

# BESSIE BUNTER'S BUSY DAY!

A Splendid Long Complete Tale of the Girls of Cliff House.

## THE SCHOOL FRIEND

Every  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Thursday

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BESSIE BUNTER HELPS HERSELF!

# Bessie Bunter's Busy Day!



## Glorious Study No. 7.

"WHAT a worry!"

"It's an honour, Clara!"

"It's a worry!" said Clara Trevlyn decidedly.

"My dear kid," remonstrated Marjorie Hazeldene, "we don't often get the head of the Sixth to tea in a Fourth-Form study."

"Which is lucky!"

"It's quite a distinction," pleaded Marjorie. "The rest of the passage will be immensely impressed. And Stella Stone is really nice, if—if you make allowances for her being head of the Sixth, and—and perhaps just a trifle swanky."

"A trifle?" said Clara scornfully.

"What would you call a lot?"

"Well, I've asked her now," said Marjorie.

"It gives the study a leg-up to have the head of the Sixth to tea!" said Dolly Jobling. "It's a worry, of course. We can't expect to enjoy ourselves. But it's a distinction."

"We shall have to sit up and be good!" said Clara rebelliously.

"You can be good for once, dear; make an effort, you know," said Marjorie, laughing. "Anyway, it's settled, and it's no good grumping. Stella Stone's coming to tea. Luckily, we're in funds, and we can have a spread worthy of the occasion."

Clara uttered a sound that closely resembled a snort.

Evidently she was utterly unimpressed by the honour and distinction of entertaining the head of the Sixth to tea in Study No. 7.

"Now, there's no time to lose," said Marjorie Hazeldene. "The study will have to be made tidy for the head of the Sixth."

"Bless the head of the Sixth!"

"The mantelpiece," said Marjorie severely, "is not the proper place for stockings, Dolly Jobling!"

"I'm going to darn them."

"Still, the mantelpiece—"

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete Story of the Girls of Cliff House, :: :: introducing Bessie Bunter :: ::

BY  
**HILDA RICHARDS.**

"Well, Clara grumbled when she found them in the biscuit-box!" said Dolly Jobling. "Somebody's always grumbling in this study. Shove them behind the clock, if you like!"

"I'll put them in your workbasket. Ow-ow! Ooooop! Yow!"

"What's the matter with you, Marjorie?"

"Ow-ow!" Marjorie sucked her finger frantically.

"Ow! You little duffer! Oh, dear!" "Oh, you've found the darnin'-needle!" said Dolly. "It's Clara's fault. She made me put it there when she found it in the armoire."

"Ow-ow!" "Dolly's getting as untidy as Bessie Bunter!" said Clara darkly. "There will be a study shake for somebody if you don't mend your ways, Dolly. Now, Marjorie, if you've done-yowing and wowing—"

"Wow!" "Well, when you've done," said Clara considerably, "we'll get on with putting the study to rights. We don't want Stella Stone telling them in the Sixth that the juniors are untidy. By the way, what are we going to have for tea? Somebody had better go down to Auntie Jones' and do the shopping."

"I say, you girls—"

A fat face, adorned by a big pair of glasses, looked into Study No. 7.

"Oh, run away!" said Clara.

"You were speaking about shopping," said Bessie Bunter. "Leave it to me! I'd do more than that for girls! I really like. Hand me the money, and—"

"I'll hand you this hockey-stick if you don't run away! We're having the head of the Sixth to tea!" added Clara loftily.

Although not impressed herself, Clara was apparently not above impressing others with the visit of the great Stella Stone to Study No. 7.

"Robbish!" said Bessie Bunter incredulously.

"Honest Injun!"

"Well, if you're having Stella to tea you'll want some decent cooking," suggested Bessie Bunter. "Leave it to me!—You horrid girl, Clara! Keep that club away from my nose! Oh! Ah!"

Bessie Bunter disappeared.

"I'll go and shop," said Marjorie, still sucking her damaged finger ruefully.

"You kids tidy the study. Mind you make it look presentable. Stella Stone is awfully keen."

"All right! Bother her!"

Marjorie Hazeldene left the study, leaving Clara and Dolly Jobling very busy.

A visit from a senior might not be an enjoyable experience, but it was necessary to make a good impression upon the trying visitor.

Bessie, Stella Stone was chief mistress, and although she came as a guest, she would probably not be divested of all her authority.

In fact, Stella was a most authoritative person, and she seldom, or never, forgot what an important person she was.

Bessie Bunter joined Marjorie in the passage, but Marjorie put on speed, and vanished down the staircase.

Bessie's valuable services were not required by Study No. 7.

"Cat!" murmured Bessie disconsolately.

The fat junior hovered near Study No. 7, as if she could not tear herself away from the spot.

Like a podgy Peri at the gate of Paradise, she haunted the scene of the delights she was forbidden to share.

She was still hovering when Marjorie returned with a large parcel.

"I say, Marjorie—"

Bessie's eyes and spectacles were gazed upon that parcel.

"Don't bother, dear!" said Marjorie.

"But I say—"

"Nothing doing!"

Marjorie passed into the study, and the door closed.

Bessie was about to open it, but she remembered the hockey-stick, and refrained.

Study No. 7 was already looking newly-swept and garnished, so to speak.

Dolly Jobling's stockings—of which there were always two or three pairs in evidence in a state of more or less disrepair—had disappeared from view.

Even her workbasket was shut and tidy, only one or two lengths of tape remaining from it.

The fire burned brightly in the grate, and a spotless tablecloth covered the table, and looked quite cosy and cheerful.

Marjorie turned out her purchases in the armoire.

It was fortunate that upon this great occasion Study No. 7 was in funds.

If Stella Stone had intimated her gracious intention of coming to tea when the study was "stony," the charms of the Fourth would have been reduced to despair.

But Marjorie's purchases were ample.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND—No. 3.

Every Thursday.

There were new-laid eggs, there was ham, there were two cakes (seed and salted), there were biscuits, and there were meringues.

There were two kinds of jam, and there was honey.

It was, in fact, a feast for the gods. "That looks all right," said Dolly Jobling approvingly. "If Stella Stone isn't pleased with that—"

"If she she'll come again!" grunted Clara.

"Don't be inebriate, my dear!" said Marjorie. "Now, then, you boil the eggs, while I turn out the jam."

"Here's the soap-dish! What would Stella Stone think of jam in a soap-dish?" exclaimed Marjorie. "Where's the jam-dish?"

"Oh, Dolly's dropped that!" said Clara. "Is there anything in the study Dolly hasn't dropped?"

"Look here, Clara—"

"Pickling the jam will be all right in the jars," said Marjorie thoughtfully. "They're nice little jars. Buck up with those eggs, Clara! Stella Stone will be here soon."

The preparations went forward actively, and when all was ready the spread was certainly very attractive.

If Stella Stone was not pleased, it was certain that she must be very difficult to please.

Marjorie surveyed the festive board with great pride.

"Ripping!" she said.

"Topping!" assented Clara. "Too good for the Sixth, in my opinion. Isn't Stella about due?"

Marjorie glanced at the clock.

"Over-due!" She said she'd come at five.

"Ten past now! Of course, she'll be late! Just like the Sixth—all swank! Well, if she's much later, she'll have cold eggs. And cold tea, too. I'm going to make the tea now!" said Clara determinedly.

"She can't be long now," said Marjorie uneasily.

"Br-r-r-r! I know Stella Stone! Shouldn't wonder if she forgets all about it, or pretends to!"

"Oh, Clara!"

"Well, if she doesn't come soon, we'd better begin," said Dolly Jobling. "I don't believe in letting a good feed spoil!"

"I agree! Let's begin, Marjorie."

Marjorie shook her head.

"No. There's such a thing as politeness, Clara. We don't have the head of the Sixth to tea every day, either."

"Thank goodness!"

"She's forgotten, right enough," said Dolly. "It's a quarter-past now. You'd better cut off to her study and remind her, Marjorie."

"Yes, do!" said Clara, with a nod.

Marjorie regarded her friends doubtfully.

She had a strong suspicion that if she went for Stella the others would begin tea, while she was gone; which would quite spoil the effect.

"We'll all go for her," said Marjorie. "I dare say we shall meet her on the stairs. Come on!"

"But—"

"Oh, do come!"

"Oh, all right!" said Clara resignedly.

"Anything for a quiet life! Let that cake alone, Dolly, and come along!"

The elms of the Fourth quieted the study.

She did not meet the head of the Sixth on the passage, however; apparently the great Stella had not yet started for Study No. 7.

Marjorie led the way to the Sixth-Form quarter, to an accompaniment of murmured remarks from Dolly and Clara which were not at all complimentary to Stella of the Sixth.

As the three girls disappeared down the staircase a fat figure crept out of a recess at the end of the passage.

Bessie Bunter's eyes glittered behind her glasses as she tiptoed to Study No. 7. She vanished into the study.

One minute later she emerged—heavily laden.

A fat, subdued chuckle floated back as Bessie Bunter disappeared with her plunder—what time Marjorie & Co., in Stella Stone's study, were reminding that lofty young lady of her forgotten appointment.

## No Tea For Stella.

"THIS way, Stella!"

"This is our study!"

Marjorie and Dolly Jobling spoke while Clara Trevlyn murmured something under her breath.

Stella Stone had arrived, in company with the three juniors.

The tall and stately Stella wore a patient, tolerant expression upon her face.

She seemed to be unaware that Marjorie's study was numbered seven, though Clara's private opinion was that she knew it perfectly well, and that this was only some more Sixth-Form swank.

"Oh, this is the study, is it?" said Stella.

"Yes, dear! Come in!"

Stella Stone asked into the study.

Marjorie & Co. followed her in, with the sweetest smiles of hospitality that they could summon up for the great occasion.

Stella sank gracefully into the armchair.

But the moment the juniors were in the study their gaze fell to the visitor and was fixed upon the table.

The spotless tablecloth, the shining crockery, were there, as they had been left.

But the spread!

The three girls stared at the table as if fascinated.

The eggs and the ham, the cakes and the jam-jars, the biscuits and the honey—everything that was of an edible nature—was gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream.

The festive board was in the same lamentable state as the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard's cupboard.

Marjorie was the first to find her voice.

"Oh dear!" she murmured faintly.

"That awful bond, Bessie Bunter!" gasped Dolly Jobling.

"Oh!" muttered Clara.

Stella Stone glanced at them, with her calm, lofty eyes.

"I hope I am not too early!" she remarked.

"Nunno! Late!" said Clara. "But Marjorie pressed her chin's amir."

It was not much use to tell the great visitor that the spread had been raided.

The calm and disdainful amusement of the head of the Sixth would be a little too much to bear.

Besides, as a nonentity, she might insist upon learning the name of the thief.

And "smoking" was sternly barred in the Fourth Form at Cliff House.

But Stella had come to tea, and tea was essential.

"So sorry to keep you waiting, Stella!" gasped Marjorie. "We—we're not quite ready for— for a minute. Just a—"

"Don't mind me at all."

"We won't—I mean, we will. That is, all right! We—we shall be ready in a—"

"Pray do not hurry."

Possibly there was an infection of sarcasm in Stella's calm tones.

She graciously turned her face to the window, and the three juniors were relieved of her disconcerting gaze; all the more disconcerting because it was so calm, and seemed to indicate so plainly that this was exactly what the Sixth-Former had expected in a junior study.

Marjorie made her chin's frantic signs to be cautious, now that Stella's head was turned away.

The exclamations of woe and wrath that trembled on Dolly Jobling's lips were fortunately restrained in time.

Marjorie stepped to the study cupboard, and looked in, in the hope of finding sufficient, at least, for the visitor.

Close by the cupboard the three girls held a hurried, agitated council in whispers.

Stella, gazing out of the window, was laborately unconscious of the whispering.

But even the back of her head seemed to be expressing that this was just what she had expected!

"There's nothing—simply nothing!" breathed Clara.

"There's the sardines—"

"They're days old—"

"I think they're still good—I hope so, at least—"

"There's a whole loaf—"

"Thank goodness! The butter's gone; but there's some marg. Do you think she would notice it was marg?"

"There's some biscuits—no, a biscuit. The one that Dolly trod on—"

"She won't know that."

"Oh dear!"

"Lots of tea, anyway. I'll make some tea! But sugar—"

"That awful little fat duffer has taken the sugar for her parrot! I'll scarp her! I'll—"

"Hush!"

Only the whispering, not the words, reached Stella Stone's ears, which was rather fortunate.

Probably even her stately politeness would not have been proof against the sardines which were doubtful, and the biscuit that Dolly Jobling had trodden on.

Stella glanced at last at the little gold watch on her wrist.

"I'm afraid I'm giving you trouble," she remarked at last.

"Oh, no! Not at all!"

"What an idea!"

"N-nothing of the sort!"

"I have to see Isabel Drake after tea," observed Stella casually. "Eh? What did you say, Clara?"

"N-nothing!"

"It sounded," said Stella Stone sternly, "as if you said, 'Bother Isabel Drake! Clara!'"

"Oh, Stella! What an idea!"

"Tea's just ready," gasped Marjorie.

"Will you—will you sit in the armchair, Stella, or— or will you come to the table?"

"I will come to the table, Marjorie."

"Here's your chair! You—you like sardines, Stella?"

"I am not excessively fond of sardines," said Stella Stone.

"Oh! I—I thought—I mean, I—"

"My dear child, pray do not mention it! Thank you very much. Two will be quite sufficient."

"Pass Stella the bread and marg-butter, Clara."

Stella Stone had taken up her fork, but she did not seem in a hurry to use it.

Her gaze was fixed, with a far-away expression, upon the sardines in her plate.

There was an audible sniff.

Marjorie gave her chin's a hopeless

look. Stella Stone had evidently detected that the sardines had been better days.

"Upon the whole, I—I think I will not have any sardines, my dears," said Stella, whose manner was growing more stately than ever.

"Oh dear! Will you—will you try the ham, Stella?" gasped Marjorie, in her confusion forgetting that the ham was no longer there.

"I will try a little ham."

"I—I mean—"

"Ham!"

"The—the fact is, we're rather short of ham, as it happens," said Clara desperately. "We—"

"Pray do not mention it!" said Stella frigidly. "I shall be quite satisfied with a little bread and butter."

"Won't you try some biscuits—I mean, a biscuit—"

"Thank you, no," said Stella Stone, after a glance at the biscuit. Undoubtedly Dolly Jobling's botch had seriously damaged it. "A little bread and butter."

With a determined though frigid graciousity of manner, Stella Stone com-

ceedingly," said Stella Stone. "I think I must go now."

"Do—do have some jam—Yarsooh!" spluttered Dolly Jobling, as a pinch came from Clara to remind her that there was no jam.

"Thank you so much!" said Stella Stone, with lofty calmness.

She was about to sweep to the door, when it was flung suddenly wide open, and a dark-eyed girl ran in.

"Is that little duffer Bessie—"

Barbara Redfern stuttered suddenly, as she saw the head of the Sixth.

"Oh!" she gasped.

And Babs fled from the study.

"Dear me!" said Stella Stone.

Her tone implied that this also was what she had expected in the junior quarters.

"I—I say, Stella—" mumbled Clara.

"Thank you so much!" said Stella crushingly.

And she sailed out of the study.

There was a deep silence in Study No. 7 when she had gone. The tea-party, which was to have been so impressive, had been a horrid, disconsolate disaster.

Babs and Mabs seemed excited.

"Nothing left for tea!" continued Barbara. "And we're late for tea in Hall. It's too bad!"

"Hallo! What are you doing with that club, Clara?" exclaimed Mabs.

"Where's Bessie Bunter?"

"That's what we want to know," returned Babs. "I came to your study to look for her, and you only had the Stone image there. The horrid little minx has bagged our cake!"

"And the tarts!" said Mabel mournfully.

"She's cleared our study!" exclaimed Clara wrathfully. "Everything we had—a topping spread for the head of the Sixth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, what are you sniggering at, you duffers? It's not a laughing matter, is it?" demanded Clara. "Where's that fat little bounder? I'm going for her!"

"Oh, Clara!" murmured Marjorie.

"Not so much of your 'Oh, Clara!' I'm going for her, I tell you! Hallo, Gwen! Have you seen the Bunter girl?" called out Clara, as Gwendoline

Cook looked in from the passage.



"Bessie Bunter!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant. "Come out from under the table at once! Do you hear me?" "I—I'm c-o-o-oming!" gasped Bessie.

meant to masticate a little bread and butter. The three juniors watched her almost in anguish.

Would she detect that it was margarine?

A curious expression was dawning upon her face.

Margarine was used for cooking in Study No. 7, and Clara remembered, with a shudder, that the last time she had used it, when cooking kippers, she had dabbed a fishy knife into it.

Had it left a flavour?

Judging by Stella Stone's expression, there was a flavour.

Stella's long, slim fingers returned the bread and butter to her plate. She rose to her feet.

"You—you're not going—" stammered Marjorie, in dismay.

"Thank you! I have enjoyed my tea

The feelings of the three chums were too deep for words. They could only gaze at one another eloquently.

Marjorie was the first to speak.

"What will she say of us in the Sixth?" she murmured.

"Both the Sixth!" Clara Trevlyn looked round the study, and picked up a hooky-stick. "I'm going to look for Bessie Bunter!"

And Clara, with deadly wrath in her face, led the way to Bessie Bunter's quarters in Study No. 4.

#### A Study Shake!

"LITTLE minx!"

"Horrid little duffer!"

Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn made those remarks simultaneously, as Clara opened the door of Study No. 4.

"Bless the Bunter girl!" answered Gwen. "I'm looking for whoever's been in my study!"

"Oh dear! You, too!"

"I just left my study a few minutes to speak to Bridget O'Toole, and when I came back—"

"The cupboard was here, and so the poor dog had none!" chuckled Babs.

"I'm sure it was Bessie Bunter," said Clara. "We're all looking for her!"

"I say, here she is!"

"Why, here she is!"

Bessie Bunter rolled in cheerfully.

There was a very fat and shiny look on Bessie Bunter's face, and her round eyes were a little glazed behind her glasses.

It was only too clear that the fat junior had been "doing herself" not wisely, but too well.

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She blinked at the juniors, apparently unconcerned of the wrathful looks bent upon her.

"So you've come back!" said Babs, in a deep voice.

Bessie nodded.

"Yes. When are you going to have tea?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Yes, tea. I suppose you know it's past tea-time?"

"Could you eat any more tea after what you've eaten?" asked Mabs, almost awe-struck.

"Oh, really, Mabel—"

"Stand clear while I go for her!" said Clara, swinging up her weapon.

"Now, Fatima, where will you have it?"

Bessie Bunter dodged round the table in alarm.

"I—I say, you girls, what's the matter? Is anything up?"

"You're eaten the spread in our study!" shouted Clara.

"Oh, really—"

"You've bagged our cake and jam-tarts!" shrieked Mabs.

"Oh, really—"

"And my sausages and chips!" exclaimed Gwendoline, shaking a wrathful set of knuckles at the fat junior.

"Where are they?"

"If you think I'd touch your sausages and chips, Gwendoline Cook—"

"Haven't you?" demanded Gwen.

"Certainly not! I didn't even know you had sausages and chips in your study. I never smelt the sausages as I was passing the door, and I never watched you go along to Bridget's room—"

"What?"

"In fact, I don't know anything at all about the matter!" said Bessie Bunter indignantly. "Besides, one of the sausages was really stale!"

"How do you know it was stale if you didn't eat it?" shrieked Gwen.

"I didn't eat it. I threw that one away."

"Then you did take them?"

"Certainly not! I haven't been near your study at all," said Bessie Bunter.

"In fact, I forget which is your study!"

"Well, my goodness!" ejaculated Gwen, almost overcome.

"As for your study spread, Clara, if you think I know anything about it, you're quite mistaken. Besides, you shouldn't have left it on the table."

"Collar her!" exclaimed Clara.

"But I haven't touched it!" shrieked Bessie, in alarm. "I suppose you can take a girl's word. You shouldn't be suspicious, Clara. It's low."

"What have you done with it?" demanded Marjorie. "You can't have eaten the lot."

"Well, I was jolly hungry, you know—I-I mean, certainly not. I haven't even seen it. I didn't know it was there. I hadn't the faintest idea you were having 'Oh, my word!'"

"How does she do it?" gasped Barbara.

"Bessie Bunter, haven't you ever Bessie sniffed."

"If you girls were as truthful as I am, you'd do," she said disdainfully. "I've being so truthful. If there's one thing I can't stand it's untruthfulness."

"Yes—you—"

"I say, you girls, you really shouldn't be suspicious, you know. It's a bad trait in anybody's character. Now, I'd prefer to let the whole matter drop. What are you going to have for tea, Babs?"

"Tea! Oh dear!"

"You must be hungry!" said Mabs, with deep sarcasm.

"Well, rather sharp too," admitted Bessie.

Bessie Bunter. "It's nearly half an hour since I finished the tarts."

"The what?"

"I—I mean, I haven't tasted anything since dinner. I'm jolly hungry. Now, it's high time we had tea."

"You haven't tasted anything since dinner?" demanded Clara.

"Not a morsel."

"No jam, for instance?"

"I've almost forgotten the taste of jam, it's so long since I had any."

"Then where did that smear of jam on your mouth come from?" demanded Clara.

"Eh?" Bessie dabbed hastily at her mouth, with a hand that was still more sticky. "I—I say—that—that isn't jam, you know—"

"What is it, then?"

"It—it's a g-g-gum!" stammered Bessie.

"Gum!" shrieked the juniors.

"Yes, I—I've been writing a letter, and—and I licked the stamp, you know, and—and the gum must have come off on my mouth—"

"Good gracious!"

"And your hands?" shouted Clara.

"What makes your podgy little paws so sticky?"

"That—that must be the gum, too."

"Off the postage-stamp!" shrieked Barbara.

"Yes. Some of these stamps are—awfully sticky, you know. frightfully sticky, in fact. Wha-ah are you going to do with that stick, Clara?"

"I'm going to hit you with it, my dear."

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you girls, I—I think I'd better go and wash off this jam—I mean gum—I'm all gunny—lemme pass, Mabel Lynn!"

"Collar her!"

"I—I say, I've got to get washed, you know. I can't go about dirty like you girls do. I'm clean, you know—I'm awfully particular— Yaroooh!"

Bessie Bunter broke off with a howl, as the indignant juniors seized her.

"Give her a study shaking!" said Clara. "Now, then; all together!"

"I—I say, you girls, leggo! I never touched the grub!" shrieked Bessie Bunter.

"This isn't jam on my mouth—it isn't really! It's gig-gig-gum—"

"Shake!"

"Yooop! I—I mean it's not gum, it's—it's liquorice. I've been eating some Spanish liquorice— Ow, owl Yow!"

"Shake, shake!"

Six pairs of hands were grasping Bessie Bunter, wherever they could obtain a hold, and they all shook the fat junior together.

Bessie shook in their grasp like a very fat jelly.

"Yow! Owl Help! Fire! Murder! Yarooop!"

"Shake, shake!"

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"Shake!"

"Now sit down!" gasped Babs.

"Owl! Wove!"

Bessie Bunter sat down on the carpet, and yelled.

"Ow, ow! Yooop! I'm hurt! You've broken my neck—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean my leg! My leg's broken in two places! Yow-ow-ow! I can't get Miss Primrose-ow-ow! I shall sit here till all together comes— Yaroooh!"

"All together comes— Yaroooh!" exclaimed Barbara, when I give the word!"

"When I say three! Jump on her, as you can. One—two—"

"Bessie Bunter did not wait for three."

"She bounded up and bolted from the study. A shout of laughter followed her from No. 4.

Faintly, from the distance, floated back one expressive word:

"Cat!"

Then Bessie Bunter was gone!

Jammy!

"COOKERY next!" yawned Clara Travlyn.

It was the following day, and Marjorie & Co. were strolling in the quad, after dinner.

"Bother cookery!" went on Clara. "Still, cookery's better than maths, and maths comes next. We've got to face the Bell in her den after we're through with Miss Plummy. What a life!"

"I say, you girls—"

Bessie Bunter joined the chorus of the Fourth, with a cheerful, smiling face.

The fat junior was looking unusually happy.

Apparently she had forgotten the study shaking of the previous day.

Bessie Bunter may have had a short memory for benefits, but her memory was equally short for other things, which was an advantage.

At all events, it was clear that the plump junior had forgiven Marjorie & Co.

She smiled at them with a fat and cordial smile.

"Isn't it ripping?" she said brightly.

"That depends upon what 'it' is," answered Clara. "What is 'it,' Fatima?"

"First lesson this afternoon—in the cookery class. We're going to make jam-tarts!" said Bessie Bunter impressively.

"We know that, goose!"

"I've seen the jam!"

"Hence this happiness," chuckled Clara.

"Did you feast your eyes on it, Fatima? You won't be able to forget anything else on it—Miss Plummy will see that you don't."

"That's all you know," said Bessie Bunter, closing one eye over her glasses. "You may be sure, my dear, that I shall sample that jam. Do you think I'm going to make tarts and not eat them?"

"We shall be allowed to have some for tea, if they're fit to eat," said Marjorie Hazeldene, laughing. "Sometimes they're not—especially when Clara makes them."

"Clara's cakes are wonderful!" remarked Dolly Jobling thoughtfully. "You—remember that cake you made, Clara, when Miss Plummy asked you if it was intended to be used as a hearthstone?"

"No, I don't!" snapped Clara.

"I do. Miss Plummy said it would have to be put on a circular-saw and cut by machinery—"

"My dear bird, don't retail all Miss Plummy's cheap witticisms. They're bad enough from rummy herself. Hallo, there goes the bell! What a life!" sighed Clara.

"Don't be a slacker!" said Bessie Bunter encouragingly.

"What?"

"Follow my example. I'm simply keen to get to work, you know."

"On the jam," grunted Clara.

"Oh, really, you know—"

Marjorie & Co. headed for the School House, joining the stream of girls who were going in, to receive the valuable instructions of Miss Plummy.

The cookery class was rather popular among the juniors—though the results of their enthusiastic attempts at cookery were not always exactly palatable.

But it was not only popular, it was a delight to Bessie Bunter.

If there was anything she really could do, it was cookery as she often confided to the juniors, and for once, there were really some grounds for the fat junior's claim.

Bessie could cook, and she was still

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 8.

more expert at disposing—internally—of the results of her cooking.

Miss Penelope Primrose, the headmistress of Cliff House, was in the model kitchen with Miss Plummy when the junior girls came in.

Miss Primrose took a deep interest in that department of instruction.

Miss Plummy was proudly showing the headmistress round, with great pride in the spotless pots and pans, dishes and plates, and the electric-cooker, that looked as bright as a new pin.

Miss Plummy was a plump, good-tempered lady, who looked as if she thrived on her art.

Perhaps she was a little too easy-going for the Fourth Form at Cliff House, in which there were some unruly spirits.

It was not unknown for Miss Plummy to sit on a jam-tart—by accident—or to find salt and pepper mixed in her ingredients for cream-puffs.

On such occasions Miss Plummy would sometimes shake her head sadly, and sometimes lay dire complaints to Miss Bellow, the mistress of the Fourth.

The juniors liked her well enough; but

would have been spurred on to greater efforts by the prospect of having the tarts placed on their own tea-tables.

But that did not occur to the innocent mind of the kind old headmistress.

"Now, my dears," said Miss Plummy, in a business-like tone. "Why, bless me! How many times, Bessie Bunter, have I told you that you must have your hands perfectly clean for cookery?"

"Please, I haven't counted, Miss Plummy," said Bessie meekly.

There was a faint titter.

"Bessie, you are a stupid girl!"

"Oh, really, Miss Plummy—"

"You will go and wash your hands at once," said Miss Plummy sternly. "A cook's hands should be spotless, Bessie."

Grunt from Bessie. Apparently she did not see the necessity for that.

However, Miss Plummy's word was law—more or less—in the model kitchen, and Bessie retired to the sink, where she made a terrific splashing with soap and water, with more or less benefit to her podgy hands—probably rather less than her mood.

"N-n-nothing, Miss Plummy! I—! wasn't looking at it."

"Come here at once, child. You have not been listening to a word I have been saying," said Miss Plummy severely.

"Oh, really—?"

"Pay attention!"

Bessie Bunter paid attention, as long as she could; but her thoughts wandered, and her eyes followed them.

Like the celebrated Dying Gladiator, she heard, but she heeded not. Her eyes were with her heart, and that was far away—with the fourteen-pound jar of jam.

Instinctively, Bessie had caught up a big wooden spoon, which she kept concealed under her apron. She hoped to put that spoon to a good use soon.

The girls were at work now, under Miss Plummy's direction; and, as the class was large, Miss Plummy had plenty to do.

More especially she devoted her attention to Clara Trevlyn, who was far from proficient in the noble art of cookery.

Poor Clara was in hot water from the beginning, and Miss Plummy cruelly held



Rap! Rap! Miss Plummy brought the wooden spoon down on Bessie Bunter's knuckles. "Now be silent, you greedy girl," she said, "and pay attention to my instructions!"

it was only human nature to take a little advantage, sometimes, of her lack of severity.

"Dear me, here are the girls, Miss Plummy," said the headmistress, with a kind smile to the Fourth. "My dear girls, Miss Plummy is going to instruct you in making jam-tarts this afternoon."

"How nice!" murmured Gwendoline Cook.

"You are going to make them yourselves, and Miss Plummy will superintend. And if they are good," added Miss Primrose impressively, "I shall allow some of them to be placed on my table for tea!"

"Oh, Miss Primrose!" chorused the Fourth ecstatically.

"I really mean it, my dears," said the headmistress graciously. "Now, I am sure you will all do your very best."

"Oh, yes, Miss Primrose!"

The kind old lady rustled out; and Bessie closed one eye at Marjorie, who manfully suppressed a smile.

It was barely possible that the pupils

When she rejoined the class work was in full swing.

In their spotless aprons, the girls looked very neat and trim, as they followed the instructions of Miss Plummy.

Bessie Bunter blinked round her through her big glasses.

She was hungry, as usual. It was nearly an hour since dinner, and Bessie had had nothing since save a piece of cake, some bananas, and chocolates and toffee.

Consequently, she was quite sharp set. And the great jar of jam, containing fourteen pounds of that delightful article, attracted Bessie's eyes as a magnet attracts metal.

Bessie could not take her eyes off that jam.

She was peering into its glorious depths when Miss Plummy's voice interrupted her.

"Bessie!"

The fat junior jumped.

"Oh, ah! Yes, Miss Plummy!"

"What are you doing with that jar?"

her up to the class, as it were, as an awful example.

And while Miss Plummy's attention was fixed on Clara, Bessie Bunter's feet, as if magnetised, were drawing her away, step by step, nearer and nearer to the big jar of jam.

It fascinated her. And it was a fascination that was not to be resisted for long—by Bessie Bunter, at least.

There was a soft, squeezing sound—delightful to the ear—as the big wooden spoon slid into the great jar.

It came out again, loaded with jam.

For a moment Bessie's eyes glistened over the jam ecstatically. Then it was transferred to her mouth.

That moment she lost no time.

She knew she might be interrupted at any moment, so there was evidently not a second to lose.

Again and again the wooden spoon plunged into the jar and came out loaded, and its load disappeared into the capacious mouth of Bessie Bunter.

And as that delightful feast proceeded

8 Every Thursday.

Bessie forgot the cookery class and the cookery mistress—forgot her surroundings, and forgot everything but the jam. Her fat face beamed with happiness as she spooned the jam from the jar to her mouth.

It was a feast of the gods! Olympus, with all their nectar and ambrosia, certainly never had such a feast as Bessie Bunter was enjoying at that moment.

Like a poet, rapt in a dream of beauty, she forgot of time and space, and lived only for the rapture of the moment.

"M-nimmmmm!"

That faint murmur was the only sound Bessie Bunter made as she big spoon pursued its rapid transit to and fro.

"And now"—it was Miss Plummy's voice—"the jam. WHAT! BESSIE BUNTER!"

Bessie jumped.

The voice of the cookery mistress, rising to a scream of horror and indignation, brought her back to common earth again, from the seventh heaven in which she had been dwelling for the last few minutes.

"Groooh!"

"Groooh!"

Unfortunately, at that moment Bessie's mouth was full of jam. She spun round in alarm, gurgling.

Miss Plummy ran up and caught her by the shoulder.

"You—you—you dreadful, greedy girl!"

"Groooh!"

"You have been eating the jam!" shrieked Miss Plummy.

"Gug-gug-gug! D-d-d-don't shake me! I'm chook-chook-chook—"

"What?"

"Chook-chook-chooking!" gasped Bessie. "Grooooh! Gurrerrr! Yurrgrrrh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fourth.

"Silence, girls! This is not a laughing matter."

"Groooh! Yoooooooh!"

"Bessie—"

"Gurrerrh!"

"I shall report this to Miss Primrose!" shrieked Miss Plummy.

"Gurrerrh!"

"The jam cannot be used now. The whole jar is spoiled!"

"Yurrerrh!"

Miss Plummy, really alarmed for her fat pupil, patted Bessie Bunter on the back with great energy.

Her efforts to restore the fat junior were rewarded with a fendish yell from Bessie.

"Yaroorh! Wharrer, you at? Stop punching me! Yoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Owl! Oh dear! Owl! Groooh!"

Bessie Bunter dodged away, still gasping from the jam that had gone the wrong way.

Miss Plummy, breathless with wrath, covered up the big jar. That jam, certainly, could not now be used for tarts that were to grace the headmistress's tea-table.

"Your pocket-money will be stopped to pay for that whole jar, Bessie!" gasped Miss Plummy at last.

"Ow!"

"Fortunately, I have some more jam here. You will keep under my eyes, Bessie Bunter, I cannot trust you."

"Oh, really, Miss Plummy—"

"Groooh!"

"And now, my dear girls," went on Miss Plummy—"now that the tarts are made, requiring only the addition of jam—"

"I—I say, Miss Plummy—"

Bessie Bunter gasped.

"Well, you had girl!"

The School Friend.—No. 2

"Have I E-got to p-p-pay for the jam?"

"Certainly!"

"Then—then it's mine."

"What?"

"C-c-can I have it now, please?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fourth, quite

overcome by the expression that came

upon Miss Plummy's face.

Miss Plummy did not answer Bessie's

question. Words seem to fall her. She

caught up the wooden spoon.

Rap, rap!

Bessie's knuckles were the target, and

Miss Plummy was as "hefty" with the

wooden spoon as Miss Bullivant with her

pointer.

There was a terrific yell from Bessie.

"Yaroorh! Oh! Yah!"

"There!" gasped Miss Plummy. "Now,

Bessie—"

"Yoop!"

"Now be silent, you greedy girl, and

pay attention to my instructions!"

"Yow-woop!"

"Another sound, Bessie, and I shall

send you to Miss Primrose to be caned!"

"Oh, dear!"

The cookery lesson proceeded without

any further sound from Bessie Bunter.

Her feelings were only expressed by a

blink of deep and heartfelt indignation.

### A Terrible Blow!

"WELL, that fat kid is the limit!" remarked Barbara Redfern, as the junior girls trooped out of the Model Kitchen at

last.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you girls, isn't she a cat?"

mumbled Bessie Bunter. "If I'm going

to pay for the jam, it's mine. Isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha! It's going to be confiscated."

Bessie sniffed.

"I know jolly well what's going to be

done with it! Miss Plummy's going to

bag that jam!"

The juniors roared with laughter.

The idea of Miss Plummy annexing

the jam after Bessie had been feeding

herself from the jar was too much for

them.

"That's it, right enough!" said Bessie.

"It's really my jam. I don't think Miss

Plummy is acting quite honourably. Do

you, Marjorie!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got to pay for it, you know. My

remittance will be taken for it. The one

I'm expecting—"

"The one you've been expecting ever

since you came to Cliff House?" chuckled

Barbara.

"Under the circumstances I feel that

I'm justified in helping myself to the

tarts," said Bessie Bunter, unheeding.

"Don't you, Babs?"

Barbara gasped.

"You differ! Have you been bagging

the tarts?" she exclaimed. "I noticed

you were hanging back."

"Well, you see, as I've practically been

robbed of my jam—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Those tarts were for Miss Primrose

and the others," said Babs. "There will

be no end of a row."

"I've left one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Miss Plummy will be after you like a

moery hawk!" exclaimed Clara. "She'll

gnow."

"I—I say, you girls, don't you give me

starts any low suspiciousness—"

"Ha, ha!"

"You girls can say that you saw Stella

Stone dodge in and bag the tarts!"

"What!"

"You see, as Stella's head of the Sixth,

Miss Plummy couldn't reg her," argued

Bessie. "I think that's a jolly good idea

myself. What do you think, Barbara?"

"I won't tell you what I think, my

dear," said Babs, laughing. "It would

hurt your feelings."

"Oh, really, Barbara—"

"There's the Bull glaring at us," said

Mabs. "Let's get in. She's bad tem-

pered, as usual."

Miss Bullivant was standing in the

doorway of the Fourth Form-room,

ready for her pupils.

The Bull was looking a little cross, as

she generally did.

"Maths" were not popular. Most of

the juniors disliked the lesson, and possi-

bly Miss Bullivant's work was harder in

consequence.

Certainly she was always a little grim

and snappy.

The juniors filed to their places for the

lesson.

But before the Bull had time to begin,

there was a sound of rapid footsteps in

the passage, and Miss Plummy burst into

the class-room.

Miss Plummy's face was pink with

wrath. She stopped, and gasped, as the

Bull turned a steely glance upon her.

"The tarts!" she spluttered.

"The what?" repeated Miss Bullivant

coldly.

"The tarts! They have been abstracted

by some member of the class!" exclaimed

Miss Plummy.

"Good gracious! Some girl here

present—"

"Certainly! I discovered the loss a

minute after they were gone. I am sure

it was Bessie Bunter!"

"Oh!" gasped Bessie.

"Bessie Bunter!"

"Owl! Yes, Miss Bullivant!"

"Stand up!"

"I—I—I—"

"Stand up!" thundered Miss Bullivant.

Bessie Bunter jumped up at that, like a

jack-in-the-box, with a gasp. Miss

Bullivant's eyes gleamed at her.

She could see a suspicious bulge in

Bessie's dress, now that the fat junior

was standing up.

"Bessie, how many pockets have you

in your dress?"

"N-n-none, Miss Bullivant."

"What?"

"I—I mean two?" gasped Bessie.

"Only tut-tut-two, Miss Bullivant! Very

small ones! They wouldn't hold any-

thing."

"Your pockets are bulging, Bessie."

Bessie Bunter glanced down hopelessly

at her dress. The bulge was so evident

that the case was quite a hopeless one.

"Bessie Bunter!" Miss Bullivant's

voice was like the rumble of distant

thunder. "What have you in your

pockets?"

"Only—only my handkerchief, please,

Miss Bullivant."

"What, in both pockets?" shrieked

Miss Bullivant.

"Yes. I—I mean, no. Oh, no! Cer-

tainly not."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Then what is in the other

pocket?"

"The—the other pocket?" stammered

Bessie.

"Yes. Answer me at once!"

"My—my other handkerchief!" gasped

Bessie.

"Do you mean to say that you carry

two handkerchiefs?"

"Yes. Exactly. I—I sometimes lend

my handkerchief to Barbara."

"Oh!" gasped Barbara.

"So—so, I—I carry two!" gasped

Bessie. "That—that's how it is, Miss

Bullivant."

"There is more than a handkerchief in your pocket, girl!"

"N-not at all."

"Do you mean to say that a single handkerchief could make your pocket bulge in that manner?"

"I-I forgot. I-I've got three."

"Three handkerchiefs!" shrieked Miss Bullivant.

"Yes. I-I sometimes lend one to Mabel."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bessie Bunter, stand out before the class at once!" thundered Miss Bullivant.

"It is perfectly clear that you have more than handkerchiefs in your pockets, even if you have two or three, which I do not credit for one moment."

"I-I forgot. I-I've got something else," faltered Bessie.

"Oh, you have something else?" said Miss Bullivant grimly. "And what else have you, pray?"

"I-I meant to say that—that I've got three handkerchiefs—I mean four—that is to say six."

"Six handkerchiefs!" stuttered Miss Bullivant.

"Yes, and a towel."

"A—~~a~~ towel!" said Miss Bullivant dazedly.

"Yes, and a duster—two dusters—in fact, three."

"What?"

"And a sheet!" gasped Bessie Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the whole Fourth.

Even Miss Plumby was grinning. But Miss Bullivant did not grin; she was wrathful.

"Bessie Bunter! How dare you tell me such—such unexampled untruths!" she exclaimed. "Stand out before the class at once, and I will myself examine what is in your pockets."

"Oh, dear!"

"Do you hear me?" Bessie Bunter rolled dismally out before the class.

Miss Bullivant thrust a stern hand into one pocket, and gave a startled squeak.

Her hand came out sticky and thick with jam, and there was a gasp of mortification from the class, as Miss Bullivant gazed at it in horror.

"Bessie!" The Bull's voice was terrifying. "You—you—very extremely greedy and dirty girl, turn out your pockets at once."

"I-I say, Miss Bullivant—"

"Turn out your pockets!"

Bessie Bunter reluctantly obeyed. She turned then out upon a chair, and the contents, as they were turned out, made the Form shriek.

Miss Bullivant could only gaze in horror.

Jam tarts galore were there, but they had been crammed in, in reckless haste, and they had lost all semblance to jam tarts.

They were sticky chunks of jam and pastry, and mixed with fragments of tinfoil and chocolate cream, and bull-eyes, and acid drops, as well as a stump of pencil, a skin of wool, and several other articles.

The heap on the chair, when Bessie had finished turning out her pockets, was like unto nothing else on the earth, or in the waters under the earth.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Miss Bullivant at last.

"Dear me!" murmured Miss Plumby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, Bessie!"

Bessie Bunter's eyes lingered mournfully on the sticky heap. It did not inspire her with horror at all—far from it.

"I—I do not think I—I will take those tarts away, Miss Bullivant," ejaculated Miss Plumby. "Under the

—the circumstances, I shall take no further steps in the matter."

And Miss Plumby hastily departed. She was eager to have no further dealings whatever with those tarts.

"Bessie Bunter! You—you—" Miss Bullivant picked up her pointer. "Hold out your hand!"

The next few minutes were painful to Bessie Bunter.

There were sounds of anguish in the Form-room, and Bessie went back to her place squeezing her fat hands, and making remarkable contortions with her fat features.

Her expression was very dismal during "maths."

"Never mind, dear!" Barbara whispered to her, when Miss Bullivant's sharp eye could be detected for a moment.

"Never mind; it will wear off!"

Bessie blinked at her.

"Eh! What will wear off?" she asked.

"The pain!" said Barbara, puzzled. She had supposed that Bessie's lugubrious look was due to the caning.

Bessie gave a snort.

"Oh, that's nothing! What nonsense!"

"Then what are you looking like a

Bessie planted her ample form in the way.

"I say, Marjorie—"

"Money's tight!" said Clara.

"If you think I want to borrow any money of you, Clara—"

"Well, don't you?" asked Clara Treovyn, in surprise.

"Oh, really, Clara! I simply want one of you to lend me a bike."

Marjorie and Clara and Dolly Jobling looked at one another, and smiled.

As the three girls were about to mount their machines, the request was rather cool.

Bessie blinked at them inquiringly.

"Which of you is going to lend me a jigger?" she asked.

"None, I fancy!" said Clara. "Can't you see we're just going on our jiggers?"

"I hope you're not going to be selfish, Clara!"

"Oh, my goodness!"

"Selfishness is a horrid thing," said Bessie, with a serious shake of the head.

"I'm sorry to say that I've found most of the girls here rather selfish. I try to set an example of unselfishness; but I must say it doesn't seem to do much good."

"You—you do?" stuttered Dolly.

"I do!" said Bessie Bunter firmly.

"If there's anything I really despise, it's selfishness. Are you going to lend me your bike, Marjorie?"

"No!"

"What about you, Clara?"

"Nothing about me, my dear!"

"I say, Dolly—"

"I'll lend you the front wheel, if you don't get out of the way!" answered Dolly Jobling. "Now, then, get a move on!"

"Oh, really, you girls! I know where you're going," said Bessie Bunter. "You're going over to Greyfriars to tea."

"How do you know that, Fatima!"

"I happened to hear you talking in your study—"

"You happen to hear too many things!" growled Clara. "You'll happen to hear yourself called a listening little mix some time!"

"If you mean to say that I would listen, Clara—"

"I mean to say that I'll run over you if you don't move off!" exclaimed Clara impatiently.

"I was simply stooping to pull up my stocking, and I happened to have my head near the keyhole. Pure chance!"

"All right! Get aside, then!"

"Do let us get on," said Marjorie.

"I'm going over to Greyfriars to see my brother, Bessie, and we really must get off."

"I've got a brother at Greyfriars, too," explained Bessie. "It's about time I gave him a look-in. That's why I'm coming with you."

"Oh!"

"Only I can't walk the distance, you know. I suppose you're not selfish enough to want me to walk. I suggest Clara staying in—"

"What?"

"You can do some sewing for me, if you like," said Bessie generously. "I've got lots of sewing to do, and I never seem to get through it. I've heard Miss Bellow say you're clever with your needle. Well, then, you stay in, Clara, and sew for me. Then I can have your bike!"

Clara looked blankly at Bessie Bunter, quite deprived of the power of speech for a moment or two.

"Now, don't be selfish, you know!" said Bessie encouragingly.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Clara at last. "Hold my bike, Marjorie, while I go for her!"

## OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY!



No. 3.

### MARJORIE HAZELDENE.

boiled owl for?" demanded Barbara, rather indignantly.

"My tarts!" whispered Bessie mournfully. "I—I say, Babs, do you think the Bull will let me have them afterwards?"

"I'm pretty sure not!" chuckled Babs. "But surely you don't want that sticky heap of rubbish."

"My tarts!" murmured Bessie disconsolately.

Miss Bullivant's eyes glittered round, and Barbara assumed an elaborate unconcernedness.

But her consolations were superfluous. Bessie Bunter was not to be consoled. Like Rachel of old, she mourned for that which was lost, and could not be comforted.

### Bike Wanted!

**I** SAY, you girls!"

"Run for it!" exclaimed Clara. Marjorie & Co. were wheeling out their bicycles on Wednesday afternoon, when Bessie Bunter arrived at the bike shed.

But there was no chance of running for it, unless they ran over the fat junior.





"Stand clear, while I go for her," said Clara Trevlyn, swinging the hockey stick. "Now, Fatima, where will you have it?" Bessie Bunter dodged round the table in alarm.

Marjorie laughed and held the bike, and Clara laid hands upon Bessie Bunter's plait, and by that means jerked her out of the path.

"There was a wild howl from Bessie. 'Yow! Leggo!'"

The chums of the Fourth wheeled on their machines, leaving Bessie Bunter blinking after them in great wrath.

"Yah! Cats!"

"Blessed if I ever came across such a selfish lot of girls as these CER House specimens," murmured the fat junior, as she turned into the bike-shed. "Of course, I must have a bike. They don't care if I walk all the way to Greyfriars, and tire myself out—not a bit! I suppose that's Barbara's machine. I dare say I can make that go if I put the saddle down a bit. She was wild last time I took it, but that can't be helped. She's selfish, too! Actually made a fuss because it was left muddy. How could I help it getting muddy? How could Bessie Bunter cheerfully remove Babs' handsome jigger from the stand and wheel it to the door.

There she paused a moment to blink round cautiously. Like Moses of old, she looked this way and that way. But there was no sign of Babs or Mabs, and she wheeled the bike out, and started for the gates.

But she had not quite reached the gates, when there was a shout behind.

"My bike!"

"Oh, dear!" ejaculated Bessie. "That's Babs! And she'd be just as selfish as Marjorie—I know that!"

And Bessie rushed the bike on. She did not mean to allow Babs a chance of being selfish.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 3.

"Bessie!" shrieked Barbara Redfern.

"Bring my bike back! I'm going out on it this afternoon!"

"Bring it back!" shrieked Mabs.

Bessie rolled on.

There was a swift patter of feet on the path behind, as Babs and Mabs rushed in pursuit. They had been making for the bike shed, when they spotted Bessie Bunter with her prize.

The fat junior blinked back over her shoulder. Babs and Mabs were gaining ground fast.

"Oh, dear! The cats! They—they actually mean to take this bike away from me!" gasped Bessie. "Oh, dear! Cats!"

The fat junior jumped into the saddle, and pedalled down to the gates.

Babs and Mabs were almost within reach, but on a bike, even Bessie was able to beat them.

She shot ahead, and whizzed through the gateway, just shaving the porter, who was standing there looking out towards the sea.

The short-sighted junior did not even observe him, and it was by sheer luck that she did not charge Mr. Piper fairly in the back.

As it was, her elbow smote Mr. Piper in the ribs, and made him jump like a kangaroo, while the bike skidded away from the shock and wobbled out into the road.

"Oh!" howled the astonished Mr. Piper. "Ah! Yah!"

He staggered against the gatepost, while the bike careered across the road, narrowly escaping curling up.

Two little figures darted past the astonished porter and rushed out.

"Collar her!"

"We've got her!"

Babs and Mabs rushed at the wobbling bike.

Bessie Bunter made a tremendous effort, and righted herself, and drove at the pedals.

The bike shot away just as Babs and Mabs reached it and grasped. It escaped their grasp by the fraction of an inch, and the two girls, clutching at space, stumbled forward and pitched on their knees.

"Oh!"

"Yooop!"

"My heyo!" murmured the ancient Mr. Piper, blinking at them in surprise.

"My heyo! I'd larrup 'em! That's wot I'd do—I'd larrup 'em!"

Bessie Bunter was sailing away merrily. She glanced back, and saw Babs and Mabs breathless on their knees, and chuckled.

"He, he, he!"

"Oh!" gasped Babs, staggering up.

"I—I'll—"

"He, he, he!"

Babs rushed down the road. Bessie Bunter waved back a fat hand, and drove at the pedals.

She sailed away cheerily round the nearest corner, and vanished, leaving Barbara with feelings that could not be expressed in words.

### Not Bessie's Fault.

"BESSIE BUNTER!"

No answer.

"Bessie Bunter!"

Miss Primrose was taking roll-call in Hall. There was a vacant place in the ranks of the Fourth. The new junior did not answer to her name.

"D'ar me!" said Miss Primrose. "Is Bessie Bunter absent, Miss Bellow?"

"It appears so, Miss Primrose."

The new junior was marked absent.

The girls were dismissed, and there was some discussion on the subject of the absent Bessie, as they streamed out of H.H.

"She's lost her way," remarked Clara. "Let's hope that she will never find it again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"She didn't turn up at Greyfriars," remarked Marjorie. "It seems that she borrowed a bike after all."

"She bagged my bike!" said Barbara sulphurously. "I've skinned my knees, too—all her fault!"

"Perhaps she's had an accident," said Marjorie.

"Very likely, the way she rides," said Phyllis Howell. "That's rather rough on Barbara's bike."

"The little idiot!" said Babs uneasily. The thought of an accident to the short-sighted junior made Babs' wrath elaborate.

She was really more anxious for Bessie than for her bike, as she waited in the bike doorway, looking out for a sign of the truant.

The dusk had settled over the quadrangle and the gardens. There was an echo of a bell ringing at the porter's lodge at last.

"That must be Bessie!" exclaimed Babs.

"Here she comes!" murmured Babs. "She's not got the bike."

Bessie Bunter came up the path to the house, looking tired, and on foot. She was not wheeling Babs' machine. Barbara's wrath revived at the sight of the fat junior safe and sound. Evidently there was no cause for alarm.

"Have you left it at the gate?" she exclaimed, as Bessie Bunter rolled in. The fat junior blinked at her.

"Eh? Left what?"

"My bike!"

"Oh, your bike! I'd forgotten your bike!"

"Have you left it at the gate?"  
"How could I leave it at the gate when I've not brought it home?" asked the fat junior peevishly. "Don't be silly, Barbara!"

"You—you've not brought it home?"  
"Of course not! How could I, when the pedal was twisted, and I couldn't ride it?"

"You—you've left it out of doors?"  
"I suppose I couldn't carry it?" suggested Bessie sarcastically.  
"Couldn't you wheel it home?" shrieked Mabel.

"If you think I can wheel a bike two miles, Mabel Lynn—"  
"Two miles!" repeated Barbara faintly. "My bike! Two miles! Oh, dear!"

"The beastly thing ran into a bank," explained Bessie Bunter peevishly. "It's not really a good bike, Barbara—nothing like my own bike at home. Beastly thing, I call it—it wouldn't go straight, even. When I found the pedal was twisted, I had to leave it. It was annoying. I've had a long walk."

"Bessie!" Stella Stone came up. "You are to report yourself in Miss Bellw's study at once for being late."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bessie. "I say, Stella, I'm awfully hungry!"

"Go to Miss Bellw at once!"  
The mistress's voice was terrifying, and Bessie Bunter jumped, and obeyed. She rolled away discontentedly to Miss Bellw's study.

The mistress of the Fourth received her with a stern look.

"You are half an hour late for roll-call!" she exclaimed.

"I couldn't help it, Miss Bellw. My bike busted."

"What?"

"The blessed bike busted—"  
"Bessie! Are those expressions to use in speaking to me?" exclaimed Miss Bellw.

"Oh! I—I mean the blessed pedal—I mean the pedal twisted, Miss Bellw, and I had to walk home!" gasped Bessie. "It wasn't my fault! I've had to leave the jigger—I mean the bike—two miles away, on the Redcliffe road, I think—some road or other."

"Bless my soul!" said Miss Bellw. "Could you not have wheeled it home?"

"Oh, no!"

"Why not, Bessie?"

"That would have been a lot of trouble, Miss Bellw."

"But surely it would have been better to take the trouble than to leave your bicycle out of doors for the night?" exclaimed Miss Bellw. "It may be taken away by someone. It may be stolen!"

"Oh, that's all right!"

"But it is not all right, Bessie—it will be a very serious loss to you if the bicycle is taken."

"I mean, it's all right—it's not my bike," explained Bessie cheerfully.

Miss Bellw jumped.

"You—you have left a borrowed machine out of doors, two miles from the school!" she ejaculated.

"Well, it—it wasn't exactly a borrowed machine," said Bessie Bunter cautiously. "I didn't exactly borrow it. You see, it couldn't be borrowed if it wasn't lent, could it? And Barbara wouldn't lend it to me."

And Bessie Bunter blinked at the Form-mistress, as if she considered that that settled the matter quite satisfactorily.

Miss Bellw did not agree with her, however, to judge by her look.

"You have taken Barbara Redfern's bicycle without permission, and left it

two miles from the school!" exclaimed Miss Bellw, almost dazedly.

"It—it wasn't quite two miles. About—about a mile and three-quarters."

"Bless my soul! I really hardly know how to deal with her!" exclaimed Miss Bellw, staring at her hopeful pupil.

"If—if you don't mind, Miss Bellw, I—I'd prefer to let the matter drop!" ventured Bessie.

"What?"

"I—I'm awfully hungry—"

"I shall cane you, Bessie—most severely!"

"Me?" ejaculated Bessie.

"Yes—certainly!"

"What—what have I done?" gasped Bessie, her round eyes opening wide behind her glasses. "Oh, really, Miss Bellw—"

"You have acted very wrongly, inconsiderately, and selfishly!" said Miss Bellw sternly.

"Oh!" exclaimed Bessie warmly. "I like that! I must really say that I like that, Miss Bellw! It's all Clara's fault, really—"

"Clara! What has Clara to do with it?"

"I asked Clara to lend me her bike, and she refused—I pointed out to her that she was acting selfishly, but it made no difference."

"Hold out your hand, Bessie!"

"Mum—mum—my hand!"

"Yes; at once!"

"Wha—ah for, Miss Bellw!"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered Miss Bellw.

"Oh!"

Bessie held out a fat hand, in a very gingerly manner. Her fat face expressed deep indignation.

"Swish, swish!"

"Yow! Yarooooooh!"

"Bessie—"

"Yaroooooooh!"

"Cease making those ridiculous noises at once, and leave sup-study!"

"Yow-ow-wooooo!"

Bessie Bunter rolled out of the study, squeezing her fat palms frantically.

Dabs and Mabs were waiting for her in the passage.

Babs was looking as if she was on the war-path, which was not surprising under the circumstances; but at the sight of the fat junior doubled up with anguish she relented.

"Had it bad?" she asked.

"Yoooop!"

"I was going to scalp you!"

"Whooooo!"

"My word! Don't life the roof off, kid!" murmured Mabel.

"Yow-ow-ow!" groaned Bessie. "I—I say, you girls, Miss Bellw is a cat! Yow-ow-ow! She made out that I was to blame—yow-ow!—about the bike, you know—wow-wow-wow! I suppose she was ratty about something—ow!—and wanted to pitch into somebody—yooop! It's all your fault, Barbara! Ow!"

"My fault?" exclaimed Barbara, in astonishment.

"Ow! Yes! You shouldn't have such an old bike! I wouldn't have taken it if I'd known it was such a beastly thing—ow! It's all your fault! Yow-ow!"

"Well—" gasped Babs.



"And what else have you in your pocket?" demanded Miss Bullivant.  
"Six handkerchiefs," faltered Bessie Bunter. "And a-a-a towel—and a duster—two dusters—in fact, Bessie—"  
"What!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant.

"I jolly well hope it will be lost now—  
—you—ow! It will serve you right!  
You—ow—ow!"

And Bessie Bunter rolled away, still  
"yowing" and "mowing" at a great  
rate. Babs and Mabs gazed after her  
speechlessly. Bessie Bunter had taken  
their breath away.

## Caught!

**A CUSHION!**  
"Something harder than a  
cushion."  
Babs and Mabs were in their  
study, No. 4 in the Fourth, which they  
had the honour and distinction of sharing  
with Bessie Bunter.

It was time for prep, but the chums  
were not thinking of prep just then.  
They were thinking of Bessie Bunter.

Bessie had been in the study, not for  
prep, but in search of provender.

She had expressed great indignation  
that her study-friends had not waited tea  
for her—and still greater indignation  
at finding that there was nothing left.

Now she was gone on a scolding ex-  
pedition up and down the passage—seek-  
ing what she might devour, so to speak.

Babs and Mabs were cheerfully dis-  
cussing the rigging up of a booby-trap,  
ready for Bessie when she returned to  
her quarters. They felt that the affair  
of the bike ought not to pass wholly  
unpunished.

Bessie Bunter certainly could not see  
that she had done anything amiss—she  
regarded herself rather as an injured  
party in the transaction.

It was possible that the booby-trap  
would help her to take a juster view  
of the matter. Babs and Mabs hoped so,  
at least.

Barbara glanced round the study.  
There was a large paper bag on the  
shelf, which had once contained a new  
hat.

"The very thing!" said Babs.  
"That won't do any damage," said  
Mabel.

"It will be all right with soot in it."  
"Oh! Ha, ha, ha!"

"The very, very thing!" said Barbara  
cheerily. "It's time Bessie had a wash-  
high time. Even Bessie will wash when  
she gets sooted. Now, look up the chim-  
ney and see—"

"You can do that, dear!"  
"I don't want to get soot on my hair."  
"Do you think I want soot on my  
hair?" demanded Mabel.

"Don't argue, dear! Just look up  
the chimney, and see if there's plenty of  
soot, and rake some down."

"Remark! I'll get on with my prep,"  
replied Mabel Lynn casually. "I  
don't think much of sooty booby-traps,  
when I come to think of it."

"Well, give me something to put over  
my head," said Barbara. "You're  
always making difficulties, Mabel!"

Barbara fastened a cluster over her  
head, and took the fire-shovel. She  
peered very cautiously into the chimney,  
and began to rake down soot.

There was quite a fair quantity—  
though not enough to fill the paper bag.  
Barbara surveyed it doubtfully.

"Put your arm right up the chimney  
and rake away!" said Mabs encourag-  
ingly.

"Fetched!" was Barbara's reply.  
"Now, look here, Babs—"

"The ashes will do, decided Barbara,  
if they weren't, if you come to that, I'll  
take the ashes with the soot, and that  
will do. It will have to do, anyway; I'm  
not going to waste a lot of time on Bessie  
Bunter."

Soot and ashes were carefully shovelled  
into the flimsy bag, which was filled  
almost to the brim.

"Careful!" murmured Mabel. "If it  
bursts—"  
"It won't burst, dear—you're not hand-  
ling it."  
"If you're going to be cheeky,  
Barbara—"  
"I'm going to stick this on top of the  
door, if you'll put a chair there for me,  
instead of talking a lot of nonsense!"  
Mabs placed the chair in position, and  
Barbara carefully arranged the bag on top.  
The door suddenly shook.  
"Steady!" exclaimed Barbara. "Do  
you want the lot down? What are you  
wobbling for?"  
"Yow-ow! Groogh!"  
"What's the matter?"  
"Ow! You—you duffer, you've  
dropped some into my eye!" wailed  
Mabel.

"It's a jolly queer thing, Mabel, that  
you can't even hold a door without get-  
ting soot in your eye!" said Barbara  
crossly. "Don't be clumsy, dear—just  
keep the door steady!"  
"You—you—Ow!"  
"That's right!"  
Barbara stepped down from the chair,  
and pulled it away. The paper bag was  
lodged nicely on top, all ready to fall as  
soon as the door was pushed from out-  
side.

Mabel was rubbing her eye frantically.  
"That's ripping!" said Babs. "No  
danger that Bessie will see it—she walked  
into a booby-trap last week that Marjorie  
had rigged up for her—she'd walk into  
anything! I believe she'd walk into a  
river, if anybody left one lying about.  
What are you mumbling about now,  
Mabel?"  
"Ow! My eye! Wow!"  
"Never mind!"  
"But I do mind!" shrieked Mabel.  
"We'd better get behind the screen,  
when we hear her elephantine tread!"  
remarked Barbara. "She might see us  
and suspect—especially if she sees you  
with that black eye!"  
"Yow-ow!"  
"Hallo! Here she comes! Out of  
sight—quick!" exclaimed Barbara, as  
footsteps were heard in the passage,  
coming towards Study No. 4. "Quiet  
—"  
"Woo-yoo—yow!"  
"Really, Mabs, you are enough to  
make a girl wild!" said Barbara, in great  
exasperation. "Bother your eye! Never  
mind your eye now! Cover!"  
Barbara fairly dragged her chum  
behind the screen.  
The footsteps outside were very close  
now.  
"Hush!"  
Mabel was still rubbing her unhappy  
eye, but she hushed. The two girls  
waited breathlessly.  
The footsteps came on, and reached  
the study, and there was a tap at the  
door, and it was pushed open from out-  
side.  
The tap astonished the two juniors—  
there was no reason why Bessie Bunter  
should tap at her own study door.  
But they had no time to think about  
it, for the door opened the same moment.  
Swoosh!  
Smash!  
A fearful shriek rang along the Fourth  
Form passage.  
But it was not Bessie Bunter's voice.  
Babs and Mabs, looking from behind  
the screen, stared, frozen, dumbfounded,  
top to toe with soot and ashes, gasped  
and gurgled and shrieked and raved.

## Trouble for Two!

**G ROOUGH!**  
"Oh, dear!"  
"Gug-gug-gug!"  
"M-M-Miss B-B-Bullivant!"  
stuttered Barbara. "Oh! G-g-good  
gracious!"  
"You—you—you've done it now!"  
gasped Mabs.  
"Oooooooggggh!"

Miss Bullivant, in a state of blindness  
and suffocation, struggled with the soot,  
gasping for breath, and emitting wild  
and weird and awful sounds.

There was a rush of footsteps in the  
passage, a chorus of voices. The whole  
Fourth Form passage was alarmed.  
"What's the matter?" exclaimed  
Clara, the first to arrive.

"Look!"  
"Oh! Who—who is it?"  
"Yurrrgh! Gurrrh! Gug-gug!"  
Barbara and Mabel, in utter dismay,  
crouched behind the screen. They had a  
faint hope—a very faint hope—of escap-  
ing detection.

Round the doorway clustered the girls,  
in wonder and alarm, while the blackened  
drill-mistress struggled for breath.

Miss Bullivant dashed soot and ashes  
away from her face. She gogged at her  
eyes, and shook her hair.

"Groogh! I—I—I am smothered!  
Oh!"

"It—it's Miss Bullivant!" murmured  
Philippa Derwent in awe.

"Oh, dear!"  
"Gug-gug! I—I have fallen into a  
trap!" shrieked Miss Bullivant. "Look  
at me! I am smothered! This is—is  
soot! And ashes! Gug-gug!"

"Ho, he, he!"  
"Is that someone laughing?" shrieked  
Miss Bullivant. "How dare you! Who  
is it that dares to laugh at this—this  
excusable outrage!"

"I—I—I wasn't laughing, Miss Bullivant  
—really, you know—I—I was crying—I'm  
so sorry—"

"It was you, Bessie Bunter!"  
"Sus-sus-certainly not! I—I was only  
weeping, please!" gasped Bessie Bunter.

"I—I wouldn't think of laughing, Miss  
Bullivant, though you look so jolly queer  
—"

"What?"  
"I—I mean, you don't look queer, not  
at all!" gasped Bessie. "You—you  
look as nice as usual, Miss Bullivant.  
The—the soot doesn't make a bit of  
difference."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Silence! Gug-gug! Bessie Bunter,  
did you lay this trap for me to walk  
into?" raved Miss Bullivant.

Bessie jumped.  
"I—I wouldn't do such a thing! I—I  
never thought of it! Besides, how could  
I when I'm outside the study?"

"It is your study."  
"But I couldn't rig up a booby-trap  
from outside," stuttered Bessie Bunter.

"Where are your study-friends?"  
shrieked Miss Bullivant. "I shall  
examine closely into this matter. The  
guilty shall be punished! I—I—Gug-  
gug-gug! Your study-friends are not  
here, Bessie Bunter! It was you! I am  
assured that it was you! I shall—"

"I didn't—I wasn't—I never  
—"  
"Miss Bullivant!" gasped Marjorie.  
"Bessie couldn't have—"

"Silence, Marjorie Hazeldene! I dare  
say you are in the plot!"  
"Oh, dear!"

"Bessie Bunter, you shall be punished  
with the greatest severity!"  
Behind the screen Babs and Mabs ex-  
changed a hopeless look. It was time to  
own up, and they realised it. "Playing

the game" was the role in the Fourth Form at Cliff House.

The two girls stepped from behind the screen. Miss Bullivant broke off suddenly as she saw them.

"You!" she exclaimed. "You here—Barbara—Mabel Lynn—you—"

"Yes, please, Miss Bullivant!" murmured Barbara.

"You set that wicked trap for me?" shrieked Miss Bullivant.

"Nunno!"

"You have just—gug-gug!—said you did."

"We—we set it for Bessie Bunter!" gasped Mabel. "We—we didn't know you were coming, Miss Bullivant—we never dreamed—"

"He, he, he!"

"Bessie, you—"

"He, he, he! Now you're going to catch it!" giggled Bessie Bunter.

"Serves you jolly well right! Fancy setting a booby-trap for me, after all I've done for you girls!"

"Silence! Barbara—gug-gug-gug—"

"Not that I should have walked into it!" giggled Bessie. "I'm too jolly cute! I'm not such a silly idiot as to walk into a trap like that! He, he, he! Yaroooh!"

roared Bessie, as Miss Bullivant's sooty hand smote her on one fat ear. "Yaroooh! Wharrier you at? I didn't do it, did I?"

"Now be silent—"

"Yow-ow-wow!"

"Barbara—Mabel—you have been guilty of an—unprecedented outrage! Look at me—gug-gug-gug—Grough!"

"We—we're so sorry!" gasped Barbara. "It was meant for that little duffer!"

"What?"

"I mean for Bessie—"

"We never dreamed you were coming to the study, Miss Bullivant!" groaned Mabel.

"Grough! Gug! I came here to speak to you—grough!—about your bicycle, which has been—oooh—left out of doors—Ow! And this is how I have been—grough—treated! I shall take you to Miss Primrose—"

"Oh, Miss Bullivant!"

"I shall let Miss Primrose see me in this state!" gurgled Miss Bullivant. "She shall see the treatment—grough—to which I have been—gug-gug—subjected! Follow me!"

"Oh, dear!"

Miss Bullivant swept away towards the stairs, leaving a trail of soot behind her as she swept.

Barbara and Mabel, with dismayed faces, followed her, rubbing their hands in unhappy anticipation as they went.

"There was no doubt that when the headmistress saw Miss Bullivant in that shocking state the vials of wrath would be poured out on the two unfortunate juniors. The fact that the booby-trap had been intended for Bessie Bunter would not be intended for an excuse—booby-traps of soot and ashes did not come within the rules of Cliff House School."

And it was Miss Bullivant who had begged the soot!

"He, he, he!"

Bessie Bunter's fat chuckle followed the two hapless juniors down the passage in the wake of the "Bull."

"Shurrup, you fat duffer!" murmured Clara Trevlyn.

"He, he, he! I'm jolly glad! Fancy laying a booby-trap for me, after all I've done for them! He, he, he!"

Barbara glanced back.

"Won't somebody bump her for me?" she asked impudently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Babs and Mabs disappeared down the staircase.

"Ho, ho, he! Here, I say, you girls—Yow-ow! Leggo!"

"Shake, shake, shake!"

"Oh, dear! Leggo! I—I wasn't laughing, was I? I'm awfully sorry for them, you know! Yaroooh!"

"Shake, shake!"

When Barbara and Mabel returned they were looking quite pale.

There were sympathetic looks and words as they came along the Fourth Form passage; but they did not speak, their feelings were too deep.

In the study they found Bessie Bunter in the armchair in a gasping state.

"I say, you girls—yow-ow—I've been shaken!" gasped Bessie. "I—I say, you ought to back me up, you know! You come with me, and I'll look on while you shake Clara. It's up to you, you know! Why, wharrier you at?" yelled Bessie, as Babs and Mabs grasped the back of the armchair.

The chair tilted up, and Bessie Bunter shot out on the hearthrug with a roar.

"Why, you cats—"

"Jump on her!" breathed Barbara.

Bessie Bunter squirmed round the table, and fled. And Babs and Mabs were left alone with their woes. And for quite a long time afterwards anyone passing Study No. 4 might have heard dolorous sounds proceeding from within.

"Oh! Ah! My hands! Yow-ow! Oh dear! M-m-m-m-m-m-m-m!"

There were no booby-traps to greet Bessie Bunter when she came back to the study for supper. Study No. 4 were fed up on booby-traps.

### Not a Success!

"MARJORIE!"

A group of junior girls were chatting near the Common-room door after lessons

next day, when Miss Bullivant came along.

Babs and Mabs exchanged a glance.

They were in Miss Bullivant's black books, and had already wasted quite a number of sweet and conciliatory smiles upon the Bull in vain.

Babs had presented a bouquet that morning; Babs had fetched a letter—all in vain.

The uncompromising grimness of the Bull was not to be melted. She could not so soon forget the soot incident in Study No. 4.

She persisted in maintaining towards Babs and Mabs an attitude which Babs described as basiliskic—an adjective of Babs' own invention, but which really did seem to describe Miss Bullivant's manner.

So far as Babs and Mabs were concerned, Miss Bullivant looked decidedly basiliskic as she sailed down on the group of girls.

And it was Marjorie Hazeldene she called to.

"Yes, Miss Bullivant," said Marjorie dutifully.

"I should like you to do something for me."

"C-o-can I do anything for you, Miss Bullivant?" murmured Barbara.

"You cannot, Barbara!"

"Oh!"

"Floored again!" murmured Mabs.

"Marjorie, I should like you to go to Mrs. Jones' and make some purchases for me," pursued Miss Bullivant, ignoring Barbara.

"Certainly!"

"I have a list here," said Miss Bullivant. "And here is the money. Bring the things to my study, my dear."

"Yes, Miss Bullivant."

The Bull sailed off, heading for Mademoiselle Lupin's room. She did "French conversation" with ma'm'selle in her spare moments.

Marjorie glanced at the list, and felt a tap on her arm.

"I say, Marjorie dear"—Bessie Bunter blinked up at her eagerly—"I say, I'll go for you, if you like! I don't mind a bit!"

Marjorie laughed.

"I do, though," she answered. "The Bull would scold somebody if you scoffed her tuck, Bessie. There are things for her tea, and I expect she is having a visitor, from the amount."

"If you think I'd touch them, Marjorie—"

"We don't think; we know!" said Clara. "Buck up, Marjorie; we've got to fix up Study No. 7 for a rehearsal, you know!"

"Give it to me!" said Barbara.

"Good idea!" chimed in Mabs. "We'll do the shopping for the Bull, and soften her hard heart. Hand over the money, Marjorie!"

"Right you are!" assented Marjorie.

Marjorie Hazeldene handed the list and the money to Babs, not unwilling to be relieved of the task, and quite willing to give Barbara a chance of making her peace with the irascible Bull.

"Oh, really, Marjorie!" said Bessie Bunter reproachfully. "I offered to go for you, you know!"

"I'm afraid the Bull would go for me if I allowed you to get near her tuck!" answered Marjorie. "Come on, Clara!"

Barbara and Mabel started for Auntie Jones' little shop near the school gate.

Babs glanced at the list as she went.

"Cake, ham, tarts!" she said. "The Bull is going it! This will really be a spread! Now, we'll be jolly careful in the shopping, and get everything fresh and nice—none of auntie's ancient tarts—and the Bull is bound to come round. I'm fed up with her scowling at us—as if it was our fault she ruined our booby trap with her silly head!"

"I say, you girls—"

"Run away!" exclaimed Barbara wrathfully. "You've got my bike to mend yet, Bessie Bunter!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"I had to walk two miles this morning to retrieve it," said Barbara indignantly.

"I'm not going to mend it. You're going to do that. Mind, if it's not mended by to-morrow, I'm going to turn you out of the study!"

"I—I say. I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll go and do that shopping for you!"

"You won't!"

"I mean it, you know! I'd do more than that for a girl I really like. Hand me the money—"

"Shake her!" exclaimed Mabel.

Bessie Bunter retreated.

Babs and Mabs went on to the truck-shop, where the purchases were very carefully made.

Auntie Jones was quite worried by the excessive care exercised by the chums in the selection of the goods, and she was glad when the parcel was wrapped up and Babs and Mabs departed with it.

The two juniors arrived at Miss Bullivant's study, and Babs tapped discreetly and took hold of the door-handle.

"Smile!" she whispered to her chum.

"Rather!"

Two bright faces smiled sweetly into the study as the door was pushed, but again the sweet smiles were expanded in vain, for the door did not open.

It was locked.

"Oh dear!" said Babs. "The Bull's out!"

"What a nuisance!"

44 Every Thursday.

Miss Bullivant had evidently not yet returned to her quarters.

She often locked her study door when she was absent, more especially since a certain occasion when she had discovered liquid glue in her slipper.

"All one trouble wasted!" grunted Mabel. "Now, I wonder where she is? Let's look in the Common-room!"

They looked in the Common-room, but it was quite empty. Barbara laid the parcel on the table.

"She's gone to Miss Primrose's study, very likely, or else she's talking French with my nannie," she remarked. "Either way we can't interrupt her. And there's the rehearsal going to begin in Study No. 7."

"Now, if you'd let Marjorie—"

"Mabs, my dear, you're a very nice girl in some ways, but you argue too much. I've often told you so."

"But if you'd let Marjorie—"

"Well, I didn't let Marjorie!" said Mabel crossly. "Here we are landed with a parcel, and the Bull gone off wandering. She ought to be fenced in like any other bull. Look here, I'm not going to hang about the passages waiting for the Bull! She can't expect it!"

"She thinks Marjorie—"

"We'll leave it here, and come back for it," decided Baba. "Let's go and see what those kids are doing in No. 7."

The parcel was deposited on the big table in the Common-room, and the two girls hurried up to the Fourth Form quarters.

The footsteps had hardly died away on the staircase when Bessie Bunter tiptoed from the other direction, and blinked into the Common-room.

"They brought it in here!" murmured Bessie. "They didn't take it out again, so— Ah!"

Bessie Bunter bore down on the parcel. She blinked at it, and hesitated. She knew what it contained, and her fat mouth watered. But she knew, too, that the tuck belonged to Miss Bullivant, and that the Bull was not a person to be trifled with.

"I—I'd better not open it," murmured Bessie as she fingered the string. "I—I might just have a squint at the things! Oh dear, the string's come undone! Well, now it's undone, there's no harm in looking at it. I wonder whether the Bull would miss one tart—just one!"

Before Bessie Bunter had quite settled that question, the tart was in her mouth; and it disappeared with great rapidity.

Another one followed it, almost unconsciously; and then, throwing discretion to the winds, Bessie Bunter proceeded with the rest. She really didn't mean to—it was a case of irresistible magnetism.

Bessie hardly realised what a clearance she was making as she stood and ate till the tarts were gone, and the cake had followed.

Then she gazed at the pot of jam.

"It—it's no good leaving that!" she murmured. "I—I'd better finish it, I think, and—and stuff the paper in the chimney. Then—they may think it was the cat."

That was really rather a slender hope to depend upon; but the jam was the chief thing to be considered. Even while Bessie was mulling she was taking off the paper top from the jar.

And it was a moment later that Barbara and Mabel arrived in the doorway. They had come for the parcel, to take it to Miss Bullivant's study again.

They stood thunderstruck at what they saw—Bessie Bunter, her head thrown back, and a jar of jam, grasped in both fat hands, applied to her capacious mouth!

The School Friend, No. 2.

The jam was gurgling into that ample receptacle, and there was an expression of almost beatific happiness on Bessie's fat face.

"Oh!" gasped Barbara, in horror. Bessie jumped.

"Oh!" she echoed. Jam swamped on her nose and chin as she jumped, and she turned a startled and jammy face towards the door.

"You—your little porker!" gasped Mabs. "That's Miss Bullivant's property!"

"I—I haven't touched it!"

"Why, you—you—"

"I—I mean, I—I've only just looked at it—I mean, I didn't mean—"

"That is, I never—I wasn't—" stammered Bessie helplessly.

"Here comes Miss Bullivant!" panted Mabel, as there was a footstep in the passage.

Bessie Bunter gave a howl of alarm. Without stopping to think, she dived under the big table. Babs and Mabs, with disengaged faces, stood by what remained of the parcel as Miss Bullivant sailed into the Common-room.

## A Cat and a Dog Story!

MISS BULLIVANT glanced coldly at Babs and Mabs, and then glanced round the room. As no one else was there, she had to address the objects of her aversion.

"Barbara!"

"Oh, yes!" gasped Babs.

"Do you know whether Marjorie has done the shopping for me?"

"Yes—no—I—I—I—"

Her confusion drew a sharp, suspicious glance from Miss Bullivant.

And then the Bull noticed the wreck of the parcel on the table—crumbs and fragments of tarts and cakes, and an upset and half-empty jam-jar. Her face assumed a terrific expression.

"Barbara! Mabel! Is it possible—"

"Nunno!" gasped Barbara. "We—we fetched the things for you, Miss Bullivant!"

"I asked Marjorie—"

"I—I got Marjorie to let me fetch them," gasped Babs. "I—I wanted to—oblige you, Miss Bullivant."

"Indeed! You are unusually obliging this afternoon, Barbara!" said Miss Bullivant satirically. "And if you have fetched the goods, pray, where are they?"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Mabel.

"Is it possible," pursued Miss Bullivant, in a voice that was like unto that of the Great Huge Bear, "is it possible that you have devoured—actually devoured—"

"Nunno!"

"In a word, is this my parcel?" exclaimed the Bull.

"Yes—es!"

"Then you have eaten the tarts, the cake—"

"N-n-a-no!"

"Someone has eaten them."

"This is—astounding!" said Miss Bullivant. "You actually induced Marjorie Hazeldene to trust you with the shopping, in order that you might devour my goods, Barbara and Mabel. It is disgusting—in fact, treacherous! I am not surprised at it, after the happenings of yesterday evening!"

"Oh, Miss Bullivant—"

"I repeat, I am not surprised. But—"

"But—but we didn't!" gasped Barbara, in utter dismay at that outcome of the unfortunate attempt to propitiate the Bull. "Not at all! We—"

"We—we—" stammered Mabel helplessly.

"Yesterday," thundered Miss Bullivant. "I was obliged to take you before the Head! I am obliged to do the same to-day. You will follow me at once to Miss Primrose's study!"

"Oh, dear!"

"I—I any—" came a sudden squeak from under the table, to the amazement of Miss Bullivant, and the still greater amazement of Babs and Mabs.

Neither of the juniors would have betrayed the fat culprit; and they had certainly not expected Bessie Bunter to betray herself.

Miss Bullivant's eyes fairly bulged, as a fat face and untidy head were projected from under the table.

"Bessie Bunter!" she stuttered. "Come out from under the table at once, you absurd girl! Do you hear me?"

"I—I'm e-c-coming!" gasped Bessie. Babs and Mabs stared at her blankly as she came up. The fat junior closed one eye at them.

"It's all right!" she whispered. "Leave it to me!"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Babs.

"What did you say, Bessie!" thundered Miss Bullivant.

"N-n-nothing, please!"

"You spoke to Barbara."

"N-not at all, please. I—I didn't even know Barbara was here!"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I—I just made a remark about the weather!" gasped Bessie Bunter. "I—I think it's going to rain!"

"It's going to thunder, I think!" breathed Babs.

"Bessie! What are you doing under the table?"

"I—I was after the cat, Miss Bullivant!"

"The cat!" articulated Miss Bullivant.

"Yes. I—I saw the cat eating your tarts, please—"

"The—cat—eating—the—tarts—"

"And the—cake—"

"And—the—cake—" repeated Miss Bullivant dazedly.

"Yes, and I rushed to stop her," said Bessie Bunter, blinking cheerfully at the astounded mistress. "She—she was gobbling up the jam!"

"The jam—"

"Like winking!" said Bessie confidently.

"Like what?"

"Winking! I mean, like anything, you know. She—she dodged under the table, and I dodged after her, and—"

Miss Bullivant seemed to recover.

"Bessie Bunter, do you think I can possibly believe such an outrageous statement!" she spluttered. "Are you out of your senses? It was you—I see it now. It was you who devoured—"

"No!" ejaculated Bessie. "Not at all! I wouldn't! I don't like tarts, and—and I simply can't stand jam. I wouldn't touch them if they were offered to me. I dislike them. Anybody in the Fourth will tell you—"

"You bad, untruthful girl, your face is smothered with jam at this moment!" shrieked Miss Bullivant.

Bessie dabbed hastily at her face.

"Is—is—is it?" she stammered.

"Certainly, it is. You—"

"That—that was the cat!" gasped Bessie.

"The cat!"

"Yes—that wicked cat! She must have—have rubbed the jam off on my face on purpose!"

That was too much for Miss Bullivant. She made a grenadier-like stride at Bessie Bunter, and grasped her by both shoulders.

Shake, shake, shake!  
"Yaroooh! Leggo! Whizzer you shaking me for?" shrieked Bessie, in wrath and indignation. "Didn't I tell you it was the cat—yaroooh!"

Shake, shake!  
"It was Miss Primrose's cat!" wailed Bessie. "That old Persian cat—Yaroooh! Leggo!"  
"You bad, untruthful girl!" Shake!  
"You utterly untruthful, wicked, greedy girl!" Shake! "It was not the cat!" Shake! "It could not have been the cat!"

Shake, shake!  
"Yoop! I—I mean, it was the dog!"  
"What!"  
"It was the porter's dog!" shrieked Bessie desperately. "That's what I meant to say all along—that horrid stiff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Babs and Mabel involuntarily.  
Bessie Bunter was a little too much for their gravity.

"Cease these wicked untruths at once!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant, Shake, shake, shake! "You are a bad, untruthful girl!"

Shake, shake!  
"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"  
"Now go and wash the jam off your face, you bad girl!" gasped Miss Bull-

ivant. "I shall ask Miss Primrose to charge this in your bill!"  
"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bessie Bunter dodged out; Miss Bullivant looked inclined to begin the shaking again.

"As for you, Barbara, and you, Mabel—"

But Mabs and Babs had fled.  
Bessie Bunter had made a bee-line, so to speak, to the bath-room.

When she came up to the Fourth Form passage, she was no longer jumping, except for a dab or two on her hair. She gave a howl as Barbara and Mabel rushed upon her and seized her.

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"  
Babs and Mabs rushed her into Study No. 4, laughing.

"Leggo! Yoop! I'll yell for a monitress! Yah!"

"Bessie, you fat duffer—"

"Help!"  
"You got us out of a licking!"  
"Eh?"

"You told a lot of horrid stories, and you must be a perfect idiot to think that anybody would believe any of them!"

"Look here—"

But you could have stayed under the table and let us be licked, and it was a wonder you didn't!"

"Oh, really, Barbara—"

"And you're not quite such a little fat horror as you pretend to be!"

"Oh, I say—"

"And we've got a bag of tarts for you!" concluded Barbara.

Bessie Bunter's fat face was all smiles.

"I say, you girls, you're really bricks, you know! Where's the tarts? Of course, I couldn't let you be licked. Guzzle, guzzle!"

"I'm too jolly honorable for that!" Bessie's mouth was full now. "I say, isn't Miss Bullivant a cat?"

She actually doubted my word!"

"Eh?"

"Doubted my word!" said Bessie indignantly. "What do you think of that? I say, these are good tarts! Are there any more?"

"Nunno! But—but I think we ought to stand you a cake!" gasped Barbara.

"If anybody ever deserved to take the cake, you do!"

Guzzle!

"I say, these tarts are ripping! Now, about that cake, you girls—I say, don't walk away while I'm talking to you—"

But they did!

THE END.

(Another long, complete story of the Girls of Cliff House, entitled "The Cliff House Ventriloquist!" in No. 4, "The School Friend," on sale Thursday next. Order your copy in advance to avoid disappointment.)



## your Editor's Corner.

Write to me as often as you like, and let me know what you think of "The School Friend." All readers who write to me and enclose a stamped envelope, may be sure of receiving a prompt reply by post. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The School Friend,' The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.



My dear Readers.—It is quite possible many of you are not aware of the fact that the SCHOOL FRIEND is passed for press nearly a month in advance of publication. But such is the case, and that is happens that I am passing this issue before No. 1 has made its appearance on the market.

Therefore, your opinions of this new paper have not, at the time of writing, reached me. But I am anxiously looking forward to receiving them in the course of a few days. I trust that hundreds and hundreds of you have already written to me, telling me what you think of the SCHOOL FRIEND, and I hope that those of you who have not yet sent me a few lines, will hurry up and do so.

### LET ME HEAR FROM YOU.

I am longing to hear what you all think of the SCHOOL FRIEND. I want to know your opinions of the girls of Cliff House, whether you like Babs and Mabs, Margorie, Clara, and Dolly, and whether you have been heartily amused by Bessie Bunter. I also want you to tell me whether our splendid adventure serial is to your liking, and whether you are fond of Hilda, Pat, and Joe.

And if there is anything you wish to know about our stories, or the characters which appear in them, don't hesitate to ask me. I shall be more than delighted to supply you with the information you require, and if you are in need of information or advice on any other matter, write and let me know; I will do all in my power to help you.

The finest compliment a reader can pay a paper is to recommend it to their friends. Therefore, if the SCHOOL FRIEND meets with your approval, you will be

doing me a very big favour by showing your chums a copy of our new paper, and by telling them all about the girls of Cliff House, and the Girl Crusoes on Diamond Island, and persuading them to become regular readers of the paper. The SCHOOL FRIEND should be read by every schoolgirl in the country, and, moreover, by every girl who has left school, and I want you all to assist me in making the paper more widely known.

Next Thursday's magnificent long, complete tale of Babs & Co., and Margorie & Co., will be entitled,

### "THE CLIFF HOUSE VENTRILQUIST."

By Hilda Richards.

I think you will all agree with me that this week's story, dealing with Bessie Bunter's day lay, is full of laughable incidents and amusing scenes; but I am confident that our next story is even more amusing. A certain girl in the Fourth—I am not going to tell you her name, that will come as a pleasant surprise to you—possesses ventriloquial powers.

During lessons the Cliff House ventriloquist imitates the squeaking of a mouse. In consequence there is considerable consternation and confusion. Some of the girls are really frightened, and even Miss Bellevy is not particularly brave. But there is one girl who does not show a sign of fear. The Cliff House ventriloquist remains perfectly calm, and the Fourth-Formers are puzzled by her behaviour.

But they are more puzzled later on, especially Babs and Mabs, when a mouse appears in Study No. 4, and the ventrilo-

quist, who happens to be in the room at the time, instead of putting on the bold behaviour she exhibited in the class-room, appears to be frightened out of her life.

The Cliff House ventriloquist, however, throws her voice once too often. The Fourth-Formers discover her secret, and then—Well, I will not tell you what happens after this; that will be another pleasant surprise for you.

There will, of course, be another splendid long instalment of our grand adventure serial.

### "THE GIRL CRUSOES."

By Julia Storm.

In next Thursday's issue. In this instalment you will read how the girls continue their investigations of Diamond Island, and of the surprising discoveries they make. The wonders of the desert island seem never-ending, and I am sure you are following the adventures of Hilda, Pat, and Joe, and will continue to follow them, with a great deal of enthusiasm.

In conclusion, let me once again urge upon you the necessity of ordering your copies of the SCHOOL FRIEND in advance. Only by so doing can you be absolutely certain of preventing disappointment. As the SCHOOL FRIEND becomes more widely known, so there is bound to be a larger demand for the paper, and you will all find it worth your while to place a regular order with your newsagent, if you are to avoid being met by the words: "Sold out!"

Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 4