

KNOCKOUT FUN BOOK 1955



I'LL HAVE THE LOT!

BILLY BUNTER'S CONSTANT COMPLAINT IS THAT HE GETS THE BLAME FOR EVERYTHING. BUT ON THIS OCCASION THE FINAL JUDGMENT WAS—

BILLY BUNTER— *NOT GUILTY*

A Smashing Story of Greyfriars

By **FRANK RICHARDS**



SNOOP scowled. Bunter grinned. The next moment Billy Bunter ceased to grin, as Sidney James Snoop made a rush with the evident intention of delivering a kick.

Billy Bunter, in his fat career, had often been kicked. But he had never grown to like it. So, as Snoop rushed, Bunter revolved rapidly on his axis, and departed from the spot on his highest gear.

He bolted up the Form-room passage. It was just Bunter's ill-luck that as he whizzed past the door of the Remove Form-room, that door opened and Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove, came out.

Snoop, catching a distant glimpse of Quelch, called off the pursuit at once, and vanished into space.

Unfortunately for Bunter, he couldn't vanish. He crashed into his Form-master with a terrific crash.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oooooogh!" spluttered Bunter.

Quelch staggered against the wall, almost up-ended by the shock. Billy Bunter sat on the floor, and spluttered breathlessly.

The look the Remove master fixed on the junior sitting at his feet was one the fabled Gorgon could hardly have rivalled.

"Bunter! You utterly stupid boy! How dare you race about the corridors in that manner, without looking where you are going?"

"I—I—I—ooogh——"

"Get up at once! You will be given detention for the afternoon. I have a great mind to cane you. Come."

"But I—I—I say——" stuttered Bunter.

"Come!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Follow me at once."

The hapless fat Owl of the Remove tottered to his feet. Dismally he followed his Form-master. It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and Billy Bunter could think of many happier ways of passing a half-holiday than sitting in Extra School. But there was no help for it, and with a lugubrious fat face, he followed his Form-master to No. 10 class-room. In that apartment, six or seven fellows were suffering under Monsieur Charpentier, the detention master. Quelch opened the door, and spoke a word to Mossoo. Bunter rolled in, and joined the detention class. Quelch, still frowning and a little breathless, departed to join Mr. Prout for an afternoon's walk, leaving William George Bunter to add to his limited knowledge of French irregular verbs.

THAT fat smudge Bunter——" said Snoop.

"Oh, leave Bunter alone," said Stott. "It was your own fault. Bunter

snooped a box of choes from Smithy, and you snooped it from Bunter—Smithy caught you scoffing the choes and pitched into you. Well, that wasn't Bunter's fault—it was yours."

Snoop scowled. The fact that the terrific licking he had received from Smithy was his own fault did not seem to comfort him. Several days had elapsed since, but he still remembered how hard the Bounder had punched.

"Well, it's that fat frump's turn to get licked, and he's going to get it from Quelch," he snapped. "And I know how. I want a fellow to keep cave while I fix it up for him."

"Rot!" said Stott, and he tramped out of No. 11 study and slammed the door after him.

Snoop scowled at the door, and then looked inquiringly at Skinner. Harold Skinner nodded and grinned. Skinner had his own grudges against the fattest member of the Form, and he was a willing recruit.

"What's the big idea?" he asked.

"Quelch has gone out," said Snoop. "I watched him go off with Prout. Nobody's in his study, and any fellow who liked could get at his typewriter."

"Um!" said Skinner dubiously. "Better leave that alone! Quelch types that tripe he calls his History of Greyfriars on that machine, and if anything happened to it——"

"Nothing's going to happen to it, fat-head! I'm on Bunter's track, not Quelch's. But suppose a fellow typed a message on a sheet of paper for Quelch, and left it in the machine—something about Quelch being a beast who ought to be sacked, or something like that——"

Skinner jumped. "You ass! Quelch would raise Cain. He will be tapping on that typer when he comes in from his walk, and if he finds a message like that on it, I wouldn't like to be the fellow who left it there——"

"He will think it was Bunter."

"Why on earth should he?"

"Is there any fellow in the Remove who spells like Bunter?" asked Snoop.

"Oh!" Skinner whistled. "My hat! Why, Bunter played a trick like that once, chalking something on the blackboard, and Quelch spotted him from the spelling——"

"That's what put it into my head!" said Snoop coolly. "What's Quelch to think, when he finds it there—in Bunter's spelling?"



Billy Bunter crashed into Mr. Quelch with a terrific crash!

"Same as he did before," said Skinner.

"Well, Quelch is out now," said Snoop. "You keep cave in the passage, while I nip into his study—it won't take a couple of minutes——"

"Where's Bunter?" asked Skinner.

"Loafing about somewhere, I suppose—frowsting over the fire in the Rag most likely, or looking for some fellow to touch for a tanner," sneered Snoop. "I fancy he will get it tougher from Quelch than I did from Smithy if this works—and it can't fail! Come on."

"I'm on," grinned Skinner. "If the coast's clear, O.K."

The two young rascals found the coast clear. Nobody was about Masters' Studies when they arrived there. Skinner posted himself at the passage window to keep "cave," and to whistle a warning if Quelch appeared in the offing. Snoop cut into Quelch's study, and whipped the cover off the typewriter.

Click! click! click! Anyone passing that Cane in hand, with Gorgonic grimness was there occupied with his celebrated History of Greyfriars, as he generally was on a half-holiday. Click! click! click!

Two or three minutes were enough for Snoop to type out the message which was to cause Billy Bunter to receive the licking of his life. Then, leaving the typed sheet on the roller, he replaced the cover, cut back to the door and left the study. He felt a momentary pang of dismay at the sight of Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth, coming along the passage from Common-room. But Capper, though he saw him, gave him no heed; there was nothing unusual in a Remove junior coming out of the Remove master's study. Snoop walked away with as careless an air as he could assume, and rejoined Skinner.

They left the House together. In the quad, Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were punting a footer. Bob Cherry was in Extra that afternoon, for the sin of sliding down the banisters, and his friends were punting the ball while they waited for him to come out. That Billy Bunter had been walked into Extra by his incensed

Form-master, nobody knew nor cared—though perhaps Snoop would have cared, had he known!

"UPON my word!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

Quelch had come in from his walk in quite a good temper. He had walked Mr. Prout almost off his plump legs, but Quelch was not in the least fatigued, and now he was in his study, prepared to spend a pleasant hour on that History of Greyfriars which was the companion and solace of his leisure. His face was quite cheery as he lifted the cover from the typewriter. And then his cheery smile was replaced by a thundercloud.

"Upon my word!" he repeated.

On the roller of the machine was a sheet of paper. On that paper a sentence typed in capital letters leaped to Quelch's eye:

**QUELCH IS A BEEST AND A BROOT.
HE ORT TO BE SAKKED.**

Mr. Quelch gazed at it. His brows contracted: his eyes glinted: his lips set. If Sidney James Snoop could have seen him at that moment, he would not have doubted that the author of that message—or its supposed author—was booked for the time of his life!

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch for the third time. "Bunter! That absurd—that impertinent—that insolent—young rascal, Bunter."

It did not occur to him to doubt.

With the grimmest of faces, Mr. Quelch picked up his cane. Bunter had done this! He remembered that he had sent Bunter into Extra School, before going out with Prout. It was not yet time for Extra to be dismissed. But Monsieur Charpentier must have allowed Bunter out of No. 10 classroom on some excuse, or Bunter could not have done this. Well did Quelch know Bunter's dodges for getting out of a class—his inventions and excuses were inexhaustible. Bunter had got out for a few minutes at least—for here was proof, typed on Quelch's own machine!

Cane in hand, with outraged grimness

in his brow, Mr. Quelch left his study and made his way to No. 10 class-room, there to bestow on William George Bunter, as Snoop anticipated, the licking of his fat life.

"**W**ARE beaks!" murmured Johnny Bull. "Quelch looks shirty."

Four juniors were in the corridor near the door of No. 10 class-room. Harry Wharton and Co. had come in to meet Bob Cherry in the corridor when Extra School came out. They could not fail to note the grimness of Quelch's brow as he came along, and they assumed their meekest and mildest manner.

But Quelch hardly noticed them, as he passed and opened the class-room door. He rustled in, interrupting French irregular verbs. Mossoo's squeaky voice floated out.

"You, Sherry! Zat is all wrong! Ecoutez, donc! Je vous dis——" Mr. Quelch's sudden entrance cut off the squeak, rather to the relief of Bob Cherry.

Monsieur Charpentier glanced round at the Remove master. All the detention class glanced at him, Billy Bunter blinking at him morosely through his big spectacles. The fat Owl of the Remove was not enjoying irregular verbs, and he certainly did regard his Form-master disrespectfully as both a "broot" and a "beest." Rather to his surprise, Quelch's gimlet-eyes fixed on him. He had done nothing, so far as he knew, since crashing into Quelch at the Form-room door, and he was in Extra for that exploit. Yet it seemed that Quelch had come on his account.

"You will excuse this interruption, Monsieur Charpentier," said Mr. Quelch, "I have to deal with Bunter at once."

"Mais oui, sair," said Mossoo, puzzled. "Comme vous voulez, monsieur."

"Bunter! Stand out before the class!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, crikey!"

"Do you hear me, Bunter?"

"Oh! No! I mean, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I haven't done anything, sir. If—if it's about a pie, I—I don't know anything about it, sir. Besides, that was yesterday, sir, and——"

"I have told you to stand out before the class, Bunter."

"Oh, lor'! "

The fat Owl of the Remove almost crawled out of his place. The detention class all watched him as he went; at the doorway Harry Wharton and Co. looked in.

"Bunter! During my absence from my study this afternoon, you visited the study and typed an insolent message on my typewriter!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice. "I shall cane you with the utmost severity, Bunter. You will bend over that desk."

Billy Bunter almost fell down! He goggled at Quelch through his big spectacles in amazement and terror.

"I—I—I didn't!" he gasped. "I—I never—I didn't—I wouldn't—I—I wasn't—I never wouldn't—I—I meant I wasn't didn't——"

"That you wrote that insolent message, Bunter, is demonstrated by the spelling, as on a similar recent occasion," said Mr. Quelch.

"But I never didn't—I wasn't wouldn't—I—I——" stuttered Bunter.

"Bend over that desk!"

"If you please, sir——" Bob Cherry broke in.

"You need not speak, Cherry!"

"But, sir——"

"Silence!"

"I've got to speak, sir!" said Bob determinedly. "If anything's happened in your study this afternoon, sir, it wasn't Bunter—he's been here ever since you brought him here, sir."

"Nonsense."

"It wasn't me," wailed Bunter. "I haven't been in your study, sir—I—I hope you can take my word, sir——"

"I cannot take the word of the most untruthful boy in my Form, Bunter. I have no doubt that you left this class-room on some invented excuse, to play this trick in my study. Bend over that desk!"

"But Bunter never left the class-room, sir!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Monsieur Charpentier will tell you, sir, that he hasn't been out."

"Mais si, si, si!" Monsieur Charpentier

chimed in. "C'est vrai—zat is true, sair! Depuis—since zat you bring Bunter to zis class-room, he stay here all ze time—he do not go out for vun moment—all ze time he is here undair mes yeux—undair my own eyes, sair."

"What?"

"Je vous en assure, sair——"

Mr. Quelch paused. He had not had a doubt—not the shadow of a doubt! But he had to doubt now!

"Monsieur Charpentier! Are you certain of this?" he exclaimed. "Are you certain that this boy Bunter has not left your class-room since I brought him here an hour ago?"

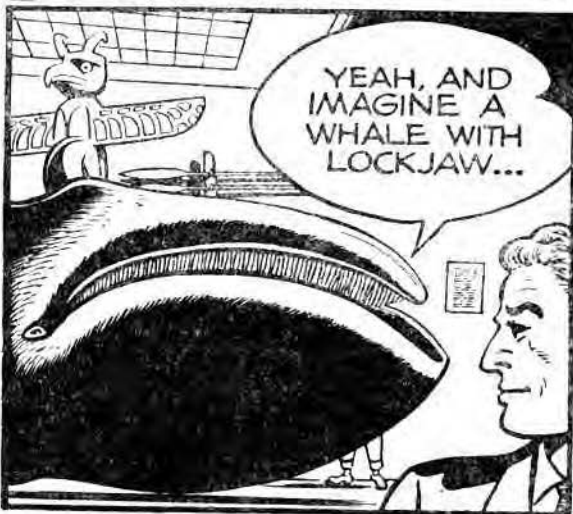
"J'en suis sur—I am sure of zat, sair! All ze time he had been here, making ze mistakes in ze verbs, sair."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch, blankly.

He gazed at Bunter! It had been Bunter's spelling on the typewriter, there was no doubt about that.

"Bless my soul!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "Bunter! You may go back to your place, I shall investigate this matter further."

Thankfully Billy Bunter rolled back to his place. Quelch, greatly perplexed, and grimmer than ever, rustled out of No. 10 class-room.



BILLY BUNTER had thought that his luck was sadly out when he was marched into Extra that afternoon. But he realised that his luck was in! For had Billy Bunter been anywhere but under a master's eye, he would indubitably have been found guilty on circumstantial evidence. His luck, undoubtedly, was in—for even French irregular verbs were better than Quelch's cane on his fat trousers.

As it was, Quelch, as he had said, investigated further. That was all that was needed: for inquiry elicited the fact that Mr. Capper had seen Snoop of the Remove leaving his Form-master's study that after-

noon, a circumstance to which Mr. Capper had attached no importance whatever at the time, and would never have dreamed of mentioning, but for Quelch's inquiries, but to which Mr. Quelch attached very much importance indeed when he heard it. And Sidney James Snoop was sent for.

Snoop had anticipated that that message typed on Quelch's machine would be followed by a tremendous licking, and he was right. It all went according to plan, except that it was not Billy Bunter who was the recipient of that tremendous licking, but Sidney James Snoop!

THE END

