



BILLY BUNTER'S BOOBY-TRAP



SCENE ONE

The form-room at Greyfriars: Mr Quelch and the Remove.

BUNTER. (*Snore!*)

WHARTON (*whispering*). That fat ass Bunter has fallen asleep.

CHERRY (*whispering*). Nodded off, by gum!

NUGENT (*whispering*). Quelch will wake him up.

BUNTER. (*Snore!*).

QUELCH (*sharply*). Bunter!

BUNTER. (*Snore!*).

QUELCH. Upon my word! Has that boy fallen asleep in class? BUNTER!

BUNTER. (*Snore!*).

QUELCH. He is asleep! Actually asleep, in class! Wharton.

WHARTON. Yes, sir!

QUELCH. Wake Bunter up at once, Wharton.

WHARTON. Oh, certainly, sir. I'll give him a shake, sir!

BUNTER. (*Snore!*).

WHARTON. Wake up, Bunter.

BUNTER. Ow! Leggo! Tain't rising-bell! Leave off shaking me, you beast!

Laughter in the class.

WHARTON. Bunter, you ass, wake up—.

BUNTER. Shan't! Beast! Leggo! I was just dreaming of a lovely spread in Smithy's study, and now you go and wake me up. I can't hear the rising-bell if you can.

WHARTON. Do you think you're in bed, fathead?

Wake up! You're in form, you ass, and Quelch is looking at you.

BUNTER. Oh, crikey! Oh, crumbs! Did—did I nod off? It's so jolly warm this afternoon. Oh, scissors!

QUELCH. Bunter!

BUNTER. Oh! Yes, sir! I wasn't asleep sir! I—I—I listen better with my eyes shut, sir, that's all.

QUELCH. You were fast asleep, Bunter.

BUNTER. Oh, no, sir! I never closed my eyes, sir, and I only closed them because I listen better—.

QUELCH. You are an idle, inattentive boy, Bunter.

BUNTER. Oh, really, sir! I heard every word you were saying, sir!

QUELCH. You heard every word I was saying, Bunter!

BUNTER. Oh yes, sir! I'm keen on history, sir, especially Roman history. I—I wouldn't miss a word.

QUELCH (*in a grinding voice*). Very well, Bunter. If you heard every word I was saying—.

BUNTER. Oh, yes, sir!

QUELCH. Then you will be able to answer my questions on the lesson, Bunter.

BUNTER. Oh, lor'!

QUELCH. Now answer this question, Bunter. What was it Julius Caesar said when Brutus struck him with his dagger in the Senate-House.

BUNTER. Oh, crikey!

QUELCH. What?

BUNTER. Oh! I—I didn't mean that Julius Caesar said, 'Oh crikey', sir! Not at all, sir! I—I meant—.

QUELCH. Tell me at once, Bunter, what Julius Caesar said on that occasion.

BUNTER. He—he—he said, "Kiss me, Hardy!"

QUELCH. Upon my word!

BUNTER. I—I—I mean, he said, "Take away that bauble!" sir.

QUELCH. Bunter!

BUNTER. And—and—and he never smiled again, sir.

QUELCH. Bunter, how dare you make such an answer?

When Brutus struck him in the Senate-House, Bunter, Caesar said, '*Et tu, Brute!*'

BUNTER. Ate two? Ate two what, sir? I didn't know he ate anything.

QUELCH. You absurd boy, Caesar was speaking in Latin. '*Et tu, Brute*', means "And thou, Brutus!"

BUNTER. Oh! Does it, sir? I—I mean, that's just what I was going to say, sir.

QUELCH. After this class, Bunter, you will write out 'Julius Caesar said, "*Et tu Brute!*"' fifty times.

BUNTER. Oh, really, sir, he couldn't have—.

QUELCH. What?

BUNTER. Well, I don't see why he should, sir. But—but if you say so, sir I—I suppose you know best.

QUELCH. I should imagine so, Bunter. You will bring me your imposition after tea.

BUNTER. Oh! Yes, sir!

QUELCH. And now Bunter, if you do not give attention to the lesson, I shall cane you.

BUNTER. Oh, lor' I—I mean, yes, sir! Oh yes sir.



SCENE TWO

Harry Wharton's study. WHARTON, CHERRY and NUGENT *at tea.* Enter BUNTER.

CHERRY. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter! How did Bunter know we had a cake for tea!

BUNTER. Oh, really, Cherry—.

NUGENT. Bunter has a wonderful nose for a cake.

BUNTER. Oh, really Nugent—.

WHARTON. Shut the door after you, Bunter.

BUNTER. Certainly, old chap.

Door is heard to shut.

BUNTER. Now, I say, you fellows—.

WHARTON. I meant, get on the other side of it first.

BUNTER. Oh, really, Wharton—.

ALL: Scat!

BUNTER. I say, you fellows, I never knew you had a cake, of course. I didn't see you getting it at the tuck-shop. I was looking the other way when I saw you,—I mean, when I didn't saw you—.

ALL: Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. I mean when I didn't see you. Still, as you've got a cake, I'll have a slice, if you don't mind. I hope you're not going to be mean about a slice of cake.

NUGENT. Cut yourself a slice and travel.

BUNTER. Thanks, old chap! Hand me that knife! Good!

Sound of munching.

I say this is a decent cake. Not like the cakes I get from Bunter Court, of course. But not bad.

CHERRY. Oh, my hat! Which is the slice, and which is the cake?

BUNTER. (*his voice muffled by cake*). Oh, really, Cherry—.

CHERRY. Better lose no time with that cake, you fellows. If Bunter takes another slice like that, there will be only the plate left.

BUNTER. I say, you fellows, you know I've got an impot to do for Quelch. Do you remember what it was that beast Caesar said to the other beast when he poked him with his dagger?

WHARTON. '*Et tu, Brute*', fathead.

BUNTER. I don't think that's right! Quelch never said anything about him calling Brutus a fathead.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. I jolly well know that Quelch never said so.

WHARTON. You fat ass, I didn't mean that Caesar called Brutus a fathead! I was calling you a fathead!

BUNTER. Oh, really, Wharton—.

WHARTON. What Caesar said was, '*Et tu, Brute!*'

BUNTER. Quelch said it meant something, I forget what.

WHARTON. It means, 'And thou, Brutus!' Or you could translate it 'Thou too, Brutus!'

BUNTER. Well, I don't care what it means, anyway. I've only got to write the words for Quelch, and never mind what they mean, if they mean anything. I say, I thought Quelch would be shirty about a fellow nodding off in class! He looked it! Pretty decent of him to give me only one line, wasn't it?

WHARTON. Only one line?

BUNTER. Yes. He generally makes it twenty at least.
He let me off very light with only one line to write.

CHERRY. You've got fifty lines to write.

BUNTER. Fifty! Wharrer you mean?

NUGENT. Aren't you going to do fifty lines for Quelch?

BUNTER. No jolly fear! Didn't you hear what Quelch said in the form-room? He said I was to write out Julius Caesar said, '*Et tu, Brute!*' fifty times. Not that I believe he did, you know.

ALL: Wha-a-a-at?

BUNTER. I mean to say, people do repeat themselves sometimes: Quelch often does in the form-room. But fifty times! That's altogether too thick, you know. As if he would!

CHERRY. Oh, scissors!

BUNTER. I mean, why should he? He just wouldn't, in my opinion. Quelch makes out that I'm dense, but I'm not dense enough to believe that Julius Caesar said the same thing over and over again fifty times. He wouldn't have had the breath for one thing, when they'd all been poking him with their daggers.

NUGENT. Oh, help!

BUNTER. Well, look at it! Why should Caesar, or anybody else, say it fifty times over, as Quelch said he did?

CHERRY. Fan me, somebody!

BUNTER. The truth is that Quelch has got it wrong. You can't argue with a beak, but I jolly well know he had it wrong. Quelch don't know so much as he makes out! Lots of beaks don't! School-masters are a dense lot, if you ask me! Not that it matters really. I've only got to write out what Quelch said. But mind you, I don't believe a word of it!

CHERRY (*shouting*). You fat ass, Quelch gave you fifty lines to write.

BUNTER. Eh? What makes you think that, Bob Cherry?

WHARTON. He said so, fathead. He said you were to write 'Caesar said Et tu, Brute' fifty times.

BUNTER. Yes, that's what I'm going to do, though I don't believe he said it fifty times or anything like it.

CHERRY. He said it once, but you've got to write it out fifty times. Do you mean to say you're going to write only one line for Quelch?

BUNTER. Of course! That's what he told me to do, isn't it?

NUGENT. He meant fifty lines—.

BUNTER. That's rot! He meant what he said,—Quelch always does.

WHARTON. Yes, and he said—.

BUNTER. I know what he said. Mind, I don't believe what he said, but I remember it all right. You can't pull my leg, Wharton.

WHARTON. What?

BUNTER. Pretty ass I should look, taking Quelch fifty lines, when he told me to write it out only once.

WHARTON (*shouting*). I tell you he meant—.

BUNTER. Chuck it, old chap, you can't stuff me. I'm too wide for that. I say, you fellows, is there any more cake?

NUGENT. Not a crumb!

BUNTER. Well, I may as well get my impot done, then. It won't take me long—just one line! Lend me a spot of paper and a pen, and I'll do it here. Oh! How do you spell Caesar, Wharton? Are there two Z's in it or only one?

WHARTON. None at all, ass.

BUNTER. Well, there must be one at least, I think. Isn't it spelt S-E-E-Z-E-R?

ALL. Ha-ha-ha!

BUNTER. I wish you wouldn't cackle every time a fellow opens his mouth. Look here, how do you think Caesar is spelt, Wharton?

WHARTON. C-A-E-S-A-R.

BUNTER. That doesn't sound right to me.

WHARTON (*laughing*). It will sound all right to Quelch.

BUNTER. Well, I'll take your word for it, but if I get into a row over the spelling, it will be your fault.

WHARTON. You won't get into a row over the spelling, old fat man, but you will if you take Quelch only one line when he said fifty.

BUNTER. Oh, pack that up, old chap—don't I keep on telling you that you can't pull my leg? Well, here goes!

Scratching of a pen is heard.

There,—that's soon done. Jolly decent of Quelch to let me off with one line,—after a fellow nodded off in form, you know.

Bell is heard.

Hallo! There goes six! I'd better take this down to Quelch.

CHERRY. You can't take that to Quelch, Bunter.

BUNTER. Why can't I? I've written just what he told me to write—here it is—look! 'Julius Caesar said "*Et tu Brute*" fifty times.' That's right, isn't it?

ALL (*shouting*). Quelch meant fifty lines—.

BUNTER. He, he, he! You can't stuff me!

Bunter is heard going. Door closes.

CHERRY. Oh, suffering cats and crocodiles! If he takes that to Quelch—!

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!



SCENE THREE

Mr Quelch's study. A tap is heard at the door.

QUELCH. Come in!

Door opens.

Oh! Bunter!

BUNTER. Yes, sir!

QUELCH. Have you brought me your imposition, Bunter?

BUNTER. Yes, sir: I've done it, sir.

QUELCH. I am glad that, for once, Bunter, you are handing in an imposition punctually.

BUNTER. Oh, yes, sir! It didn't take me long to write, sir. I—I mean, I always try to be punctual, sir. I always remember the proverb, sir, that punctuality is the procrastination of princes.

QUELCH. The what, Bunter?

BUNTER. The procrastination of princes, sir.

QUELCH. Punctuality is the politeness of princes, Bunter.

BUNTER. Is it, sir? I thought it was procrastination—.

QUELCH. You are an absurd boy, Bunter. However, I am glad that you have been punctual for once, and I trust that your imposition has been carefully written. You may hand it to me.

BUNTER. Here it is, sir. I hope the spelling's all right, sir. Oh! I—is—is anything the matter, sir?

QUELCH. Why—what—what—what is this? Bunter, what does this mean?

BUNTER (*anxiously*). Ain't the spelling right, sir? I—I knew there ought to be a 'Z' in 'Caesar', but I asked a chap, and he said there wasn't, and I—I took his word for it, sir—.

QUELCH. Bunter! Explain yourself! You have written a single line—.

BUNTER. Yes, sir! You told me—.

QUELCH. Making the ridiculous statement, Bunter, that Julius Caesar said '*Et tu Brute*' fifty times!

BUNTER. Yes, sir, that's right.

QUELCH (*thundering*). Right?

BUNTER. I mean, sir, that's what you told me, though it did seem to me queer that Julius Caesar said it fifty times, sir.

QUELCH. How dare you write such nonsense, Bunter, and bring it to me?

BUNTER. I had to do what you told me, sir. Don't you remember, sir, in the form-room,—you told me to write 'Julius Caesar said "*Et tu Brute*" fifty times'?

QUELCH. I gave you fifty lines, Bunter.

BUNTER. Oh, no, sir! All the fellows heard you, sir. You said—.

QUELCH. Upon my word! You have written this—this—this absurdity, and have ventured to bring it to me, your form-master. I shall double your imposition, Bunter,

BUNTER. Do you mean two lines, sir, instead of one?

QUELCH. I mean a hundred lines, Bunter.

BUNTER. Oh, crikey!

QUELCH. Let there be no mistake this time, Bunter. You will write, 'Caesar said "*Et tu Brute*".' You will write that sentence one hundred times. Is that clear to you, you stupid boy?

BUNTER. Oh! Yes, sir! But—.

QUELCH. You may go, Bunter.

BUNTER. But, sir, as I wrote exactly what you told me in the form-room—.

QUELCH. Grant me patience! Bunter, if you utter another word, I shall cane you. Leave my study this instant, or—.

Door is heard to close hurriedly.



SCENE FOUR

In the Rag. WHARTON, NUGENT, CHERRY, others.

Enter BUNTER.

BUNTER. I say, you fellows—.

CHERRY. How did you get on with Quelch?

NUGENT. Did he like your impot, Bunter?

WHARTON. Whopped?

BUNTER. Well, Quelch is a beast, but he ain't such a beast as to whop a chap for doing exactly what he was told. But he's given me a hundred lines. I don't know why but he has.

WHARTON. You don't know why?

BUNTER. He made out that my impot wasn't right.

You fellows know that I wrote exactly what he told me—.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. Well you can cackle: but what's a fellow to do, except what his beak tells him? Now I've got a hundred lines, for nothing at all. That's the sort of justice we get here.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. Oh, cackle! Jolly funny for a fellow to get a hundred lines for nothing at all, ain't it? Well, I'm not taking it lying down, I can tell you. I'm going to make Quelch sit up. And I jolly well know how. He won't think it so jolly funny when a booby-trap falls on his head.

WHARTON. What?

CHERRY. You potty porpoise, what have you got in your noddle now?

NUGENT. Forget it, fathead.

BUNTER. Think I'm going to have a hundred lines for nothing? I'll watch it! Quelch has got it coming, I can jolly well tell you. I'm going to fix up a booby-trap in his study! I'll show him!

NUGENT. With Quelch sitting there watching you?

BUNTER. Quelch won't be there. I just saw him taking a deck-chair out into the quad. He won't be back in his study yet awhile, as he's sitting out in the quad in that deck-chair with a book. See? Easy as winking to get into his study without being seen.

CHERRY. Better keep out of it, all the same.

BUNTER. I'll watch it!

WHARTON. Look here, you fat duffer—.

BUNTER. Oh, really, Wharton—.

NUGENT. You'll get into a fearful row, if you set up a booby-trap for Quelch!

BUNTER. He, he, he! He won't know a thing! How's he to know? It's jolly easy, really. Now he's out, I can walk into his study, can't I? Well, I'm going to stack a pile of books on top of his study door, a few inches open, you know—.

CHERRY. Oh, my hat!

BUNTER. He won't see them from outside, of course, when he comes back to the study. He will just push the door open and walk in! Then down comes the lot on his nut, see? He, he, he!

CHERRY. Are you going to stay and wait for him to get it?

BUNTER. No jolly fear!

CHERRY. Well, how will you get out, after fixing the booby-trap over the door?

BUNTER. That's easy, too. Of course I shan't be able to

get out at the door, as it will be only a few inches ajar. But what about the window? It's an easy drop to the ground from Quelch's study window.

CHERRY. By gum! It might work! Much safer to leave Quelch alone, though, and go and do your hundred lines, old fat man.

BUNTER. I'll show him! But I say, you fellows, don't get saying anything about it: I don't want Quelch to know it was me. That's important. Quelch simply must not know that it was me did it.

NUGENT (*laughing*). Do you mean, Quelch must not know that it was I did it?

BUNTER. Eh? How could Quelch know it was you, when it was me. You won't have anything to do with it, Nugent.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER. Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. Quelch couldn't know it was you, Nugent, when it was me. How could he? Wharrer you mean?

NUGENT. Only that there's such a thing as grammar, old fat man. You can't say 'Quelch mustn't know it was me'—.

BUNTER. You can't teach me grammar, Frank Nugent.

NUGENT. No: even Quelch can't.

BUNTER. Quelch won't know it was me, so that's all right. But I say, you fellows, will you come along and lend me a hand fixing up the booby-trap for Quelch?

WHARTON. Time we got out, you men.

BUNTER. But I say—.

ALL. Cheerio, Bunter.

Departing footsteps.

BUNTER. I say, you fellows, don't walk away while a fellow's talking to you. I say—Beasts! Yah! Well, I'm going to Quelch's study to fix up that booby-trap. Quelch won't know it was me, and if Nugent thinks he might think it was him, that's his lookout. Quelch has got it coming,—right on the nut! He, he, he!



SCENE FIVE

Mr Quelch's study. BUNTER *enters.*

BUNTER. O.K. Nobody here, and nobody about! Quelch won't be coming back to this study yet. Safe as houses. I shall want a chair to stand on.

Sound of chair being moved.

Now, I'd better set the door five or six inches ajar—not more than that, or Quelch might spot what's on it. I'll get a specially big book to stick across from the top of the door to the lintel over the doorway—and pile the rest on it! He, he, he! Quelch won't know a thing, till he pushes the door open, and they come down—wallop! He, he, he!

Sounds of rummaging in a bookcase.

That big Latin dictionary—that's all right to start with. Now, then, to heave it up to the top of the door.

BUNTER *is heard getting on the chair, panting and grunting.*

That's right—safe till the door's pushed open from outside,—he, he, he! Let's see—the *Works of Josephus*—they go up next! They look jolly heavy! The *Works of Josephus* on top of the Latin dictionary, and the *Odes of Horace* on top of the *Works of Josephus*, and *Cicero's Letters* on top of the *Odes of Horace*,—he, he, he! May as well shove up *Pliny* and *Virgil*, too! He, he, he! Will Quelch jump, when he gets that stack of books on his napper? He, he, he! I'll show him! Giving a fellow a hundred lines for doing exactly what he was told! Yah!

BUNTER *is heard to step off the chair, and replace it against the wall.*

Now all I've got to do is to clear off by the window. All ready for Quelch, now: but the sooner I get out the better. Better take a squint round and see if there's anybody about, though. Only Wharton and Nugent and Cherry over there by the elms—they're staring at this window, but they don't matter. Well, here goes—it's an easy jump!

BUNTER *is heard to clamber into the window and jump out.*



SCENE SIX

In the Quad. wharton, nugent, cherry.

CHERRY. Hallo, hallo, hallo!

WHARTON. What—?

CHERRY. Look!

NUGENT. Look at what?

CHERRY. Quelch!

NUGENT. Eh? Where's Quelch?

CHERRY. Sitting in his deck-chair—under his study window!

WHARTON. Under his study window!

CHERRY. Well, look!

WHARTON. So he is! Oh, my hat!

NUGENT. Great pip! If that benighted ass Bunter jumps out, as he said he was going to do—!

CHERRY. He will land on Quelch, if he does!

WHARTON. Phew! There he is at the window! Too late to warn him . . . he's fixed up that booby-trap—.

NUGENT. If the fat ass doesn't spot Quelch sitting there under the window—.

CHERRY. He's squinting round—but he's not looking down! The window-sill's in the way—he can't see Quelch unless he leans out. Oh, holy smoke! He's going to jump—.

NUGENT. If he jumps on Quelch—.

CHERRY. No 'if' about it! He's jumping!

WHARTON. Oh, scissors! There he goes!

A terrific crash is heard, as Billy Bunter, jumping down from the window, crashes on MR QUELCH, and the deckchair folds up.

QUELCH. Why—what—help! Is the House collapsing! What—what—what is that? Something has fallen on me—something very heavy—.

BUNTER. Yaroooooh!

CHERRY. He's done it now.

WHARTON. Never thought I should ever see Quelch on his back, and Bunter sprawling over him.

NUGENT. Does Quelch look shirty?

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

QUELCH (*thundering*). Who—what—who is that? Is—is—is that Bunter?

BUNTER. Yow-ow-ow! I'm hurt!

QUELCH. Bunter!!

BUNTER. Oh, jiminy! Oh! No, sir! Tain't me, sir.

QUELCH. What?

BUNTER. I—I—I mean—.

QUELCH. Bunter, you have been in my study—you have jumped from the window—jumped on me, Bunter! You have knocked me over Bunter! Bunter, are you out of your senses? Why have you done this, Bunter?

BUNTER. I—I haven't, sir—.

QUELCH. What?

BUNTER. I—I—I mean, I haven't done anything in your study, sir—.

QUELCH. In my study!

BUNTER. Yes, sir! No, sir! I haven't fixed up a booby-trap, or—or anything—.

QUELCH. A booby-trap—in my study!

BUNTER. Oh! Yes! No! Nothing of the kind sir! If—if there's a stack of books on top of your study door, sir, I don't know anything about it.

QUELCH. Bless my soul!

BUNTER. I—I never, sir! I—I wasn't wild because you gave me a hundred lines for doing what you told me in the form-room, sir! I—I never said anything about fixing up a booby-trap for you, sir,—you can ask Wharton and Nugent and Cherry, sir—they heard me—.

QUELCH. Upon my word! Bunter! Come with me. The severest chastisement—the very severest chastisement—.

QUELCH's voice fades out.

SCENE SEVEN

In the Rag. BUNTER.

BUNTER. Ow! wow! wow!

Enter WHARTON, NIGENT, CHERRY.

WHARTON. Had it bad, old fat man?

BUNTER. Ow! wow!wow!

CHERRY. Did Quelch lay it on?

BUNTER. Ow! wow! wow!

NUGENT. Thinking out another booby-trap for Quelch, Bunter!

BUNTER. Ow! wow! wow! Wow! Ow! wow! wow!

THE END

