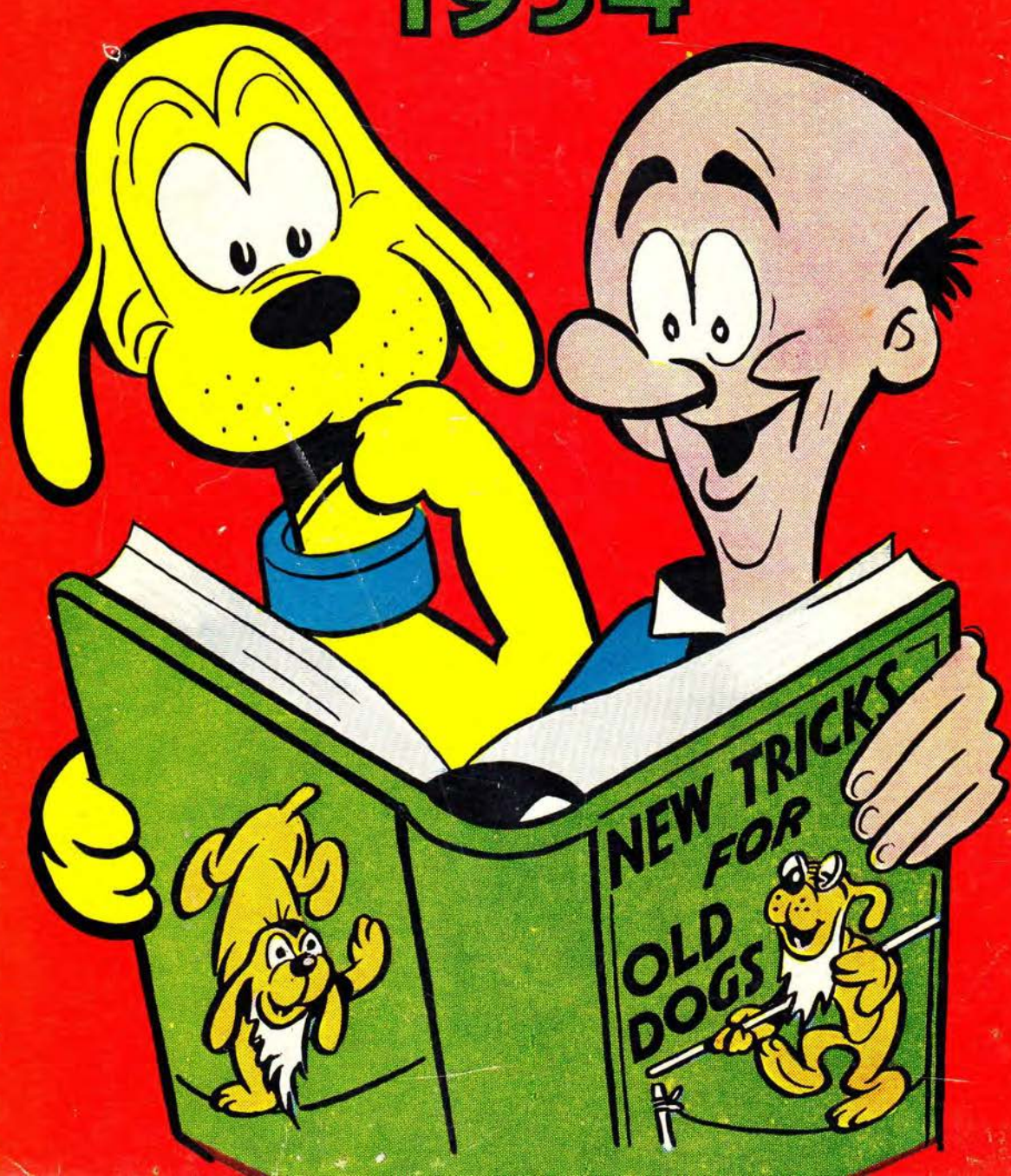


KNOCKOUT FUN BOOK

1954



**BILLY BUNTER HAD BEEN WHOPPED
BY COKER AND VOWED HE'D GET
HIS OWN BACK, SOMEHOW!**

BILLY BUNTER ON THE WARPATH!

**A Rollicking Story of the
Chums of Greyfriars**

By FRANK RICHARDS

Bunter Knows How!

Ow! Wow! Wow!" Five fellows, in Study No. 1 in the Remove, were talking cricket when sounds of woe and anguish floated in from the passage.

The door was pushed open, and Billy Bunter blinked in through his big spectacles. He wriggled as he blinked.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Enjoying life, Bunter?"

"Ow! No! Wow! That beast Coker!" moaned Bunter. "Wow! I'll jolly well show him, though! He ain't going to stump a man for nothing! Wow."

Grunt from Johnny Bull. "What did Coker stump you for?" he asked.

"Wow! Because he's a beast!"

"Any other reason?" grinned Bob.

"I tell you it was for nothing!" howled Bunter. "Wow! Ow! Wow!"

Billy Bunter wriggled spasmodically. Whether Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, had laid on the stump for nothing, or for something, there seemed no doubt that it had been well and truly laid!

"He made out that I was after his tuck!"



went on Bunter. "As if a fellow couldn't stroll into a fellow's study without being after a fellow's—wow!—tuck! Besides, there wasn't any tuck in his cupboard, either."

"And so the poor dog had none!" said Bob Cherry sadly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wow! I told him I only went into his study to—to look out of the window, and he didn't—wow!—believe a word of it—"

"It wanted some believing," agreed Bob.

"I told him I hadn't been near his cupboard—never even looked into it, you know—"

"You found out there wasn't any tuck in it, without looking?" inquired Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Oh, really, Bull! I'm not the fellow to nose into a fellow's cupboard, I hope. You chaps might! Wow! That beast Coker wouldn't listen—he just reached for a stump and whopped! Six from Quelch was nothing

to it," moaned Bunter. "But I'll jolly well show him, and I jolly well know how."

There was a vengeful gleam in Billy Bunter's little round eyes, behind his big round spectacles.

Generally Bunter was a peaceable fellow. He forgot offences as easily as he forgot his lessons. But that stumping in Coker's study had been severe. Horace Coker had a heavy hand.

"You'd better leave Coker alone, old fat man," advised Bob Cherry.

"I'll leave him alone when I've landed a mouldy tomato in his eye," said Bunter. "Not before! I say, Wharton, can I have one of those tomatoes in your cupboard?"

"How do you know there's any there?" inquired the captain of the Remove.

"Oh! I—I never looked before tea to see if there was a cake, or anything——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle," snorted Bunter. "You jolly well wouldn't cackle if you'd had a dozen on the bags from a cricket stump. I'll jolly well show him!"

Bunter rolled across to the study cupboard.

"Now look here, you fat ass——" began Harry Wharton.

"Yah! I'll pay for it, if you like—I'm expecting a postal order to-morrow——"

"Fathead! Steer clear of Coker!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were quite concerned for the fat Owl. They had no objection, in principle, to Horace Coker getting a ripe tomato in the eye. But they did not think that Billy Bunter would have much luck on the war-path.

But good advice was wasted on the fat Owl. There was a dish of tomatoes in the cupboard in Study No. 1—and several of these tomatoes had undoubtedly seen better days. Billy Bunter selected the ripest and juiciest. He packed it in a little paper bag with care.

"Look here, you ass, chuck it!" said Nugent.

"Eh?" Bunter blinked at him. "I'm going to! You don't think I'm going to hand it to Coker on a plate, do you?"

"I mean drop it, you duffer."

"What for?" asked Bunter. "I don't suppose I could pick it up again if I did—it's jolly juicy. It would jolly well muck up your carpet, too! What do you want me to drop it for?"

"Oh, help!" gasped Nugent, while the other fellows yelled. "I mean you'd better not buzz that tommy at Coker—he will strew you all over Greyfriars in little pieces if you do."



Herbert Vernon-Smith jumped as the over-ripe tomato hit him smack in the eye!

"That's all you know," said Bunter. "Coker ain't going to see me buzz it. The beast had come up to his study to write a letter when he found me there. Well, when he's written it he will post it, won't he?"

"Chaps generally do," said Bob Cherry.

"Well, then, I shall be behind that old elm close by the post-box," grinned Bunter. "Coker will get this right in the eye when he posts his letter. He won't see me. I shall be behind that tree. He won't see anything, with a tomato in his eye, if you come to that."

And Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. I—wriggling as he rolled, but considerably consoled by the prospect of landing that over-ripe tomato fairly in the eye of Coker of the Fifth. Harry Wharton & Co. resumed the topic of cricket, and dismissed the fat Owl from mind; though they were very shortly to be reminded of him.

Just Like Bunter

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH jumped clear of the ground.

Life is full of surprises; and no doubt Smithy of the Remove had had his share of them. But never had he been so utterly surprised as at the present moment.

It was the sort of thing that no fellow could have foreseen. How could any fellow guess, or surmise, or even dream, that when he walked down to the letter-box to post a letter he would be suddenly caught in the eye by a juicy, over-ripe tomato?

Yet that was what had happened! The collection was almost due, and Smithy had cut down to the letter-box, passing Coker of the Fifth on the way. Coker of the Fifth was far too lofty and dignified a fellow to hurry, even if the post was just going. Smithy, being less lofty and dignified, got there first; he dropped his letter into the box, and was turning away, when there was a sudden whiz, and the tomato landed—squash!

That tomato was still capable of holding together, so long as it was carefully and gently handled. When it landed in Smithy's face with a sudden whop, it burst and spread all over his features. The Bounder of Greyfriars, to his great surprise, was suddenly masked with juicy tomato.

"Ooooooooooh!" spluttered Smithy, staggering away from the letter-box and grabbing wildly at a clammy face.

There was a suppressed chuckle behind the old elm near the letter-box. That massive, ancient tree grew hardly a foot from the wall, the space between leaving plenty of room for a shot, the thick old trunk affording plenty of cover for the marksman. Bunter really had planned it well. He had parked himself in astute ambush, he had heard footsteps arrive at the letter-box, he had hardly shown himself for a second round the elm as he buzzed the tomato—yet, hurried as the shot had been, it had landed fair and square on the fellow at the post-box. Having delivered the goods, Bunter backed into immediate cover again, grinning. In only one trifling detail had Bunter failed to score—he had got the wrong fellow. He had been rather too hurried for accurate observation, and Vernon-Smith of the Remove had got the tomato instead of Coker!

"Urrrrgh!" came in a frantic splutter from Smithy; and Billy Bunter barely repressed a chuckle; having no doubt that those sounds proceeded from Horace Coker of the Fifth Form. "Wurrgh! Who—groooogh—woooooogh!"

He grabbed out his handkerchief and dabbed his face. He glared round him with a juicy glare in search of the tomato-buzzer.

Nobody was to be seen; only the burly form of Coker of the Fifth, coming along the path with a letter in his hand, ready for posting. Coker stared at the Bounder's juicy face and grinned. Smithy gave him a glare.

"Did you buzz that tomato, you Fifth Form booby?" he roared. As nobody else was in sight, that was Smithy's natural first impression.

"Eh! What? Think I'd play a fag trick like that?" snorted Coker disdainfully. "Don't be a cheeky young ass!"

"Then who did?" yelled Vernon-Smith. "You spindle-shanked ditherer——"

"What?" That was enough for Coker. His friends, Potter and Greene, in the Fifth, regarded him as rather a ditherer; and he might justly have been described as spindle-shanked. But he did not welcome painful truths like this from a Remove junior. He

grabbed at Smithy, caught him by the collar, and tapped his head, not gently, on the old elm. "Take that!"

"Ow!" yelled Smithy as he took it.

Coker of the Fifth gave him a glare, dropped his letter into the box, and stalked away. Herbert Vernon-Smith was left rubbing his head with one hand and a juicy face with the other.

Billy Bunter, behind the elm, was no longer grinning. He had had no doubt at first that he had "got" Coker. But the exchange of compliments between Smithy and Coker, reaching his fat ears, enlightened him. The fat Owl realised that he needed

"Oh, crikey! I—I say, Smithy, it wasn't me!" howled Bunter, in a great hurry. "I never chucked that tomato, old chap——"

"You!" yelled Smithy.

"Nunno! Not me!" gasped Bunter. "I meant it for Coker, you know—the beast stumped me in his study. I say, old fellow—yaroooh!"

Bunter dodged hurriedly.

"Keep off, you beast!" he howled. "I tell you it wasn't me—I haven't touched a tomato to-day, and I never got it from Wharton's study—and I meant it for Coker, because he studied me in his stump—I mean—whooooop!"



Billy Bunter was having a grand time wrecking Coker's study—until Mr. Prout arrived unexpectedly!

to hug cover just as carefully as if he had got Coker. Smithy was sure to be bad-tempered.

Undoubtedly he was! Between a tomato in the eye and a bang on the head, Smithy was almost in a foaming state.

Nobody was to be seen anywhere near at hand. But that tomato evidently hadn't hurled itself! Whoever had hurled it was in cover: and the only cover near was the old elm close to the school wall. It had not occurred to Billy Bunter's fat brain that the fellow getting the tomato would soon make that simple deduction. He was quite startled when Smithy came raging round the elm.

Bunter fled for his life, with the infuriated Bounder in hot pursuit. Seldom did Bunter move swiftly; generally he understudied the tortoise rather than the hare. But with a thudding boot close behind, Bunter could move. An arrow in its flight had nothing on Bunter as he hared across the quad.

Swift as he was, Smithy would have had him; but as they neared the House, the sharp voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was heard:

"Vernon-Smith! Stop this at once! Do you hear me?"

The Bounder unwillingly slowed down,

and Billy Bunter had time to dart into the House and disappear. But as he puffed and blew up the staircase, seeking refuge in the Remove, he heard footsteps behind him. He cast a terrified blink back over a fat shoulder, to glimpse a red and wrathful face close behind—so close that Bunter fairly stamped on the gas and flew.

He darted into the first doorway in the Remove passage. Five fellows jumped as a fat figure hurtled in like a cannon ball.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What——"

"Ow! Keep him off!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, keep him off! I never chucked that tommy at him, and I meant it for Coker, and—— Ow! Wow! Help!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton as the Bounder flew in after Bunter and grabbed him. "Smithy——"

Thump! Thump! Thump!

"Yaroooh! Rescue! I say, you fellows—whooooop!"

The Famous Five rushed to the rescue. Bunter, evidently, had landed that over-ripe tomato in Smithy's eye instead of Coker's, which was exactly the sort of thing Bunter would do. It was not surprising that Smithy was excited about it. Still, there was a limit, and Harry Wharton & Co. grasped the infuriated Bounder and dragged him away from Bunter by main force.

"Chuck it, old man," gasped Bob Cherry.

This CURIOUS WORLD

T. M. REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

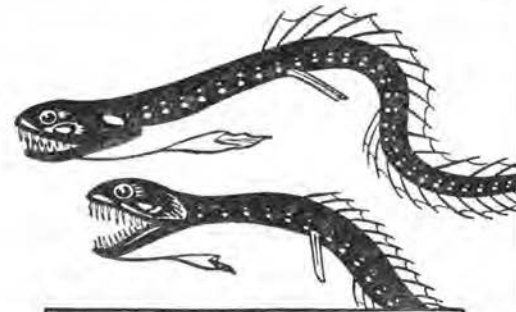
MAN HAS EXPLORED MOST OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE, RECORDING THE ANIMAL LIFE OF EACH REGION! BUT IN THE BLUE-BLACK WORLD OF THE OCEAN DEPTHS, THERE LIVE SOME OF THE PLANET'S STRANGEST CREATURES!

640 WILLIAM KERSUSON

THROUGH DEEP-SEA EXPEDITIONS AND THE USE OF DRAGNETS MANY OF THESE ODDITIES ARE NOW KNOWN TO SCIENCE.




MANY OF THESE UN-EARTHLY INHABITANTS ARE BRILLIANTLY ILLUMINATED WITH COLORED LIGHTS!



EATING ONES NEIGHBORS SEEMS TO BE THE MOST POPULAR PASTIME...

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"Ow! Wow! Yow-ow!"

"Will you let go?" yelled Smithy. "Look at my eye! I'm going to smash him into smithereens. Leggo!"

The Famous Five did not let go—they held fast. In their opinion, if not in Smithy's, Bunter had had enough.

"I say, you fellows, keep hold of him," gasped Bunter. "It was all his own fault, getting in the way while I was waiting for Coker. I say, hold him while I get the tomatoes, and I'll shove them down his back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

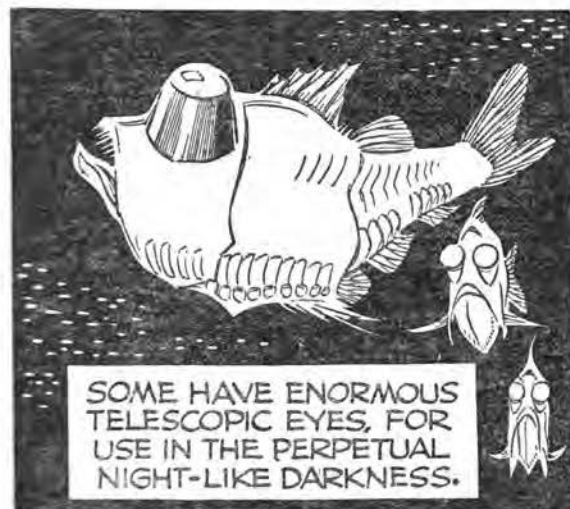
"Better go and get a wash, Smithy," said Bob Cherry. "You need one, you know.

Bunter's had enough—haven't you, Bunter? Help him out, you chaps."

Vernon-Smith was helped out of the study. Perhaps he realised that Bunter had had enough, though he would willingly have given him a little more. Anyhow, he went, and Bunter, gasping for breath, rubbed the numerous places where Smithy's thumps had landed.

"I say, Wharton, old chap, can I have another tomato? That one was wasted on Smithy. I want one for Coker——"

"Oh, my only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "And who's going to get the next, you cack-handed octopus? Quelch, perhaps——"



master—I shall demand severe punishment for this! I shall——”

“Oh, crumbs!”

“Come!” boomed Prout. A plump hand on Bunter’s collar led him from the study. That grasp did not relax for a moment till the fat Owl was marched into Mr. Quelch’s study, where the wrathful Prout boomed for three or four minutes without stopping to take breath. After which, Mr. Quelch carefully selected his stoutest cane.

Hit or Miss!

HARRY WHARTON stared.

“What are you up to here, you fat chump?” he exclaimed.

It was the following morning in break. Wharton had come up to his study for a book needed in third school. As he entered the study he had an unexpected back view of an extensive pair of trousers.

The inhabitant of those trousers was leaning out of the window, looking down into the quadrangle below. But he gave a startled ejaculation at the voice behind him, and jerked up a fat head to look round—so hurriedly that the back of it cracked on the window sash. That crack was followed by a frantic howl.

“Wow!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Ow! Wow!” Bunter rubbed the back of his head as he blinked at the captain of the Remove. “Wow! You silly ass, think it’s funny? I’ve banged my head—wow! Beast! Making a fellow jump!”

Harry Wharton laughed.

“What are you up to in my study?” he demanded.

“Don’t yell!” snapped Bunter. “If Coker heard you, he might look up! I don’t want him to see me at this window.”

“Coker!” repeated Harry.

“I spotted him in the quad,” breathed Bunter, “leaning on the buttress down there, just under this window! I’m going to get him this time. I’m going to drop this bag of flour on his head, see?”

“You howling ass, chuck it,” exclaimed Harry. “You’ll get the wrong man again——”

“Well, I’m a bit short-sighted,” admitted

Bunter. “You look down and make sure that he’s still there—make sure it’s Coker, see?”

“Look here, you burbling bandersnatch, you’d better forget all about it,” advised the captain of the Remove.

“Beast!” hissed Bunter. “Will you look down and make sure it’s Coker? I’m going to chuck this bag of flour and chance it.”

“Oh, all right!”

Harry Wharton stepped to the window and glanced down. He could see little more than the head of the fellow leaning on the buttress below; but he recognised Coker of the Fifth. This time Bunter was making no mistake. At a little distance, Wingate of the Sixth was coming along the path below the study windows. But the fellow below undoubtedly was Horace Coker.

“It’s him?” asked Bunter, too eager to regard grammar, as Wharton drew in his head.

“Yes, but——”

“That’s all right, then! Perhaps he’ll be sorry for stumping a fellow, and getting a fellow a whopping from Quelch, and kicking a fellow on his trousers, when he gets this bag on his head!” said Bunter vengefully. “What?”

Harry Wharton laughed. There was no doubt that Coker would feel sorry for himself if a large paper bag of flour burst on his head. But as Billy Bunter was what the Remove fellows called “cack-handed,” it seemed to Wharton that a miss was much more probable than a hit.

Bunter, however, had no doubts. He leaned from the window again, the bag of flour in his fat hands. He blinked down with a vengeful blink. The moment that bag left his hands he was going to pop back into the study before Coker or anyone else could look up and spot who had done it.

Whiz went the bag, falling through the air.

Bunter popped back instantly.

“He, he, he!” he gasped. “Listen!”

There was a loud, startled yell from below. That bag had landed on a head, evidently much to the surprise of its owner. The yell was followed by a frantic spluttering.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "He's had it! He, he, he!"

For a moment Harry Wharton was amazed. It really looked as if the Owl of the Remove had scored this time. Then he gave a hurried glance from the window, and jumped.

"Oh, crumbs!" he gasped.

"He, he, he! Got him!" chortled Bunter. "Got him all right——"

"You dangerous maniac!" hissed Wharton. "You haven't got Coker."

"Wha-a-at?"

"You've missed him by yards, you potty porpoise! You've got Wingate—that's Wingate smothered with flour and spluttering——"

"Oh, crikey!"

Billy Bunter ceased to chortle quite suddenly. He gazed at Harry Wharton in horror. The captain of the Remove grabbed a fat shoulder.

"Cut, you fat ass! Hook it, you potty rhinoceros! Travel, you benighted chump! You'll go up to the Head for this if they get you! Mizzle!"

"Oh, lor'!"

Wharton fairly dragged the fat Owl from the study. What would happen to Bunter for dropping a bag of flour on the head of a Sixth Form prefect, the captain of the school, hardly bore thinking of. Harry Wharton rushed him away at top speed, and they did the Remove passage in record time, Bunter puffing and blowing as he flew.

Below, in the quad, a crowd gathered round Wingate of the Sixth, smothered with flour from top to toe, clothed in flour as in a garment, gouging flour from his eyes and nose and ears, and spluttering for breath. Horace Coker, still leaning at his ease on the buttress, grinned, apparently thinking it funny.

It was two or three minutes before



"Boy! How dare you push past me like that?" cried Mr. Prout. But Billy Bunter dared not stop.

Wingate, shedding flour at every step, and breathing wrath, came hurrying up to the studies to investigate. Luckily for Billy Bunter, he was at a safe distance by that time.

Backing Up Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Scat!" said six voices in unison.

It was after prep. There were half a dozen fellows in Study No. 1. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh had dropped in, to go down with Wharton and Nugent; and then Herbert Vernon-Smith had drifted in and they were talking cricket when Billy Bunter arrived. They all said "scat" together—but Bunter did not "scat." He rolled in and shut the door after him.

"I say——" he recommenced.

"Roll away, barrel," said Harry Wharton.

"Like me to kick him out for you?" asked Smithy, perhaps remembering the tomato of the previous day.

"Oh, really, Smithy! I say, you fellows," hooted Bunter, blinking reproachfully at Harry Wharton & Co. through his spectacles. "A fellow expects his pals to back him up. After all I've done for you fellows——"

"Fathead!"

"I've mapped it all out," went on Bunter unheeding. "All you fellows have got to do is to carry out the plan. I've got the brains, you know. I've got it all cut and dried. All I need is my pals to back me up."

"Why not go and tell them, then?" asked Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Jolly good idea," said Johnny Bull heartily. "Go and tell your pals about it, Bunter, and give us a rest."

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"And shut the door after you," suggested Nugent.

"Shut up, anyhow," said Vernon-Smith.

"Beast! Look here, will you listen to a chap?" hooted Bunter. "Wouldn't you like to see that swab Coker smothered with green paint?"

"Green paint!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

Bunter chuckled.

"That's the idea," he said. "I've snooped that big can of green paint from Gosling's shed—the paint he does fences with, you know. Fancy Coker with that can of paint up-ended over his head. What? He, he, he!"

Bunter's fat chuckle was echoed in Study No. 1. Half a dozen fellows seemed amused by the idea of Horace Coker bonneted with a can of green paint. Certainly, such a sight was likely to be entertaining—to the spectators, at least, though hardly to Coker.

"So that's the big idea, is it?" asked Bob.

"That's it," grinned Bunter.

"And you're going to get Coker to stand still like a good boy while you up-end a can of paint over his napper?" inquired Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Oh, no! Some of you fellows are going to do that," explained Bunter.

"Are we?" said the fellows all together. They seemed to doubt it!

"Just that," said Bunter with a nod. "Coker's gang have gone down, after prep,

you know. There's nobody in Coker's study. Easy as winking for some of you fellows to park yourself in his study with that can of paint. One of you would be enough really—you park yourself in the study with that can of paint, Bob——"

"Do I?" grinned Bob.

"Yes! Then I get Coker to come up to his study, see? Look here, suppose I tell him some fags are larking in his study? That will fetch him up, you bet. He would come up three stairs at a time. You'll be ready in the study, Bob——"

"I hardly think so," chuckled Bob.

"I wish you'd listen to a chap instead of jawing," said Bunter peevishly. "You'll be in the study with that can of paint. Coker rushes in——"

"And rushes into me?" asked Bob. "Thanks."

"You haven't heard it all yet——"

"We've heard about enough, old fat man. Go and tell some other chaps the rest."

"Coker rushes in and gets the paint——" resumed Bunter.

"And then I get six from Quelch for painting Coker, if I get out of the Fifth Form passage alive?" asked Bob.

"Will you listen to a chap? I tell you I've mapped it all out. Coker won't see you in the study, and won't know who mopped the paint over him——"

"You're going to get him to come up with his eyes shut?"

"No!" yelled Bunter. "But the study will be all dark——"

"He wouldn't switch on the light as he came in?"

"No, he wouldn't if you took the lamp out. If the lamp ain't there he can switch on as much as he likes without getting a light."

"Oh!" said Bob. Evidently Billy Bunter had been thinking this out. His fat brain seemed to have worked to some purpose for once.

"By gum!" said Vernon-Smith. His eyes gleamed and he rubbed a spot on his head where it had contacted the trunk of an elm the previous day. "The fat ass seems to have thought it out. It would work."

"Brains, you know," said Bunter compla-

cently. "All you've got to do, Cherry, is to carry out my instructions carefully. You'll do it, old chap?"

"Not at all!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Not the least little bit in the world," said Bob cheerily, "and now you've done your funny turn, old fat man, roll away like a good barrel."

"I say, Wharton, you ain't so funky as Bob. You've got lots of pluck," said Bunter. "I've always admired your pluck, Harry, old chap."

"Thanks!"

"I mean it," said Bunter. "I'm not just buttering you because I want you to paint Coker, you know——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pluckiest chap at Greyfriars, and chance it," said Bunter. "You'll do it, won't you, Harry, old fellow?"

"Not at all!"

"I say, Nugent, you've got tons more pluck than Wharton and Cherry put together! You ain't funky, are you?"

"I hope not."

"You'll do it, won't you, old chap?"

"Not at all!"

"I say, Inky, what about you?"

"Nothing about me, my esteemed fat Bunter," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"All of you afraid of Coker?" sneered Bunter. "All except Bull—you've got tons of pluck. Bull—Yorkshiremen aren't afraid of anything. You're going to do it, ain't you, old fellow?"

"Not at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five in intense exasperation. As a last hope he turned to the Bounder.

"I say, Smithy, you've got ten times more pluck than all that bunch put together. Will you——"

"I'm on," said Smithy.

Billy Bunter's face brightened.

"Don't be an ass, Smithy," said Harry Wharton. "Coker stumped Bunter for getting after his tuck, and serve him right——"

"I'm going to give Coker something for

banging my head on a tree," answered Smithy. "He can stump Bunter till he wears out a whole cricket outfit, but he can't bang my head on a tree without hearing about it afterwards. If you've got that can of paint——"

"It's in my study, old chap! Come on!" said Bunter eagerly.

"Smithy, you ass——" said Bob.

"Rats!" said Smithy.

And he followed Bunter from Study No. 1. Billy Bunter grinned as he went. Coker, at long last, was going to be paid in full; that stumping was going to be avenged!

Done in the Dark!

"COKER, old chap——"

Horace Coker glanced at Billy Bunter. His glance was expressive.

"Did you say 'old chap,' Bunter?" he asked.

"Eh? Oh! Yes——"

"Then don't," said Coker. "I stumped you yesterday for getting after my tuck, Bunter, and I've booted you to-day for ragging in my study. If you want some more, you've only got to call me 'old chap' again!"

Billy Bunter breathed hard. Coker of the Fifth was far too lofty a personage to be addressed as "old chap" by a mere junior: an inconsiderable microbe in Coker's lofty eyes.

"Oh, all right!" retorted Bunter. "If you don't want to know that I heard fags larking in your study, I jolly well won't tell you."

"What?" exclaimed Coker. "Fags larking in my study! By gum! I'll give 'em larks!"

Coker whirled round and started for the stairs at once. Billy Bunter grinned at his back. Coker had fallen for this at once, just as the astute fat Owl had expected that he would. The bare idea of fags larking in his study was more than enough to rouse Coker's deepest ire.

Smithy was waiting in Coker's study, just inside the door, with that big can of green paint from Gosling's shed. The study was in deep darkness—the lamp removed from the socket. The landing light reached only

very dimly up the passage. Coker wouldn't and couldn't see a thing. He would arrive in his study in hot haste—most likely rush in like a bull! And then——

No wonder Billy Bunter grinned, a grin so wide that it looked as if it might almost meet round his fat head. Coker, with a wrathful face, already had a step on the stair: all was going well—for Bunter! But at that moment a deep voice boomed.

"Coker!"

It was Mr. Prout. Billy Bunter gave him an irritated blink. He did not want any interruption at this stage. Neither did Coker; but he paused and looked round at the voice of his Form-master.

"Yes, sir."

"Have you done your lines, Coker?"

"Oh! No, sir. I——"

"Yesterday," boomed Prout, "I doubled your imposition, Coker, because it had not been written. I directed you to bring the lines to my study before preparation this evening. You have not done so, Coker."

Coker breathed harder. He would have liked to explain to Prout that he had no time for him and his rot! But even Horace Coker couldn't explain that to a Form-master.

"I warn you, Coker, that this will not do!" boomed Prout. "You will now go to my study immediately, Coker, where I shall deal with you! Go!"

"But, sir——"

"Immediately," thundered Prout. "This instant! How dare you argue with me, Coker? Do you desire me to send you to your headmaster? Go to my study this instant."

Billy Bunter, quite unnoticed by Mr. Prout, gave that portly gentleman an infuriated blink. Everything was set for the performance in Coker's study, and now Prout had to butt in! Prout did not even notice that a fat Removite was there. His eyes were fixed sternly on Coker. His plump hand was raised to point.

"Go!" he boomed.

"I—I—I've just heard that there's fags ragging in my study, sir——" stammered Coker. "I—I was going up——"

"That is immaterial, Coker! If there are

Lower boys in a Fifth Form study, I will look into it! Go to my study and wait for me there."

"But, sir——" objected Coker.

"GO!" Prout almost roared. And Coker, realising that there was no help for it, suppressed his feelings as best he could, and went.

Prout cast a stern glance after him, and then turned to the stairs.

Billy Bunter caught his breath.

"Oh, crikey!" he breathed.

He blinked at Prout. Prout was going up—to Coker's study! If there were Lower boys ragging in a Fifth Form study, certainly it was a matter for the Fifth Form-master to look into: and Prout was going to look into it! But in Coker's study lurked Smithy, with that can of paint! It was as dark there as the inside of a hat—Smithy was expecting Coker, and he wouldn't see Prout—what was going to happen?

Billy Bunter's fat brain almost swam at the idea of Prout getting that can of paint intended for Coker!

Prout must not get that can of paint! That was clear to the fat Owl's terrified mind. He had to stop that somehow!

There was no time to lose. Prout moved to slow motion, but he moved. It was only a matter of minutes——

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Bunter.

He rushed after Prout. There was only one thing to be done—to get to Coker's study ahead of Prout, warn the Bounder of what was coming, and get him away with that can of paint before Prout arrived. Fortunately, though time was short, there was time enough for that if Bunter put on speed. And in the dire circumstances even Billy Bunter was capable of speed.

"What—what?" Prout ejaculated, as a fat figure shot past him on the staircase. "Boy! How dare you rush past me like that? Do you hear me? How dare you?"

Bunter heard him—but he heeded not! He shot on up the staircase at a speed that was simply marvellous, considering the weight he had to carry. He disappeared on the study landing before Prout was half-way up. Prout gave an angry snort, and made a mental note to report Bunter's unmannerly

conduct to Mr. Quelch. Little cared Bunter at the moment. There was only one thought in his fat mind—to get to Coker's study in time, before that awful catastrophe happened.

He streaked across the study landing. He galloped into the Fifth Form passage. Breathless, gasping, he reached Coker's study. He was going to say "I say, Smithy," as he entered, but that wild rush up the stairs had deprived him of breath, of which he never had an ample supply. He only gasped for breath as he rushed into Coker's study—which was unfortunate in the circumstances. A word would have warned Smithy—a gasp, naturally, did not.

All the Bounder knew was that somebody, as expected, was rushing into the study in the dark. Another few seconds and Bunter would have got a word out. But Smithy, as arranged, acted promptly and with despatch.

Swoosh!

"Gurrrrrggh!" gurgled Bunter.

Something wet and clammy descended on the fattest head at Greyfriars. It was followed by an inverted tin can, which fitted on that fat head like a hat. And Vernon-Smith, his deadly work done, cut out of the study and ran—leaving behind him a figure that staggered wildly to and fro, gurgling horribly, with its head in a can of green paint.

Beastly for Bunter!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"You've done it?"

Harry Wharton & Co. all looked at Herbert Vernon-Smith as he strolled into Study No. 1 with a grin on his face. Smithy had put on speed in getting out of the Fifth

Form quarters; but he strolled into Harry Wharton's study quite at his ease, with his hands in his pockets, grinning.

"You've painted Coker?"

"Sort of," drawled the Bounder.

"There'll be a row," said Johnny Bull.

"There was rather a row when I left. It sounded like a grampus gurgling.

"You've really left Coker with his head in a can of green paint?" exclaimed Nugent. "It's too jolly thick, Smithy."

"Coker's head, do you mean? Much too thick," agreed the Bounder. "It's because his head's so thick that these things happen to him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, that fat porpoise seems to have brought it off this time," remarked Bob Cherry. "Seems to have gone like clock-work."

"Quite!" chuckled Smithy. "I hadn't to wait more than ten minutes. Then I heard him rushing up the passage, and he rushed in, in the dark—he never saw me, and I never saw him—but he got the paint—about a gallon, I think, with the can fitting on his head like his Sunday hat! I rather fancy we shall hear something from the Fifth soon."

"I fancy all Greyfriars will hear Coker, if he's got a gallon of paint and a can stuck on his napper," said Bob. "Let's go and gather the news, my infants."

"Come on," said Smithy, "Coker will be worth seeing! I think I can hear sounds of alarm already."

The juniors left the study and hurried out on the landing. "Sounds of alarm" were certainly audible from the Fifth Form passage. There was an almost unearthly

CHUCKLES! . . .



sound of gasping, gurgling, guggling and spluttering, and five or six voices in tones of astonishment.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he is!"

A strange figure staggered out of the Fifth Form passage to the landing. All eyes fixed on it.

Mr. Prout, his slow progress up the staircase completed, had just reached the top and stepped on the landing. He very nearly fell backwards again at the strange and startling sight that met his eyes.

"What—what—what——" stuttered Prout.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not heed Prout. They were staring blankly at the extraordinary apparition that had merged from the Fifth Form quarters.

The hapless recipient of the can of paint had disengaged his head from the can. But he could not disengage it from the paint. Green paint smothered him—it was thick in his hair, it was oozing into his ears, it covered his face like a green mask, it caked and almost hid his spectacles, it ran in streams down his neck and over his clothes. That strange figure was like a walking pillar of paint. Horrid sounds came from it.

"Urrrggh! Wirrrggh! Grooooh! Ooooh!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry. He grasped the Bounder's arm. "Smithy! You ass—that's not Coker——"

"Oh, gad!" breathed the Bounder. "But—but—it was—it must be—he rushed in, and—and—and——"

Smithy broke off in utter puzzlement. He had had no doubt that it was Coker and that all had gone according to plan. But seen in the light, that figure was far from tall enough for Coker—and it was too wide! It wasn't Coker! It had Coker's paint on, but it certainly was not Coker!

"Who the dickens——" murmured Harry Wharton. "It's not Coker, but who——"

"Bunter!" howled Bob. "It's Bunter—he's got specs on under the paint—and he's too wide for anybody else—Bunter."

"Bunter!" said Smithy dazedly.

"Urrrggh! Gurrnggh! Oh, crikey! Wooooh! I'm smothered! Wurrnggh! I'm chook-chook-chick—choking——"

The painted object was hardly recognisable. But it was evidently Bunter. The Bounder could only blink at him. Why Bunter, after planning for Coker to rush into the study in the dark and get the paint, had himself rushed into the study in the dark and got the paint, was a deep mystery to Smithy. But only too evidently he had!

"Gurrnggh! Ooooooh! I say, you fellows, I'm all painty—I'm all sticky—I say, ooooooooooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wooooooooooooooh!"

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Prout. "What—what—who—who——"

"Goooooooooooooh!" Billy Bunter spluttered and gurgled, and clawed at paint. "I say, you fellows, look at me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That idiot Smithy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This way, old man," gasped Bob Cherry. "What you want is a bath—lots of hot water, and lots of soap and a scrubbing brush—this way!" Bob carefully selected a small section of Bunter that was not sticky with paint, grasped it, and led him away. Prout stared after him as he went, like a man in a dream—little dreaming of his own narrow escape! Everyone else was howling with laughter. But Bunter did not heed Prout—and he did not heed the laughter—he heeded nothing but the green paint. For the present, the green paint occupied Bunter's whole attention.

And for a whole hour, until the bell rang for dorm, Billy Bunter wallowed in hot water and a lather of soap, and scraped and scrubbed, and scrubbed and scraped, and repented from the very bottom of his fat heart that he had ever thought of canning Coker!

The next day there was still a glimmering of green about Bunter. And it was a very angry and irritable Owl. Everybody else seemed to think it frightfully funny: only Bunter, like the old Queen, was not amused! And he was quite fed up with his campaign against Coker of the Fifth—Billy Bunter was no longer on the war-path!

THE END