencies. There was not likely to be anything left over while the Owl of the Remove was in the study.

"How kind of you dear boys to entertain me in this way," said Aunt Matilda, smiling sweetly. "And my letter has not arrived?"

"No, aunt."

"Well, I am not surprised! Franky darling, will you show me round the school now? I am so interested in your school."

"Ain't you tired?" asked Nugent eagerly. "You must be awfully tired after such a long journey."

"What a dear, kind, affectionate boy he is!" exclaimed Aunt Matilda, and Nugent coloured and felt frightfully hypocritical. "But I am not a bit tired, and I must look over Greyfriars to-day, as I shall not stay very long at the school."

"Very well, then!"

"Let us go and see the football-fields!" said Aunt Matilda. "I suppose there will be a game going on at the present moment?"

"Well, no," said Nugent, driven into sarcasm. "We don't usually play footer after dark. You see, it would be difficult to see the ball."

"Yes, yes, of course! Let us go and see the cricket!"

"Cricket!"

"You play cricket, I suppose, Franky?"

"Not at the same time of the year as football," said Nugent, still more sarcastically; "and not after dark, even in the season!"

"Deary me! I see I have a great deal to learn about school life," beamed Miss Matilda. "But come and show me round, Franky!"

Nugent rose unwillingly.

"Give me your arm, dear Franky!"

Nugent shuddered inwardly, and gave his arm. Miss Matilda leaned upon it heavily, and they walked out of the study.

Frank cast an imploring glance back at his chums.

They could not resist the appeal. And as Nugent and his Aunt Matilda went down the passage the chums of the Remove accompanied them. Only Billy Bunter remained in the study, and he had strict orders to cut after them at once and bring the news if Marjorie Hazeldene arrived, though the juniors had almost given up expecting her now.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

An Astonishing Revelation.

AUNT MATILDA seemed very pleased with Greyfriars, and with the fellows she met. They, too, seemed very pleased with her—at all events, every fellow she came upon seemed unable to avoid breaking into a smile.

Nugent, with the face of a martyr at the stake, conducted her downstairs. He hated walking arm in arm with anybody, and with Miss Matilda! Words could not express his feelings.

Bulstrode, Skinner, Stott, and some more fellows were in the passage, and they stared blankly at the Greyfriars visitor.

"My only hat!" said Bulstrode. "Who's that?"

"What is it, you mean?" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not the umbrella! Talk about gamps!"

"And the specs; they're bigger than Bunter's!"

"And the charming colour scheme of the dress!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the boots!"

"I say, Nugent, who's your friend?" said Bulstrode.

"Introduce us!"

Nugent glared, and would have passed on, but Aunt Matilda stopped at once, regarding the Removites with a sweet smile.

"Pray introduce your dear playmates, Franky!" she exclaimed.

"Franky!" gasped Bulstrode.

"Oh, come on!" muttered Nugent.

But Aunt Matilda refused to come on.

"Oh, introduce them, Nugent!" said Hazeldene. "Your Aunt Matilda wants to know them."

"Aunt Matilda!"

"Nugent's aunt!"

"My only hat!"

Nugent had to do it. Aunt Matilda shook hands with all the juniors, beaming at them over her glasses.

"And are you all fond of my dear Franky?" she asked, in her queer, high-pitched voice.

"Oh, yes, ma'am," said Bulstrode solemnly; "we're all greatly attached to Franky! We worship the ground he treads on!"

"Shut up, you cad!" muttered Nugent fiercely.

"What did you say, Nugent?" said Bulstrode, in a loud voice.

"Nothing!" muttered Nugent, as Miss Matilda's eyes turned upon him.

"I thought you spoke!" persisted Bulstrode.

"I—I—I—"

"And you love one another, as dear little boys always should?" went on Miss Matilda, with an affectionate smile all round.

"Oh, yes, ma'am," said Skinner, "we love one another like little William and dear little George in the story-books, ma'am! But, most of all, we love our dear playmate Nugent. The head-master is sometimes moved to tears when he sees us walking hand in hand through the daisy-spangled meadows, with affectionate smiles upon our faces, reading from the same copy of 'Sandford and Merton,' or eating from the same stick of toffee!"

"How sweet!"

"Shut up!" muttered Nugent.

"Did you speak, Nugent?"

"Um-m-m-m-m!"

"How nice and kind of you!" said Aunt Matilda.

"It makes us happy, ma'am!" said Bulstrode, taking out his handkerchief to wipe his eyes. "Excuse these tears; I cannot help weeping a little when I think of how much we all love Nugent, and how we shall miss him when he dies of consumption, as good little boys always do in the good little books."

"A dear, kind boy!" said Aunt Matilda, feeling in her purse. "I must make you a little present!"

"Oh, not at all, ma'am!"

"Yes, yes, I insist!" beamed Aunt Matilda, still fumbling in her green purse. "You are a dear, kind boy, and you fully deserve it. You will, I suppose, purchase sweets, and

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in that case you will share them with your schoolfellows. I should recommend, however, that you save one-half of my little gift, and expend the remainder in sweets, as I always wish to encourage habits of thrift among the young."

And the old lady pressed a coin into Bulstrode's hand.

Bulstrode looked at it. It was a penny!

Aunt Matilda walked on, and the juniors walked on too, leaving Bulstrode staring blankly at the penny in his hand.

The juniors were grinning now.

Miss Matilda Nugent did not seem the kind of person to perpetrate a joke, but certainly she had succeeded in perpetrating one, whether intentionally or not.

"And what are these rooms?" asked Miss Nugent presently.

"They're the Sixth Form studies, aunt."

"Oh, let me look into them!"

"Oh, you mustn't! The Sixth don't like being disturbed."

"Deary me!"

Ionides was looking out of his study. He stared blankly at the old lady.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, loud enough for her to hear.

"What is that animal?"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Loder, who was standing there with him. "She's a queer old girl, certainly, but no need to insult her."

The Greek shrugged his shoulders.

"Bah! I shall say what I like, I suppose."

"Oh, rats!"

Ionides stepped out of his study. His hatred for the chums of No. 1 Study made him eager to seize any opportunity for humiliating them. He had not forgotten his painful experience in the Remove dormitory yet.

"Who is this?" he exclaimed.

"Mind your own business," said Wharton fiercely.

"What is it to do with you, Ionides?"

"Take care, Wharton."

"Rats!"

The Greek gritted his teeth.

"Who is this person?" he exclaimed. "How dare you bring such a person into the school?"

"It's my aunt," said Nugent, colouring.

Ionides stared, and then burst into a scoffing laugh.

"Your aunt! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, I am Franky's aunt from Yorkshire," explained the old lady, smiling at Ionides. "Are you one of Franky's friends?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Ionides!"

"Well, of all the odd old frights," exclaimed Ionides, "I think Nugent's aunt takes the cake! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You are a rude boy," said Aunt Matilda severely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Franky, I hope you are not on familiar terms with this ill-bred person?" said Aunt Matilda.

"Oh, not at all!" said Nugent, with a faint grin. "I never chum up with a chap in the Sixth."

"Very good. He is certainly not fit for you to associate with."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

The Greek scowled.

"Take that absurd old person away at once," he said.

"I'm showing her round Greyfriars," said Nugent.

"Take her away at once."

"Oh, don't be a pig!"

"Take her away! I will myself put her out of this passage if you do not obey me immediately," exclaimed Ionides angrily.

Nugent's eyes flashed.

"Oh, shut up, you cad!" he exclaimed.

Ionides started forward furiously. But Aunt Matilda stepped before her nephew, taking a business-like grasp upon her umbrella.

The umbrella swept in the air, and descended upon the Greek's shoulders with a loud-sounding thwack.

The Greek gave a roar, and the juniors gave another roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

The umbrella fell again and again upon the Greek, until Ionides, gasping with rage and pain, was fain to beat a hasty retreat. Aunt Matilda followed him, and Ionides ran into his study under a shower of blows from the umbrella.

"There!" exclaimed Aunt Matilda, a little breathlessly.

"There!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Good! Jolly good! Poor old Ionides!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I feel quite faint," said Miss Matilda; "I—I think I will go and sit down."

"I should jolly well think so," grinned Hazeldene.
 "Come to the study," said Nugent, who was not sorry to have the tour of inspection over.
 Aunt Matilda assented, and they returned to No. 1 Study. Miss Matilda sat down and rested.
 "I—I think I should like a little water," she said faintly.
 "I'll get it!" exclaimed Hazeldene.
 He ran out of the study. In a few moments he returned with a bowl of water, with a sponge floating in it. The juniors stared at him.
 "You ass!" muttered Nugent. "She wanted water to drink, not a blessed bowl of water to wash in."
 Hazeldene chuckled.
 "I know what I'm about, Nugent."
 "Look here——"
 "Thank you so much!" said Aunt Matilda. "I will bathe my poor forehead."
 She placed the wet sponge on her forehead, and to the surprise of the juniors proceeded to rub it all over her face. They watched her silently. The little old lady's face was lifted up from the bowl the next moment, wet and shining, and there was a perfect yell of astonishment in No. 1 Study.
 "Marjorie!"

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

The Night of the Play.

MARJORIE HAZELDENE smiled at the astounded juniors. That swift sponging had removed the sallow complexion and the wrinkles and the crow's-feet, and the pretty, youthful face of the belle of Cliff House was revealed.

The juniors stared at her blankly.
 It was not Nugent's aunt, after all. It was Marjorie!
 They could scarcely believe their eyes.
 "Marjorie!"
 The girl smiled at them. The sweet, young face seemed strangely at variance with the hideous bonnet and the horrid dress.

"Well?" said Miss Hazeldene.
 Hazeldene went off into a roar of laughter. The chums of the Remove gasped for breath.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Hazeldene. "Do you think Marjorie can act now?"

"Marjorie!" gasped Wharton.

"Marjorie!"

"Marjorie!"

The girl laughed.

"Yes, it is I," she said. "You must forgive me for this little deception, but it was agreed, you know, that I should come and give you a specimen of my acting and make-up. I think you will admit that I have succeeded."

"Marjorie!" said Nugent faintly. "Then—then you're not my aunt Matilda."

"Oh, no! Ha, ha!"

"I—I—knew I hadn't an Aunt Matilda!" exclaimed Nugent, with a gasp of relief. "You—you boulder! Excuse me; I've had a fearful time."

"I am sorry," said Marjorie contritely; "but you thought I couldn't act, you know, and I felt that I ought to convince you."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Harry. "It was wonderful! We never had any suspicion—any of us."

"Not a bit," said Bob Cherry.

"The not-a-bitfulness is terrific."

"I suppose Hazeldene knew it all along," said Nugent, turning a somewhat wrathful look upon that individual.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Hazeldene. "Of course I did. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"You boulder!" said Nugent. "Well, never mind. I admit I was taken in. And—and you can act, Marjorie; I know that."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"But I say, you know, I saw it all along," said Bunter. "I knew it all at once, you know, but I wouldn't give Miss Marjorie away."

"Oh, yes, you knew it all—I don't think!" said Bob Cherry. "You're a wonderful chap for guessing a thing after you've been told the answer."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"I think I must go now," said Marjorie, smiling. "Do you think I can act?"

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

"Well enough for the Amateur Dramatic Society?"

"Oh, don't rub it in!" said Nugent, with a grimace.

"Of course, you will put us all in the shade."

"Oh, no!" said Marjorie, laughing. "Still, I think my Portia will be passable."

"We shall be jolly glad to have you," said Bob Cherry. "Wharton thought all along it would be all right. We must admit that."

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE CAD OF THE SIXTH."

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"That's so!" said Hazeldene. "Come on, Marjorie, and I'll see you back to Cliff House. I've got a pass."

"I can get one, too, I think," said Wharton. "Just wait a minute while I go and speak to Wingate."

"And—and I think I'll buzz off and speak to Quelch," said Bob Cherry. "No good all asking the same person. Wait for me."

"I'll just say a word to Barnes, the prefect," said Nugent. And the three juniors rushed off.

They succeeded in getting their passes from those various sources, and Marjorie having donned a cloak to conceal her Aunt Matilda dress, they left Greyfriars.

On the way to Cliff House all arrangements respecting the performance of "Julius Cæsar" were made, and appointments for rehearsals. After seeing Marjorie to the gate of Cliff House, the juniors were about to say good-bye, when a cheerful face looked over the gate, and there was a soft laugh.

"Did it work, Marjorie?"

"Yes, Clara."

"Jolly good!" said Miss Clara. "Perhaps you fellows will think now that girls can do things as well as boys."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes, we give in," he said. "If I ever hear a chap as much as hint again that a girl isn't as clever as a boy, I'll punch his head."

And Marjorie and Clara laughed, and said good-bye, and went up the garden path. The Removites turned back towards Greyfriars.

"Well, it was a jolly good jape," said Nugent. "I never suspected that Marjorie could act like that. She kept up the character wonderfully well. But I think it would be a jolly good idea to give Hazeldene the frog's-march, anyway."

"Oh, cheese it!" grinned Hazeldene. "You wanted a lesson for your blessed conceit, and you've got it. There you are!"

"Well, anyway, we're sure about a jolly good Portia now," said Wharton, "and that's the main point, after all."

And the juniors agreed that it was.

They looked eagerly forward to the time when Marjorie was to come over for the first rehearsal, and when it came they were more than satisfied.

Marjorie had her lines perfect, and her acting was excellent, and the Removites could not help admitting to themselves that it was a little better than their own.

They looked forward with much more confidence now to the night of the play. Miss Clara had agreed to take the part of Cæsar's wife; and though her acting was not as fine as Marjorie's, she made a very good Calphurnia.

When the night arrived upon which the play was to be given, there was a great deal of excitement in the Greyfriars Remove.

Nearly every member of the Amateur Dramatic Society was to be on the stage in some character or other—as a senator, a soldier, a citizen, or something.

The costumes had been hired or borrowed, and the dress rehearsals had been considered very successful, and the juniors looked forward to a triumph.

Wharton, as stage-manager and Brutus, had plenty on his hands, and he began to experience the delights of an actor-manager. But he did very well. Several of the masters and some of the prefects had promised to come to the performance, and there was to be a big crowd of fellows, seniors and juniors. The play was given in the lecture hall, where the stage was a fixture, and the juniors had only to arrange curtains and scenes. Just before the curtains went up, Billy Bunter came behind the scenes, and poked Harry in the ribs. Harry was in Brutus costume, and looked very handsome as a noble Roman.

"I say, Wharton——"

"None of the public are allowed behind the scenes," exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Get out!"

"Yes, but——"

"Buzz off! I mean, get thee hence, caitiff!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Avaunt, or die the death!" exclaimed Bob, drawing the stage sword with which he was girt. "Avaunt! Aroint thee! Get thee hence! Buzz off! Bunk!"

"Yes, but I was thinking it's not too late——"

"No, we don't want a new Brutus——"

"It's not that."

"Or a new Mark Antony——"

"Not at all. I——"

"Or a new Julius Cæsar. Get out!"

"I wasn't going to suggest anything of the sort," said Bunter indignantly. "I've given up trying to combat the petty jealousy in our dramatic society. I was going to suggest that it's not too late to arrange for a feed after the performance."

"Oh, get out!"

"But I say, you fellows, you'll be hungry, and—"

"The curtain's just going up," said Wharton. "Get out, Bunter!"

"Yes, but it's important, you know. You fellows will be hungry after spouting for a couple of hours. I shouldn't mind fetching the things from the tuckshop, and I'll do any cooking you like. I don't want to see the play. It won't be much to see, the way you fellows will do it. I'll get a feed ready—"

"Get out! They're stamping for the curtain to go up," exclaimed Bob.

"Yes, but—"

Bob Cherry seized the fat junior and rushed him away across the stage. The audience were in their places, and the time was past for the commencement, and some of the younger members of the audience were stamping their feet as a sign of impatience.

The fellows appointed to manage the curtain pulled away, and it went up, unfortunately just as Bob Cherry was kicking Bunter along the stage.

The audience gasped.

The scene represented a Roman street, and along that Roman street Mark Antony was kicking a fat junior in spectacles.

The audience stared, and then burst into an irresistible roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled off the stage, and Mark Antony, suddenly aware that he was in the full sight of a convulsed audience, gave a gasp, and popped back behind the scenes. The curtain came down again with a run.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Why doesn't somebody suffocate Bunter? He ought to have been slain years ago."

"Better wait till they've done laughing before we have the curtain up again," said Nugent dubiously.

Wharton nodded, and they waited.

In five minutes the curtain went up again, the audience having composed themselves somewhat, and then the play commenced.

In spite of the inauspicious beginning, caused by Billy Bunter, the whole thing went off with a swing.

There were cheers at the end of the first act, and louder cheers when, after labouring nobly for two hours, the juniors brought their play to a successful close.

It was admitted on all hands that Brutus and Portia were the finest actors, but the others were all cheered.

The Amateur Dramatic Society felt very proud of itself that evening.

"Jolly good!" said Wharton, when the Remove went to bed that night. "We'll get up the 'Merchant of Venice' next."

"Good!" said the Amateur Dramatic Society, with one voice.

And a voice was heard from Billy Bunter's bed.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"But I say, you fellows, if you're going to do the 'Merchant of Venice,' I suppose you'll want me to play Shylock?"

"Well, it would be a jolly appropriate character for you," grunted Bob Cherry. "But we sha'n't want you, all the same."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Oh, go to sleep!"

"That's the worst of these amateur dramatic societies," said Billy Bunter. "There's so much petty jealousy, and a really clever chap is never given a chance. I—"

"Go to sleep!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yes, but—"

A pillow whizzed through the air, and Billy Bunter suddenly collapsed into his bed, with a gasp; and his voice was heard no more that night in the Remove dormitory.

THE END.

(Next Tuesday: "The Cad of the Sixth," by Frank Richards. Please order your copy of "The Magnet" in advance. Price One Penny.)

The First Chapters of a New Serial.



STANLEY DARE

The Boy Detective

INTRODUCTION.

Stanley Dare, the boy detective, on his way back to England from India goes ashore at Port Said, and is met on the quay by the British Consul. "Just the man of all men I most want to see!" exclaims Matthews (the Consul). "A King's messenger, carrying important despatches, disappeared mysteriously only a few hours ago. He was on board a liner which had lain-to in a cove a little way up the Suez Canal. He appears to have completely disappeared!" The young detective immediately takes up the case, and proceeds to the spot where the boat had stopped. A search is made, and in dragging the canal in the vicinity, the body of the King's messenger is brought to view. Strangely enough there are no marks of violence; but an iron hand firmly clutches the unfortunate man's wrist. Dare follows up a clue; but in so doing is robbed by natives and thrown into a lake. However he is rescued by a fisherman.

The Cry for Help.

This train of thought opened up so many possibilities that Dare did not follow it up just then. He wanted to get hold of some more facts before he plunged into a sea of theory. Moreover, the old fisherman was pressing him to partake of some food, which, indeed, he sorely needed, and had spread some rice-cakes, fruit, and cooked fish on the sand at the shady side of the boat.

Having settled himself down to the welcome repast, he discussed with the old fisherman ways and means of getting to Cairo without having to go back to Port Said.

"If I could get to Mansoorah," said Dare, "I could arrange about my railway journey all right. That would not be a difficult matter."

"I am the effendi's servant," replied the old Arab. "If a horse from the village would suffice, I can obtain it."

"But I have already told you, my friend, that those

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NOW ON SALE!

THE EMPIRE LIBRARY.

ONE HALFPENNY.

villains have robbed me of every piastre I had with me!" exclaimed Dare.

"For the hire of a horse, ten piastres," returned the man. "If the master will give me an order for the amount to the British Consul at Port Said, it will be enough. For such service as I have rendered, there is no need of payment."

"You shall be paid, nevertheless, my good fellow," said Dare. "You have rendered me, a stranger, excellent service, and money is not too plentiful with you, I imagine."

So when the meal was over, the fisherman returned to the village, coming back, after a brief absence, with a horse. It was a sorry-looking nag, but, as it turned out, it was tough and wiry, and quite up to all Dare's requirements. Saddle and bridle, too, had the appearance of having been raked out of some lumber-shed.

Still, he was not disposed to find fault with his "turn-out," for he was glad enough to be saved, a weary tramp of thirty miles across the desert. But the native pen and ink which the man had brought with him were the real trial. The ink was thick, and the pen was made out of a reed, and would not mark at all on the rough paper, or else spluttered, scattering blots in such profusion that it was rather difficult to pick out the written words from amid them.

"The effendi, no doubt, usually leaves his writing for a hired scribe to do," observed the fisherman, as he surveyed the result.

"If there is a scribe in Tassoumah who could use that pen, except as a weapon of offence in a free fight," replied Dare, "he is a clever man. I hope that Matthews will be able to read what I have written. Anyhow, I shall wire to him from Cairo. This is an order, Yusuf—that, I believe, is your name—for five hundred piastres, and you have well earned the money."

(Five hundred piastres equals five pounds in English money.)

The old fisherman was profuse in his expressions of gratitude, declaring, in the flowery language of the East, that he was his slave henceforth for as long as he should live.

Dare laughingly cut him short, and, mounting his steed, rode off across the desert in the direction of Mansoorah.

Two days had passed since he had parted with old Yusuf at the lake, and Stanley Dare was quartered comfortably at Shepheard's Hotel. He had money now, having wired to Port Said for his letters of credit, which he had presented at the Bank of Egypt; and he had got some clothes through, also, in place of the crumpled and bloodstained garments which he had been wearing when he was hurled into the lake.

His quest, so far, had been only partially successful. He had traced Abdullah as far as the Babel Look, a part of old Cairo remote from the tourists' quarters; but there the wily villain had vanished as completely as though he had melted into air.

The Arab "merchant," whose arm was in a sling, had reached Cairo a few hours before Abdullah—they had missed each other at Tassoumah; but, with the assistance of the native police, Dare found out that he had taken a conveyance to the Babel Look as well. But the Arab merchant had disappeared as completely as had Abdullah.

"Well, Abdullah believed that I am dead, while the so-called merchant doesn't know me from Adam," mused the young detective. "I will have a thorough look round that quarter this evening, though I shall have to be cautious in the matter of a disguise, as I am a bit shaky in my Arabic. Meanwhile, a spin along the road to Gizeh will give me an appetite."

The animal he bestrode as he went out for his morning gallop was very different from the one with which old Yusuf had provided him. It was a pure-bred, Syrian Arab, which had been lent to him by an officer of the Egyptian Army with whom he was acquainted.

It was a horse that required to be ridden carefully; so, as there were a number of vehicles about, he turned from the main road, when a mile outside the city, and made his way along a bridle-path towards Abbasieh.

Half an hour's gallop brought him up to some ruins, partially hidden by palms and other trees, which had grown up in their midst.

His thoughts were busy with the difficult problem which he had to solve of the murder of the King's messenger, when he was roused from his reverie by loud cries for help, which came from behind a crumbling wall.

"Help, help! Yalla, yalla! Quick, quick! Allah Kerim! Will no one help a holy man who has been set upon by thieves?"

"A holy man—eh!" thought Dare. "I could have sworn that was a woman's voice!"

The wall ended abruptly about twenty yards to his right. Whipping a revolver from his pocket, he galloped round the angle. It was a strange sight that met his eyes on the further side.

The Dervish—A Warning—Kalatides, the Greek—An Apparition.

An old man, in the costume affected by those semi-religious individuals who call themselves Dervishes, was lying upon the ground, with his arms bound to his side by the folds of a voluminous scarf, the green edges of which showed that he was a descendant from the Prophet; while by his side, striving to defend him from the brutality of two powerful Soudanese, was a handsome Egyptian girl, whose dark eyes flashed with a mixture of anger and fear.

"Hands off, you cowards!" shouted Dare, reining up his horse, and holding his revolver at the head of the nearest Soudanese. "If you are not out of this in less than a minute I'll chip pieces out of you with a few bullets!"

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE CAD OF THE SIXTH."

A Double-Length Tale of Harry Wharton
& Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

He spoke in English, and though the ruffians did not understand the words which he used, they could not mistake the meaning of his gestures.

Casting a glance of malignant fury and hate at him, the man whom he threatened with his revolver muttered a few words to the other, and the pair of them took themselves off.

Meanwhile, the girl had been unfastening the scarf with which the Dervish was bound, and had assisted him to his feet. This done, she turned to Stanley Dare, and poured forth a torrent of thanks, very few words of which he understood. However, he saw that she was very handsome, and that her eyes shone with gratitude. As soon as she became calmer she hastily resumed her burko, or face-veil, which had been torn off. The dervish, in a mixture of Arabic and English, explained the situation.

"Those dogs of Soudanese waylaid me, and, pretending to believe that I had a large sum of money concealed on my person, beat me and attempted to rob me. But I believe that the son of evil whom they serve had instructed them to carry off my niece Emina, and they surely would have succeeded in their design but for your appearance, and the courage with which you drove them off!"

"And who is this 'son of evil,' as you call him, that they serve?" asked Dare.

The dervish hesitated, and then replied slowly:

"He is a Greek, effendi—a man of wealth and power, but, as I have said, a man of evil." Then, suddenly, he bent a searching look upon the young detective's face, and an exclamation of surprise broke from his lips.

"Mahomet!" he exclaimed. "Strange, indeed, is it, effendi, that you, of all men, should have come to my assistance!"

"Why so?" demanded Stanley Dare.

"You arrived in Cairo from Mansoorah two days ago, and are now living at the great serai which they call Shepheard's Hotel?"

"Yes."

"You have an enemy in Cairo who has sworn to take your life," pursued the dervish. "You are in deadly peril. At any moment the blow may fall—this very night!"

"Indeed!" said Dare incredulously. "Who is this person?"

"The son of evil whose servants you rescued me from," was the unexpected reply. "The one-armed Greek——"

"One-armed!" interrupted Dare.

"Rather should I say one-handed," pursued the dervish.

"His right hand has been cut from his arm at the wrist when he was engaged in some evil work."

"I know of an Arab merchant who would answer to that description," said Dare; "but I am not acquainted with any Greek. But even he cannot know that I am in Cairo. Indeed, if he knows anything about me at all, he must suppose that I am dead. You must be mistaken."

"This holy man, my uncle, is not mistaken," interposed the girl. "He has means of gaining information that are denied to ordinary men."

Dare only understood a part of what she said, but he was able to fill up the blanks.

"It is certain that you are the man," went on the dervish. "The Greek and another saw you come from the railway-station, and I heard something of what passed between them. There was reference to your supposed death by drowning in Lake Menzaleh."

This was disquieting news indeed. If such a reference was made, one of the men must certainly have been the scoundrel Abdullah. It seemed clear, too, that the Arab merchant, who carried his right arm in a sling, and the Greek whose right hand was missing, were one and the same person. And the dervish had referred to him as a man of wealth and power. That made him doubly dangerous, as no doubt he would have many unscrupulous agents in his pay.

At present, of course, there was nothing to show that this man had anything to do with the murder of Frederick Wargrave, the King's messenger, but the fact that he had singled Dare out as an enemy to be removed from his path, was almost a proof of his complicity in the crime. For, by some means which at present the young detective had been unable to fathom, Abdullah and his rascally associates had discovered that he—Dare—was on the trail of the murderer. And Abdullah was evidently in the pay of this mysterious Greek.

"What is the name of this Greek?" demanded the young detective.

"I dare not tell you, effendi," replied the dervish. "He is too powerful, and there are few who dare oppose him. Take my advice, master, and escape. Leave Cairo while there is yet time."

"Not to be thought of," said Dare. "Not only do I mean to oppose him, but if he is the man I suspect him to be, I mean to hunt him down and have him punished for his crimes. Moreover, you have ventured to oppose him—why should not I?"

"I defended my own life and the honour of my brother's child," the dervish answered. "Surely any man would do that; and I have less cause to fear him than you. We dervishes have a secret society that in itself boasts of some power. It would not suit the policy of the Greek to greatly offend."

"Tell me his name," insisted Dare.

"It is not always safe to speak it aloud," muttered the dervish, who seemed to be possessed of a feeling that was half fear, half hatred of the Greek. Then he bent forward and whispered in Dare's ear:

"His name is Kalatides, and he lives now in the green-painted house in the Babel Look quarter."

Having given Dare this information, he beckoned to his niece and vanished with her among the ruins.

On returning to Cairo, the young detective found Egerton Matthews waiting for him at the hotel, and over lunch the two devised a plan of action.

"This fellow Kalatides," said Egerton Matthews, "is a man of considerable wealth and influence in Cairo, and it certainly would not do to make an accusation against him unless it can be backed up with absolute proof of his guilt. Little is really known about him, or how he obtained his money, but there are two or three people in Cairo who believe that he was at one time an unscrupulous adventurer who was ready to commit any crime, provided it ended in some distinct advantage to himself. I am inclined to think that he has not altered in the slightest degree. Still, it is hard to believe that he took a part in poor Wargrave's murder. However vile he may be, he is not a man who would ever run needless risks. Had he been on board the ship, someone would surely have recognised him; and if the man who committed the crime was not on board the ship, the murder remains as great a mystery as ever."

"The manner of its committal remains a mystery, for the present," replied Dare; "but I have already found out a possible motive for the crime."

"You have!"

"Yes," said Dare. "Although, to all seeming, I have been a mere pleasure-seeker, caring about nothing but my own enjoyment, I have learnt a great deal since I have been here. You remember that Wargrave stayed at this very hotel when he was in Cairo twelve months ago."

"Yes."

"One night he went to the Turf Club; it was on the evening of a race-meeting," continued Dare. "A Greek, who owned a racehorse, was at the time a member of the club. Wargrave sat down to a game of ecarte with him, and detected him in the act of cheating. There was a scene. Wargrave thrashed the fellow, and had him ejected from the club. The Greek vowed to be revenged—"

"It could not have been Kalatides," interrupted the Consul; "for he would never have ventured to show his face in Cairo again."

"Kalatides, the Greek, has more than one name, and more than one personality," was Dare's significant reply. "I mean to pay him a visit to-night in his own house."

"Not alone!" exclaimed Matthews. "That would be madness. Your life would be in the greatest peril, if Kalatides is really the guilty man."

"I am going alone," replied Dare quietly, "but I shall be disguised. However, I should like you and Nouredin, your servant, to be within hail. You and he could remain concealed somewhere in the neighbourhood of the house. I am going to quit the hotel this afternoon, and take private rooms in a quiet part of the town."

"Whereabouts?"

"You will forgive me, Matthews, if I keep that matter a secret for the present," said Dare. "We have to deal with a master of craft, and our only hope of success lies in meeting guile with guile, craft with stratagem."

"But if you are disguised, how shall we be able to recognise you?" objected Matthews.

Dare picked up a sheet of notepaper, wrote a few lines on it, folded it, and fastened it up inside an envelope. Then he handed it to Matthews.

"Be in the neighbourhood of the Greek's house at nine o'clock to-night," he said. "But before you start you can read what is written in that note. It explains the character of my disguise, and describes the clothes I shall be wearing. I think that is all for the present. And now I must be going, for I have a great deal to do before nine o'clock."

"If you are going into any danger, I want to share it," declared the Consul.

"You will probably have an opportunity of doing so," answered Dare, with a light laugh. "Mind, not a word to

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ONE HALFPENNY.

the police; they can't be of any service to us yet. And come armed."

Kalatides, the Greek, sat alone in the gloomy and sombre dining-room of the old house which he occupied in the Babel-Look quarter, with an ugly gleam in his deep-set, brooding eyes, and a scowl on his thin, parchment-hued face. He was dressed in the ordinary European costume affected by Turks, Greeks, and native officials in Cairo—namely, a black frock-coat, white drill trousers, patent leather boots, and a red tarbooch—sometimes called a fez—on his head.

He was a tall and sinewy man, with a slight stoop in his broad shoulders, and evidently a man of great muscular strength. But there must have been some mistake in the descriptions which Dare had received of him, for old Yuuf had said that the pretended Arab merchant—whom Dare believed to be the Greek in disguise—carried his right arm in a sling, while the dervish had distinctly stated that Kalatides was minus his right hand. But here, as he sat on a divan at one side of the room, both hands were visible, clasped together in front of him, as he stooped slightly forward, deep in thoughts that were evidently the reverse of pleasant ones.

A chiming clock on the mantelpiece struck the hour of nine. Kalatides glanced up sharply. It was not the striking of the hour which concerned him, but a footstep outside the room door.

He had supposed that he was alone in the house; who, then, was the intruder?

The door had been locked, and the key was in his pocket. He put his hand in his pocket to make sure that it was there, and then he glanced across the room again in a state of utter bewilderment. For the door was slowly opening!

It swung open noiselessly to its full width, and a figure appeared in the doorway.

The Greek leaped to his feet with a wild cry of terror, for the silent figure that stood on the threshold was the murdered King's messenger—Frederick Wargrave.

Self-convicted.

"Villain!"

Kalatides was no coward. He was a man of inflexible will, and plenty of that brute courage which will enable a man to face any ordinary peril without flinching. But here he was confronted with a peril which was beyond his understanding, and which stirred up the dark superstitions hidden away in his black soul, the existence of which he had never before admitted, even to himself.

His victim had risen from the dead, and was come for vengeance. Yesterday he would have laughed such an idea to scorn, but now—

He stared with widely-distended eyes at the apparition, whose face was grey with the hue of death, whose garments even appeared to be dripping with water, as though he had but just risen from the depths of the canal, and whose eyes seemed void of all expression as they returned his gaze.

"Who are you?" gasped Kalatides. "You are not Wargrave. I will not believe it. A man once dead cannot revisit the earth."

"You killed me, yet I am here."

"Killed!" cried the Greek. "Well, use the word if it pleases you. I had my revenge for what you did, as I swore I would have."

He addressed the apparition as one might address a living man, yet still he feared it. Had he but known that instead of being a spirit it was in good truth a living man, one whom he had sworn to remove from his path, if the dervish was to be believed, his fear would have vanished.

Yet he would have had more cause for fear, as a living foe is surely more dangerous than a dead one. That which he supposed, in his superstitious terror, was the spirit of a dead man, whom he stood self-confessed as having murdered, was really Stanley Dare in one of the most marvellous disguises that he had ever attempted. For surely to make up in the image of a dead man, with no detail forgotten, even to the dripping garments, as though he had just risen from his watery grave, was the very perfection in the art of disguise.

The young detective had hit upon this daring expedient as being the most likely plan to draw a confession of his crime from Kalatides's lips. The man was an educated scoundrel, and spoke the English language fluently, but, as Dare surmised, there was a strong vein of superstition in his nature, as there is in the natures of most of his countrymen.

Of course, the words which he had uttered were of no avail as legal proof of his guilt, but to obtain that would be less difficult now.

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Gordon Gay's Company

A Tale of
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By PROSPER HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

Introducing Gordon Gay.

"I'M going to start a proper theatrical company!" The curly-haired, sunny-faced boy who was sitting on the edge of the table in the Fourth-Form common-room at Rylcombe Grammar School swung his legs and looked intensely earnest as he made this momentous announcement.

The buzz of talk in the common-room ceased suddenly. "Eh? What's that, Gay?"

A pleasant-looking, rather lanky fellow, seemingly a year or so older than the first speaker, looked up and put the query.

Gordon Gay looked at him and smiled.

"I say, I'm going to start a proper theatrical company, Monk!"

There was a moment's silence as the eyes of the entire common-room were turned on the speaker in a stare which might have abashed a statue, but did not seem to have the slightest effect on its cheerful objective.

"You're going to what?" inquired Frank Monk at last, in measured accents.

Gordon Gay laughed in the light-hearted fashion that was peculiarly his own.

"You heard what I said; I'm going to start a proper theatrical company of my own, and make this dull old place wake up a bit!"

There was a general sort of gasp in the common-room at this calm assertion.

Frank Monk himself seemed hardly able to believe his ears.

For Gordon Gay had been at Rylcombe Grammar School but three short weeks, and by the unwritten law of schools should have been content to be seen and not heard in his Form until at least half term. But not so Gordon Gay.

From the day of his arrival he had taken an active part in the affairs of the Fourth Form, in spite of the disapproving attitude of his elders in the Form, and, as they considered themselves, his betters.

His independence was attributable partly to the fact that Gordon was an Australian boy, fresh from the land of his birth, whence he had arrived in England for the first time but a few weeks ago.

After a short stay in London, he had been sent off to the Grammar School, where Dr. Monk, the head-master, found that his education had been so far attended to in Australia that he had been able to put him into the Fourth Form at once. Gordon had quickly adapted himself to his new surroundings, and in the three short weeks during which the Fourth Form had known him when this story opens, he had kept them in a constant state of uncertainty as to what he would be up to next.

His hairbrained schemes, mostly in the form of weird and startling entertainments in aid of the various school funds, had caused the Fourth considerable uneasiness, owing to the amount of comment and criticism, not unmixed with ridicule, they had attracted from other Forms.

But his latest announcement, with which this chapter opens, struck them as almost reaching the limit; while the avowed object of it "to make this dull old place wake up a bit," coming as it did from a "new kid," fairly made the Fourth gasp.

Dull old place!

Why, was it not the first duty of every Grammarian, from the head of the Sixth down to the smallest fag, to maintain by word and deed that the Grammar School was the finest school in England or the world—at any rate, in public?

Privately, there might sometimes be a grumble or two about some small matter among the old, and therefore privileged, stagers.

But for a new boy to calmly designate the school a "dull old place" was unheard of, and the Fourth felt that such things must not be.

That is why there was a curious expression on Frank Monk's face as he looked from the bland face of Gordon Gay to the group of his horrified Form-fellows.

"What's up with you chaps?" asked Gordon cheerfully, swinging his legs to quicker time as he noticed the shocked expression of the Fourth-Formers. "Don't you like my idea?"

Frank Monk, who was the recognised leader of the Form, gave a gulp of indignation, and then felt inclined to laugh. Gordon's "nerve" was so amazing for a new boy that he felt quite taken aback.

Also, he was Gordon Gay. And the Grammar School, as a whole, had already learned that the sunny irresponsibility of Gordon Gay's nature had a fascination peculiarly hard to resist.

His name fitted him to a T.

His whole temperament was so unaffectedly gay that no one could be angry or annoyed with him for long.

But Frank Monk was a great stickler for etiquette, and he pulled himself together.

As Form captain it was up to him to teach Master Gay his place—or try to.

He frowned portentously.

"We think your idea is a blessed rotten one," he said deliberately. "And, besides—"

"You mean you do," put in Gordon, in nowise abashed by this candid criticism of his idea.

Monk frowned again.

"I mean we all do," he said with emphasis, looking round at his Form-fellows.

A growl of assent went up.

"And, what's more, we think it's like your cheek—" began a tall, rather aristocratic-looking youth.

But Gordon Gay interrupted again.

"It's jolly nice of you to say so, Van-boy," he said sweetly.

"I think so, too."

The aristocratic-looking youth turned red, and a subdued chuckle ran round the common-room. The aristocratic one's name was Carboy—and very proud of his name he was.

It was, as he was always ready to inform anyone who would listen, one of the oldest names in England, and Carboy did not appreciate Gordon Gay's version of it at all.

The Form, knowing it, chuckled. They could not help it.

Carboy glowered round the common-room, and the chuckle subsided.

"Look here—" he began angrily.

"Certainly!" said Gordon Gay blandly.

But Gordon Gay interrupted again.

The chuckle broke out afresh.

Frank Monk came to his chum's rescue hastily.

"Look here, Gay—"

Gordon looked at him with a twinkle in his blue eyes, but Monk went on hastily before he could be interrupted.

"We think your idea's absolutely rotten, all of us, but that's not the point."

"The point's the thing!" murmured Gordon, as Monk paused for breath before going on.

"The point is, that for a new kid to call the Grammar School a 'dull old place' is beastly, blessed cheek," continued Monk warmly—"beastly, blessed cheek, that's what it is! And we're not going to stand it!"

Gordon Gay glanced expressively at a form—a glance which was not lost on the common-room—but said nothing. He only listened, with an air of resignation, to Frank Monk's growing indignation.

The serious air of the Form leader did not seem to impress the lad from Australia. He glanced calmly at Monk as the latter was clearing his throat preparatory to continuing his weighty remarks.

"Well, and what are you going to do about it, Monkey?" he asked encouragingly.

Frank Monk gave a gasp like escaping steam.

But he quickly recovered himself. He was a born leader, and although, as he confided to Carboy afterwards, "he felt like having a fit on the spot," he saw that the right thing to do was to meet Gordon Gay with his own weapons, as it were.

So he controlled himself with an effort, and turned to his Form-fellows with an assumption of carelessness.

"Do we know what we are going to do about it, chaps?" he asked.

Instantly there was a yell.

"Yes!"

"We do!"

"Bump him!"

A rush was made towards the table, but Gordon Gay was too quick.

He was, fortunately for him, nearer to the door than anyone else in the room. He was also on the alert, though he did not look it. He stopped the careless swinging of his legs, and with one bound was out of the common-room, banging the door to after him.

There was a shout from the Fourth.

"After him!"

"Seize the rotter!"

"Stop the villain!"

Frank Monk reached the door first of the pursuers.

With a wrench he dragged it open, and flung it back on its hinges, catching Carboy, who was just behind him, a terrific crack with it, and sending him flying.

There was a howl of anguish from Carboy as he went down; but Monk, in his excitement, paid no heed.

The next instant, however, Carboy's lamentations were completely drowned by the terrific uproar which burst forth.

After he had slammed the door to, Gordon Gay had just had time to hurl one of the passage chairs upside down in the doorway, in the hope of its impeding the pursuit somewhat.

And his hope was fully justified.

Impelled by his own eagerness and the rush of juniors behind him, Frank Monk crashed straight into the up-turned chair, and went flying, and in a few seconds the door of the Fourth Form common-room was chock-a-block with a wedged mass of struggling, yelling juniors.

Gordon Gay, as he fled down the passage, heard the turmoil behind him, and guessed what had happened.

And Gordon Gay chuckled!

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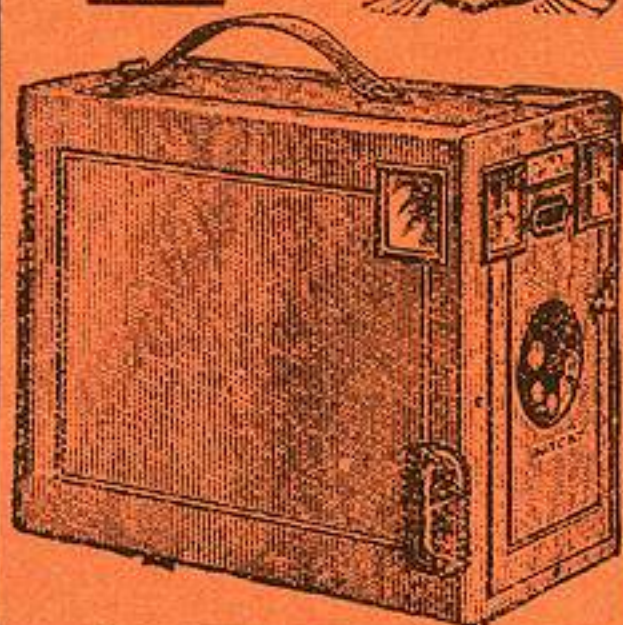


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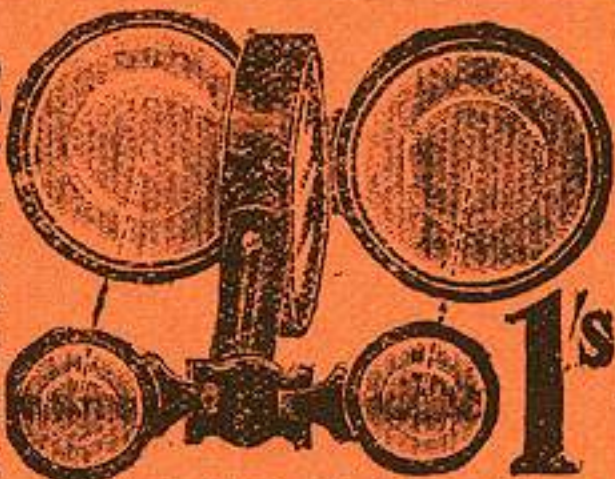


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