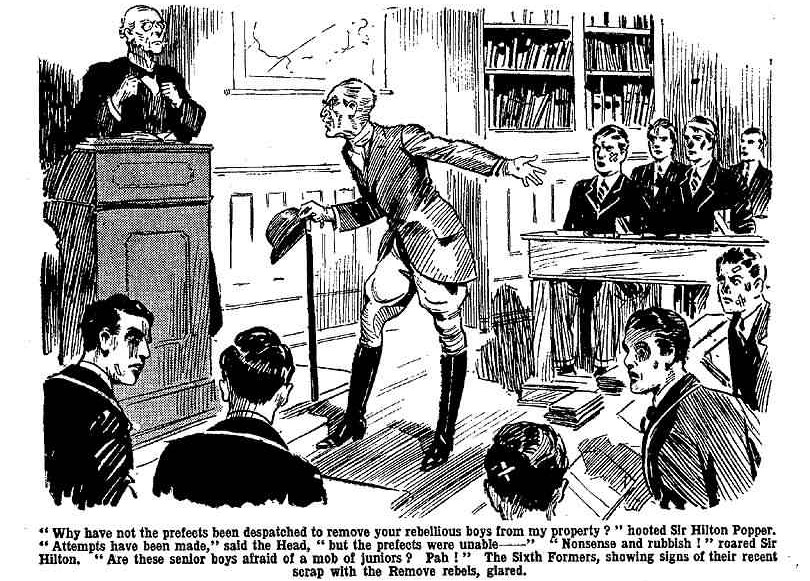
   
  
  
 **THE ISLAND SCHOOLBOYS!  
  
 BY FRANK RICHARDS**

**The First Chapter.  
  
 Out of School!**  
CLANG, CLANG, CLANG!  
 Sharp rang the bell in the sunny July morning.   
Soot and the fans say It was the rising bell Greyfriars Remove. But it was not the bell they were accustomed to hear in their dormitory at the old school. It swung from a branch of the big oak on Popper’s Island, in the River Sark, and it was Bob Cherry who was ringing it with his usual vigour.  
 A mile away, at Greyfriars school, Gosling was clanging the rising bell as usual. There, the Sixth and the Fifth, the Shell and the Fourth, the Third and the Second, yawned and turned out. But not the Remove! The Remove were far from their usual quarters.  
 Neither did they turn out so promptly on Popper’s Island as they had been accustomed to do in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars. Bob Cherry clanged the bell on the oak branch with terrific vim. It was felt all over the island in the river; far away on both banks; it might almost have been heard at Greyfriars.  
 All the rebels at Greyfriars heard it; but many of them did not heed. There were no classes for the Form that had marched out of Greyfriars and camped on Popper’s Island. There were no masters and no prefects. Instead of turning out, many fellows yawned and turned over, and went to sleep again. Billy Bunter’s echoing snore was checked only for a moment. Then it was resumed, like a deep bass accompaniment to the clang of the bell.  
 Vernon-Smith put his head out of a bell-tent.  
 “Stop that fearful row!” he shouted.  
 “Turn out, Smithy! called back Bob cheerily.  
 “Rats to you!”  
 “Rising bell, old bean!”  
 “Oh, don’t be a silly ass!”  
 The Bounder drew his head in again. Having cast off the authority of head- master and Form-master, Smithy seemed to consider that he was done with authority for good.  
 Clang, clang, clang, clang  
 It was not a musical bell! It was a rusty old iron bell that had once clanged in the fog on a seagoing barge. It had been picked up cheap at Mr. Lazarus’ second hand shop in Courtfield. It was old, it was forced a, and it was cracked; but it made plenty of noise. With Bob Cherry’s muscular arm pulling at the rope, it was bound to make plenty of noise.   
 Sleep was difficult for the laziest fellow in the rebel Form. That cracked old iron bell, like Macbeth, murdered sleep!  
 “Will you stop that awful row?” yelled Skinner, sitting up in his blankets on a bed of ferns.  
 Clang, clang, clang!  
 “Aw, can it, you jay!” howled Fisher Fish. “I guess it gets my goat, a few! Pack it up, you pesky geck!”  
 Clang, clang!  
 Harry Wharton & Co. turned out promptly. They were not slackers, even if they were rebels; and they were ready to set an example of order and discipline to the Remove. Also, they were rather anxious for that bell to cease from troubling.  
 Turn out, you slackers!” roared Bob Cherry. “Buck up, Smithy! Get a move on, Toddy! Jump up, Squiff! I‘m getting tired of ringing this bell!”  
 “Not so tired as everybody else, you howling ass!” snorted Bolsover major. “Let it alone, you fathead!”  
 “You’re not up yet!”  
 “I’m not getting up yet! Stop that row!”  
 Clang, clang, clang!  
 “I say, you fellows!” Billy Bunter’s snore stopped, and he lifted a fat face and a fat head from his blankets. “ I say, make him stop that row! How’s a fellow to sleep with that fearful din going on?”  
 “The sleepfulness not the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter!” chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “Beast!”  
 “Turn out, you men!” called out Harry Wharton. “We haven’t come here to slack, you know!”  
 “Haven’t we?” growled Skinner. “I jolly well know that I’m not turning out for an hour yet.”  
 “Your mistake!” said the captain of the Remove cheerily. “You are!”  
 And Skinner did! As Wharton grasped his ankles and hooked him bodily from his blankets, he had no choice about turning out. He rolled on the greensward under the spreading branches of the oak, and roared.  
 “You cheeky rotter! Leggo! Ow!”  
 “You turning out, Snoop?”  
 “No!” snapped Sydney James Snoop.  
 “I’ll help you, old bean!”  
 “Look here------ Yarooooh”  
 Snoop rolled over Skinner.  
 Clang, clang, clang!  
 “Will you stop that row?” shrieked Vernon-Smith. “do you want to wake up everybody from Canterbury to Dover?”  
 “Why not?” answered Bob. “It’s a lovely morning, and time everybody turned out What’s the good of slacking?”  
 “They’ll hear that row at Popper Court, and know we’re here!” snarled Skinner. “You’ll have old Popper’s keepers coming along.”  
 “Let ‘em all come!” said Bob. “their bond to ret goes out sooner or later, anyhow! Its a lovely morning for a scrap!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Aren’t you getting up, Smithy?” asked Johnny Bull.  
 “No!” came an angry snort from the bell-tent.  
 “Better crawl out, old bean!”  
 “Rats!”  
 Johnny Bull grinned. He sat down on the bell-tent. There was a howl from the Bounder underneath, and he wriggled out.  
 “You silly ass!” he yelled.  
 “Look here, Smithy,” began Harry Wharton, “we’ve got to keep some sort of order in the camp---”   
 “Oh, shut up!”   
 The Bounder did not seem in a good temper. However, now that he was up, he grabbed his towel and walked down the path under the thick trees on the island for a dip in the Sark.  
 Other fellows followed his example. Bob Cherry left off ringing the bell at last, much to the relief of all concerned. The Famous Five went around the camp together, rooting out slackers. Fellows who felt entitled to another hour, or another ten minutes, gave up the disputed point, when they were rolled out in a heap, or jerked out by the ears.  
 Billy Bunter was the last, and he raised strenuous objections. Bunter never liked the rising bell at Greyfriars, and his view was that it was an absolutely rotten idea to institute one on Popper’s Island. What was the use of fellows rebelling against lo the Head, Bunter wanted to know if you couldn’t stay in bed till ten o’clock or eleven? Bunter hugged his blankets round him and glared at the Famous Five  
 “Lemme alone!” he bawled. “I’m not getting up yet! You can call me at ten if you like.”  
 “Roll him out!” said Frank Nugent.  
 “Beast! Look here, I’ll get up when brekker’s ready! said Bunter. “You can call me as soon as it’s ready---quite ready, mind---"   
 “Jump on him!” said Bob Cherry. “Now, all jump together, and see if there’s room for all of us to land at once---"  
 “Yarooooh!”  
 Billy Bunter was out of his blankets in a twinkling, without waiting for the Famous Five to jump! He did not want to ascertain whether there was room on him for five pairs of feet to land at once!  
 “Beasts! he roared.  
 “Here’s your towel, Bunter.” said Harry Wharton, laughing. “Come along and get a dip!”  
 “Shan’t!” roared Bunter. “Why, we might as well be in school at this rate! I don’t need all the washing you fellows do, either. I’m clean!”  
 “The cleanfulness is not preposterous, my esteemed Bunter!” grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.for a bathe  
 “Beast!”  
 “Poor old Bunter’s too tired to walk down to the river.” said Bob Cherry. “Let’s roll him along like a barrel.”  
 “Hear, hear!”  
 “ Go it!”  
 Billy Bunter rolled---and roared;  
 “Whoop! I say, you fellows------ Yooop! Leggo! I say, I’m going------ I---I want to go--- I---I’m just longing for a bathe------ Yarooop! Oh crikey!”  
 And Billy Bunter went---the Famous Five following him, laughing. Under the green branches that jutted out from Popper’s Island and there was a merry dashing and splashing in the water.  
 It was quite a cheerful scene that met the eyes of a tall, angular gentleman who came striding down the tow-path beside the Sark. Cheerful as it was, it did not seem to have a chilling effect on Sir Hilton Popper, the load of Popper Court. He stopped and stared at it in amazement and wrath through his eyeglass.  
  
 **THE SECOND CHAPTER.  
  
 Ordered Off!**“HALLO, hallo, hallo!”  
 “Popper!”  
 “The esteemed and ludicrous Popper!”  
 Harry Wharton & Co., treading water, looked towards the tall figure on the banp. They smiled at the expression on the face of Sir Hilton Popper. Wrath and amazement were mingled in Sir Hilton’s speaking countenance. He removed his eyeglass, rubbed it, and jammed it into his eye again, to stare at the sportive crowd in the water as though he could hardly believe what he saw through it.  
 “The dear old bean looks waxy!” remarked Smithy.   
 The waxfulness is terrific!”   
 “I guess he’s got his mad up!” remarked Fisher T. Fish, and he promptly scrambled back to the island. There was a wide space between the island and the bank of the Sark, and the bathers were far out of the old baronet’s reach. But Fishy was taking no risks.  
 Sir Hilton Popper strode down to the edge of the grassy bank. He waved an angry hand at the swimmers.  
 Bob Cherry waved back in cheery greeting.  
 “Top of the morning, sir!” he called out.  
 “What? What?”  
 “Lovely morning, sir! Enjoying life, what?”  
 “You impertinent young rascal!”  
 “Oh, my hat!” said Bob. “I’m wasting my nice manners on him.”  
 “”Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “What does this mean?” roared Sir Hilton. “How dare you bathe here? What are you doing on my island? You ase Greyfriars boys! Why are you not in school!”  
 “We’ve cleared out of Greyfriars for the present, sir!” answered Harry Wharton.  
 “You have—what?” ejaculated Sir Hilton. “Do you mean to say that you are out of school without leave?”  
 “You’be got it!” said the Bounder.  
 “I heard from my keepers that a number of vagrants had camped on my island. I find that they are Greyfriars boys!” exclaimed Sir Hilton. “Get yourselves dressed at once, and return to the school. I shall see that you are all severely punished for this outbreak”  
 “Thanks awfl’y, sir!” drawled that Mauleverer.  
 “You are aware that I am a governor of the school!” roared Sir Hilton. “You will obey my commands at once.”  
 “I don’t think!” grinned the Bounder.  
 “Wharton! You are head boy of this Form, I believe?”  
 “Right on the nail!”  
 “Do not answer me in that absurd and impertinent manner, Wharton! As you are head boy, see that all the young rascals return to the school at once.”  
 Harry Wharton looked round at a swarm of grinning faces that dotted the sunny water. Then he looked at the irate Sir Hilton.  
 “I can’t see any here, sir!” he answered.  
 “What? You cannot see any what?”  
 “Any young rascals, sir!” answered Harry. “If you mean the young gentlemen of the Greyfriars Remove------”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Wharton! If you get to bandy words with me, I shall lay my stick about you!” roared the lord of Popper Court.  
 “Do not answer me in that absurd and impertinent manner, sir.” said the captain of the Remove in a cheery parody of Sir Hilton. And there was a howl of laughter from the rebels of Greyfriars.  
 Sir Hilton’s face, already pink with wrath, became crimson. He had a stick under his arm, and he grasped it, and brandished it at the grinning juniors. It was an unfortunate for them that they were far out of his reach, or certainly that stick would have taken toll. The testy old gentleman stamped out to the very edge of the grassy bank, where it overhung the Sark. But there was no swimmer within reach of the brandished stick. Skinner and Snoop and two or three more fellows followed Fishy’s example and retreated on to the island. But most of the Remove remained where they were, only taking care to give the lord of Popper Court, and his stick, a wide berth.  
 “Joyce!” roared Sir Hilton.  
 A burly man in velveteens and gaiters came out of the wood. There was a faint grin on his weather-beaten face, as he glanced at the juniors. But his mood became gravity itself as Sir Hilton’s fiery eye turned on him.  
 “ Joyce! Drive these young scoundrels away from this spot!” rapped Sir Hilton Popper.  
 “Oh, yes, Sir Hilton!” gasped the keeper.  
 He blinked at his lord and employer and then blinked at the Removites. Probably he did not quite see how he was to drive away thirty fellows, especially as he had no means of getting at them, unless he swam for it.  
 “Joyce!” called out Harry Wharton.  
 “Eh! Yes, Master Wharton.”  
 “You are Sir Hilton’s head keeper, I believe?” said the captain of the Remove, in playful imitation of Sir Hilton’s remarks to himself.  
 “Yes, sir!”  
 “As you are head keeper, see that that old duffer returns to Popper Court at once!” said Wharton.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!” yelled the Removites.  
 Sir Hilton gurgled. Wharton’s parody of his own words made the juniors yell, but it did not seem to amuse Sir Hilton in the least. And  
 “You---you---you young ruffian!” he gasped. “I will have you expelled from Greyfriars for this! Joyce! You are laughing! How dare you laugh, Joyce? I repeat, how dare you?”  
 “I*---*I---I---” stammered Joyce.  
 “You should have prevented these young rascals trespassing on my island! What do I pay you for?” roared Sir Hilton. “Wharton!”  
 “Barge on, old bean!”  
 “I shall go to the school and see your headmaster! I shall insist on all of you being taken back to school at once, soundly flogged, and the ring leaders expelled. Nothing less will satisfy me.”  
 “Then I’m afraid you’re booked to stay unsatisfied, sir!” answered the captain of the Remove. “We’re not going back till the Head comes to our terms. You see, he’s sacked a Remove man for nothing, and we’re not letting him go------"  
 “I say, you fellows------”  
 “Do you mean to tell me that your headmaster is allowing you two remain out of school?” exclaimed Sir Hilton.  
 “He can’t exactly help it.” answered the captain of the Remove. “He sent the Sixth Form prefects after us, and we whopped them---”  
 “You--- you what?”  
 “Whopped them!”  
 “The whopfulness was terrific.”  
 “And they were jolly glad to get away!” chortled Bob Cherry. “ We haven’t seen them since. They’re not keen to pay us a second visit.”  
 “Good gad!”  
 “We’re all here now, the whole Remove, to the last giddy man!” went on Wharton. “And we’re holding out till the Head comes round. If you’re going round to see Dr. Locke, sir, you might mention that we’re sticking to Bunter, and are not letting him be sacked. We don’t want him, of course----"  
 “Oh, really, Wharton---”  
 “Nobody could possibly want him---”  
 “Beast!”   
 “But fair play’s a jewel, and a Remove man isn’t going to be sacked for nothing! You might mention that to the Head when you see him.”  
 “You---you---you------” gasped Sir Hilton. “You---you------"  
 “Try singing, sir!” suggested Peter Todd.  
 “What?”  
 “It’s good for stuttering!” exclaimed Peter.  
 Sir Hilton was stuttering with wrath. But he did not try singing! He seemed on the point of choking.  
 “If---if---if I could reach you------” he gurgled.  
 “Jump in, sir!” suggested the Bounder. “Give him a shove in, Joyce! It will cool the old bean’s temper.”  
 Joyce turned his face away, lest Sir Hilton should suspect him of laughing again. The Lord of Popper Court brandished his stick, fatally stamping with rage.  
 “ Look out!” yelled Bob Cherry.  
 “Oh, my hat! He’s in!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Sir Hilton was on the very edge of the jutting grassy bank. That angry stamp was his undoing. It dislodged a large chunk of earth, which slipped down into the river. As Sir Hilton was standing on it, naturally he slipped down along with it.  
 Splash! Splash!  
 “Groooooooogh!”  
 “Oh jiminy!” gasped Joyce  
 Sir Hilton’s stick floated away on one side, his hat on the other. He splashed and struggled and gurgled. The keeper leaned down from the bank and grasped him. Drenched and dripping, with his eyeglass fluttering at the end of its cord, Sir Hilton was dragged out of the Sark.  
 “Gurrrrgggh!”  
 He stood with water streaming down him, his clothes clinging limply to his bony figure. He spluttered frantically.  
 “Oooogh! Oooooch! Oooo – er! Groogh!”  
 “Do it again!” yelled the   
 “Ha, ha, ha ha!”  
 Sir Hnlton Popper shook a dripping fist, turned, and stamped away up the bank in the direction of Popper Court. He had had enough of the Greyfriars rebels for the present, and he was badly in need of a towelling and a change. His gasps and gurgles died away in the distance. Joyce, the keeper, followed him, and now that Sir Hilton’s lordly back was turned, the grin on Joyce’s face extended almost from ear to ear.  
  
 **THE THIRD CHAPTER.   
  
 A Master Without a Form.**MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, looked into his Form-room at Greyfriars School with a frowning and troubled face.  
 Every other Form-room was going strong, but the Remove room was empty. That apartment was seldom the quietest at Greyfriars. Now a pin might have been heard to drop in it.   
 Mr. Quelch was a Form-master without a Form---which was a very peculiar position for any “beak.”  
 Not a man of the Lower Fourth remained within the walls of the school. Mr. Quelch, like Othello, found his occupation gone.  
 A Form-master, especially one with a numerous junior Form, is a hard worked man! So Quelch might have been expected to enjoy the rest from his usual strenuous labours. But he did not! The remove were a halt form to handle---with duffers like Bunter, slackers like Mauly, obstreperous fellows like Bolsover major, rascals like Fisher T. Fish, shady scoundrels like Skinner; but, on the whole, it was a good Form and a credit to the school, and Quelch missed it sorely. He would have been glad to see the Removites in their places and to get on with his job---he felt lost without his work. He could have taken a plus and will not faring July morning, and Quelch was a tremendous walker. But he did not want to take a walk; he wanted to take his Form! And his Form was not there to be taken!  
 Prout, the master of the Fifth, looked out of a doorway up the corridor. He spotted Quelch, and stepped out to speak.  
 “Your boys are still absent, my dear Quelch!” boomed Prout. “A most extraordinary state of affairs, what, what?”  
 “Quite!” said Quelch briefly.  
 And he walked down the corridor to the door on the quad before Prout could resume. He did not want to chin-wag from Prout. Prout really was the cause of all the trouble. It was because ink had been squirted over Prout that Billy Bunter had been sacked---and the sacking of Bunter had caused the rebellion of the Remove and their remarkable exodus from the school. Certainly Prout had not asked to be inked!  
 Quelch walked in the deserted quadrangle, green and sunny and quiet. He did not want to talk to other beaks; since the departure of his Form he had avoided Masters’ Common-room as much as possible. He was aware that the other beaks smiled, or sneered, over the present state of affairs, and told one another such things could not possibly happen in their Forms.  
 Lascelles, the maths master, pasta and in accord, but did not stop to speak. That young man had tact. He knew that Quelch, outwardly calm, was inwardly writhing. Then Monsieur Charpentier, the French Master, appeared in the offing. Mossoo came up to Quelch. Mossoo lacked tact, and he was full of sympathy.  
 “Les garcons---ze boys, zey are always of to be gone, yes?” asked Monsieur Charpentier.  
 Mr. Quelch nodded.  
 “C’est affreux!” said Mossoo. “You shall feel zis, oh yes, verree mooch! Zose young rascals------”  
 “I do not care to hear such a name applied to the boys of my Form, sir!” said Mr. Quelch stiffly.  
 “Comment?”  
 Quelch walked on, leaving Mossoo staring. Monsieur Carpentier realised that his sympathy was not appreciated. He shrugged his shoulders, and whisked away.  
 The Remove master went down to the gates. Gosling, at his lodge, clutched his ancient hat, with a very curious look at the Form-master.  
 Quelch’s peculiar position, as a master record of four, was, of course, talked of up and down Greyfriars, from end to end. Gosling had told Mr. Mimble, the gardener, that these were precious “goings-hon,” and Mr. Mimble agreed that they were. Taking no heed of Gosling’s stare, Mr. Quelch looked out of gates, up the long white road that ran over the common to Courtfield.  
 “They ain’t coming back, sir!” said Gosling. “Ain’t seed ’ide nor ’air of ’em, sir, since they ’ooked it.”  
 Quelch seemed deaf.  
 “Wot I says is this ‘ere, sir---” went on Gosling.  
 Quelch stepped out into the road . He appeared to have no use for Gosling’s entertaining conversation.  
 Nobody was to be seen on the road. If Mr. Quelch had hoped to spot some signs of returning Removites, he was disappointed. Like Sister Anne, he watched in vain to see anyone coming.  
 Presently, however, a figure appeared on the road. It was not that of a Remove junior. It was a tall and angular figure, with an eye glass gleaming in one eye and a stick under one arm.  
 Quelch compressed his lips a little as he recognised sir Hilton Popper. It was rather unfortunate but one of the governors of Greyfriars lift some near the school. He had no doubt that Sir Hilton had now learned of the strange state of affairs, and was coming along to poke his lordly nose into it. Indeed, as the rebels of Greyfriars had taken up their quarters on Poppers Island, the baronet could not have remained in ignorance of the outbreak for long.  
 Sir Hilton was frowning darkly as he came, his long legs whisking. He gave Mr. Quelch a curt nod as he came up.  
 “Good-morning, sir!” barked Sir Hilton. “I have called to see Dr. Locke; but you, sir, I think, are the master of the Remove---the boys who have taken possession of my island in the Sark.”  
 “Quite!”  
 “May I ask, sir, why you have not removed the boys of your Form from my island?” demanded Sir Hilton. “I found them there this morning, and was treated with disrespect and insolence. They refused to go at my order.”   
 “Indeed!”  
 “Yes, indeed!” snorted Sir Hilton. “Are these boys to be left, sir, wandering about the country at their own pleasure?”   
 “I understand that they are camped on the island.” said Mr. Quelch calmly. “If they wonder a word, they will probably be brought in by the key facts.”  
 Snort, from Sir Hilton.  
 Press “they are trespassing on my property, sir!” he hooted. “Do you suppose, sir, that your boys we’ll be relied to come on my property like a mall of new circuit Commo Jeff is?”  
 “On your property, sir?” repeated Mr. Quelch, with a touch of sarcasm. He was in no mood to be bully-ragged by even so great a man as Sir Hilton Popper, Baronet, chairman of the governing board of Greyfriars school.  
 “My island, sir!” hooted Sir Hilton.  
 “I am sure that my boys would not trespass on private property, sir, if they were aware of it.” said Mr. Quelch drily. “Probably take the view, general in this neighborhood, that the island in the Sark is common land, and open to any of the King’s subjects, sir!”  
 Sir Hilton gasped. This was dashed impertinence, from a man who was, after all, in Sir Hilton’s lordly view, only a dashed teacher!  
 The fact was, that Sir Hilton’s claim to that island was very nebulous. Sir Hilton’s wide estate was covered with mortgages, as with a garment. But he had found difficulties in raising a mortgage on that island. Lawyers were more particular about title deeds than was the lord of Popper Court.  
 “Sir,” gasped Sir Hlton, “if you are supporting these boys in this—this rascally rebellion and lawless trespass---”  
 “Not at all, sir---; but—”  
 “Pah!”  
 “Really, Sir Hilton—”  
 “Pah”” repeated Sir Hilton. “If you venture, sir, to make excuses for these rebellious and impudent young scoundrels---”  
 “There are some excuse is to be made, nevertheless.” said Mr. Quelch mildly. “The boys believe a member of the Form has been unjustly expelled, and they are standing by him. It is, of course, great error; but------"  
 “If you encourage these boys, sir, in attempting to dictate t the and and th o their headmaster, I shall see that you do not long retain your position of Greyfriars!” roared Sir Hilton.  
 “Kindly do not suggest that I am encouraging them!” snapped Mr. Quelch. “And as from my position at Greyfriars, sir, that does not rest in your hands. I refuse to discuss it with you!”  
 “What? What?” barked Sir Hilton. “You are aware, sir, that I am chairman of the governors! I will make it clear to you, sir, that--- Good gad! Are you going, sir, when I am speaking to you? Stop at once! I insist upon your hearing—"   
 Sir Hilton insisted in vain. Turning his back on the lord of Popper Court, Mr. Quelch walked away. Sir Hilton glared after him, almost speechless with wrath.  
 “Mr. Quelch!” he bellowed.  
 The Remove master did not turn his head.   
 “Good gad!” gasped Sir Hilton.   
 He grasped the stick under his arm, and made a stride after Henry Samuel Quelch. Really, it looked, for a moment, as if the irate lord of Popper Court was going to “whop” the back that was turned on him so disdainfully.   
 Fortunately, Sir Hilton restrained himself. With a snort, he strode on, and whisked in at the gates of Greyfriars. He was at boiling point when he arrived at the House, and demanded to see Dr. Locke.  
  
 **THE FOURTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Sir Hilton Takes a Hand!**DR. LOCKE started.  
 He was taking the Sixth Form in Greek, when a deep and booming voice became audible from without.  
 The Six Form fellows exchanged glances. Some of them grinned. They knew the voice of Sir Hilton Popper.  
 “Bless my soul!” murmured the Head.  
 He laid down Sophocles---not, perhaps, to the disappointment of the seniors. They were not so keen on Sophocles as their headmaster.  
    
  
Heavy footsteps were heard on the corridor. Then there was a startled squeak from Trotter, the House page.  
 “If you please, sir---"  
 “Where is Dr. Locke?”  
 “In the Sixth Form Room, sir! But---"  
 The heavy footsteps tramped on.  
 “Bless my soul!” repeated the Head.  
 Probably he had been expecting to hear, sooner or later, from Sir Hilton Popper. He was not anticipating the interview with any pleasure.  
 Dr. Locke was, in point of fact, rather at a loss to know how to deal with the strange situation that had arisen in the school. He was taking his time to consider the matter. In the meantime he had to carry on---and Greek with the Sixth seemed a trifle light as air to Sir Hilton. He interrupted Greek with the Sixth ruthlessly.  
 There was a sharp knock at the Form-room door, and it flew open. Sir Hilton strode in.  
 “Dr. Locke------”  
 “Good morning, sir!” said the Head mildly.  
 Sir Hilton snorted. He was not there to exchange polite greetings.  
 “Are you aware, sir, what is going on?” he demanded. “My property has been invaded by a mob of boys from this school. They refuse to leave at my order. I learned that they are remaining out of school, in defiance of authority. Is that, sir, a proper state of affairs in one of the oldest and most celebrated Public schools in the kingdom?”  
 “Not at all, Sir Hilton! But----"  
 “But what, sir?”  
 “At the present moment I am taking a class! If you would be kind enough to wait in my study------”  
 “I shall do nothing of the kind, sir!” barked Sir Hilton. “I insist upon this matter being dealt with at once! I insist upon those boys being removed from my property without delay! As a governor of the school, I insist upon discipline being maintained here! Why have not these rebellious boys been brought back to the school?”  
 “Attempts had been made------”  
 “Have you no prefects, sir?” hooted Sir Hilton. “Why have not the prefects been dispatched to fetch them in?”  
 “It has been done, sir, but they have resisted------”  
 “Nonsense!”  
 “And the prefects were unable------”  
 “Rubbish!”  
 “Really, Sir Hilton------"  
 “I repeat, sir, nonsense, and rubbish!” roared Sir Hilton. He glared at the staring Sixth. “Are these senior boys afraid of a mob of juniors? Pah!”  
 The Sixth glared back. A good many of the Greyfriars prefects had plenty of signs to show of the scrap with the rebels on the island.  
 Wingate and Gwynne had a swollen nose each, Loder had a big bump on his head, Walker had a dark shade round one eye, Carne had a cauliflower ear. Other fellows had other damages, from which they had not yet recovered.  
 They had been beaten of by the rebels, and there had been a lot of damage on both sides. There were not, as the angry baronet suggested, afraid of a mob of juniors. Still, they were not keen to try it on again.  
 “Pah! What is my old school coming to?” snorted Sir Hilton. “Have your prefects, sir, run away from a crowd of small boys------"  
 “Cheese it!” came a voice from the back of the class.  
 Sir Hilton jumped.  
 “What? What? Who spoke?” he roared.  
 “Silence in the class!” exclaimed the Head. “Really, Sir Hilton, this is no place------no time------"  
 “I insist, sir, on this outrageous state of affairs coming to an end at once! At once, sir! Send your prefect’s with me to the island now, and I will see that they do not run away again.  
 “Rats!” came a voice.  
 “Silence!” gasped the Head.  
 “Dr. Locke, will you deal with this matter at once---instantly?”  
 “I am considering how to deal with it, sir------"  
 “Nonsense!”  
 “Sir!”  
 “Then I, sir, will deal with the matter personally!” roared Sir Hilton. “If you, sir, as headmaster, cannot maintain order in this school, I will take the matter in hand, as a governor, sir! I will call my keepers and the remove the young rascals from the island. Be prepared, sir, to receive them in a very short time; and I shall insist, sir, upon the ringleaders being expelled from the school, and all the others soundly flogged, sir, under my own eyes!”  
 “Sir Hilton---”  
 “I have told you, sir, what I am going to do. It is for you to deal with the young rascals when I bring them here, sir!”  
 With that Sir Hilton Popper stamped out of the Sixth Form Room. The door closed after him with a bang.   
 “Bless my soul!” mumbled the Head faintly.  
 He passed his hand over his forehead. Sir Hilton’s visit left him with a feeling that a whirlwind had blown in and ripped round the Form-room. Fortunately it was nearly time for break, and the Head was soon able to dismiss the Sixth and retire to the quietude of his study.  
 Sir Hilton Popper was gone--- which was one comfort. If he succeeded in bringing the rebels back to the school, that would be another comfort.  
 The head was undoubtedly very anxious for the present state of affairs to come to an end. Sitting in his study, he was thinking it over, when the telephone bell rang. With a sigh he took up the receiver. Really, there seemed to be no recourse for a harassed headmaster!  
 “Is that the Head?” came a voice over the wires.  
 Dr. Locke almost jumped. It was a familiar voice---that of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove.  
 “Wharton!” gasped the Head blankly.  
 “Yes, sir! Good morning, sir!” came the cheerful voice.  
 “You---you---you have left the---the island, Wharton?”  
 That question was rather superfluous, as there was certainly no telephone installation on the island in the Sark.  
 “I’m speaking from Courtfield Post Office, sir! I thought I could catch you in break.”  
   
 “If this means, Wharton, that you have decided to cease this rebellion, and return to your duty------"  
 “Certainly, sir, we shall all been very glad to do so.” Came the respectful answer of the captain of the Remove. “It depends, sir, on whether you will allow Bunter to stay.”  
 “Bunter! You are aware that Bunter has been expelled, for having attacked a Form-master------"  
 “Bunter never inked Prout, sir! We all know that!”  
 “Nonsense!”  
 “It was some other fellow, sir, and if he’s found out and sacked we shan’t say a word. We’re standing by Bunter because he never did it, and he was sacked for nothing.”  
 “How dare you------”  
 “I said I’d tell you, sir, that we’re all willing to come back to school, and toe the line, if you’ll let Bunter off------"  
 “You impertinent young rascal!” gasped the Head. “Do you imagine, for one moment, that you will be permitted to dictate to your headmaster?”  
 “We can’t let Bunter down, sir! If you will let him stay on, till the end of the term, it might be found out who really inked Prout---”  
 “That matter is closed, Wharton!”  
 “Not at all, sir! It’s wide open!” answered the captain of the Remove cheerfully. “We’re staying out till Bunter gets justice, sir.”  
 “I command you to return to school at once, Wharton! Immediate submission may induce me to deal with you leniently.”  
 “And you’ll let Bunter off, sir?”  
 “No!” roared the Head.  
 “Then there’s nothing doing, sir! Sorry! Ta-ta!”   
 “Wharton------"   
 No reply.  
 “Boy!”  
 Silence!  
 The captain of the Remove had rung off. Dr. Locke, breathing hard and deep, jammed the receiver back on the hooks with a jam that made the instrument rock. At that moment, had the captain of the Remove been within his headmaster’s reach, he certainly would have received the thrashing of his life. Fortunately, there was the length of a telephone wire between.  
 In Courtfield Post Office Harry Wharton left the telephone box. He strolled out of the post office with a cheery smile on his face. But that cheery smile faded away as he almost ran into a tall, angular gentleman who was striding along the pavement.  
 “Oh, my hat!” ejaculated Wharton.  
 He jumped back--- too late! In a moment he was wriggling with Sir Hilton Popper’s sinewy grasp on his collar.  
  
 **THE FIFTH CHAPTER.  
  
 A Narrow Escape!**SIR HILTON POPPER fairly grinned.   
 This was luck!  
 He was on his way to Popper Court from Greyfriars, and his way lay through Courtfield High Street, past the post office. Certainly he had had not the remotest suspicion that one the slightest intention of the schoolboy rebels was in that building, phoning to his head master. Neither had the captain of the remove any idea but Sir Hilton was at hand. He had, in fact, forgotten the existence of Sir Hilton, important as that gentleman was.  
 It was an unexpected meeting on both sides---satisfactory only on one side! Sir Hilton grabbed the junior’s collar, and held on to it like a bulldog to a bone. This was the ringleader of the rebellion; this was the young rascal who had cheeked him only that morning! The deep, dark frown on Sir Hilton’s face was replaced by a smile of happy satisfaction---which to Wharton’s eyes seemed rather like the grin of a hyena.  
 “ I have caught you!” exclaimed Sir Hilton.  
 “Looks like it, sir!” assented Wharton coolly. After the first wriggle he did not resist. Strong and sturdy as he was, he had no chance in a tussle with the lean, but muscular baronet. Not that he had the slightest intention of remaining a prisoner. But he had to wait for a chance.  
 “Come with me!” rapped Sir Hilton. “ I shall take you back to the school at once. Are you alone here?” Sir Hilton glanced round for other rebels.  
 “No, sir!” answered Harry.  
 “Who is with you?”   
 “You, sir!”  
 “Wha-a-at what? Are you suggesting with me, you young rascal?” ejaculated the bottom it.  
 “Exactly!” assented Wharton.  
 Sir Hilton breathed hard.  
 “You have left the island in the river!” he snapped.  
 “Had to!” explained Wharton. “I couldn’t possibly bring it to Courtfield with me. So I left it.”  
 Said Wharton beast robber! Evidently this young rascal was in a jesting mood! Sir Hilton had no use for jests, and he compressed his grip on the junior’s collar, grinding bony knuckles into the back of his neck.  
 “Did any other young scoundrels come with you, Wharton? he demanded.  
 “No, there’s only an old scoundrel with me, sir.”  
 “Good gad! I have a mind to lay my stick about you----"  
 “Have you, sir? That’s news!” said the captain of the Remove cheerily. “I never knew that you had a mind at all.”  
 “Wha-a-at”  
 “If you have, why don’t you use it sometimes, sir?”  
 Sir Hilton did not answer that question. With are red and wrathy visage, he jerked his prisoner along the pavement, stared at by a score of people in the High Street.  
 It was rather an unusual sight, in Courtfield, for a stiff old gentleman adorned with an eyeglass to be seen jerking a schoolboy along by the collar. Indifferent to stares, Sir Hilton marched the Greyfriars junior off down the street.  
 “Would you mind taking your knuckles out of the back of my neck, sir?” asked Wharton meekly. “They’re rather bony if you don’t mind my mentioning it.”  
 The bony knuckles ground harder into the unoffending neck. Sir Hilton grasped his stick with his free hand.  
 “Another word of insolence and I will thrash will slash you before I take you back to Greyfriars to be expelled!” he snapped. “Come!”  
 Down the high street they went, stared out on all sides, and followed by a gathering crowd of curious youths. Mr. Lazarus, in his shop doorway, blinked at them as they passed.  
 “My cootness!” said Mr. Lazarus, in astonishment.  
 “Give this old donkey a punch in the eye, will you, Mr. Lazarus’?” asked Wharton.  
 “Oh my cootness!” gasped Mr. Lazarus.  
 He did not oblige! Sir Hilton, with an angry snort, jerked the Greyfriars juniors onward.  
 Farther on, they came on Inspector Grimes. That official gentleman stared at this strange sight.  
 Wharton shouted to him.  
 “Lend me a hand, Mr. Grimes! I’m being kidnapped.”  
 “Kidnapped!” ejaculated the Inspector.  
 “Tell this old ass to let go my collar, please.”  
 “Sir Hilton---what------”  
 “Stand aside, sir!” snorted Sir Hilton. “This boy is a truant from school, and I am taking him back to Greyfriars!”  
 “Oh!” said Mr. Grimes, staring. “You had certainly better go back to school, master Wharton!”  
 “Can’t I give old Popper into custody for kidnapping?” demanded Wharton.  
 Mr. Grimes grinned.  
 “Come!” roared Sir Hilton, and he jerked the junior on past the grinning police inspector. Surfaced since face was cruising nine. He was doing his duty, as he considered it, but he was getting much more publicity than he wanted. Half the younger generation of Courtfield seemed to be fallowing on behind, and, as they passed the Peal of Bells, a number of loungers there joined up, and followed on.  
 It was getting to be quite a procession. Sir Hilton accelerated more and more.  
 Suddenly his long legs stumbled and tangled over something. It was Harry Wharton’s foot! Tripped by that foot, Sir Hilton stumbled, and fell on his knees. Unfortunately he retained his iron grasp on the juniors collar, and Wharton wrenched in vain.  
 “Good gad!” gasped Sir Hilton, as he scrambled up, scarlet with fury. “I---I---I---I will---” without stating farther what he would do, Sair Hillton proceeded to do it! His stick fairly rang on Wharton’s shoulders.  
 “Ow! Wow! Yaroooooh!” roared the juniors. “Chuck it! You silly old ass, stop it! Help! Whoooop! Chuck it, you dangerous maniac!”  
 Whack, whack, whack!  
 “Take that,” gasped Sir Hilton, “and that---and that---”  
 Whack, whack!  
 “Whoooop! Help!” roared Wharton, as he took them. He wriggled and struggled frantically. “Help! Rescue! Yoo-hooop!”   
 “Look ’ere, you let the boy alone!” A big brewer’s drayman shoved forward. “What’s he done, old codger?”  
 “What?” Sir Hilton glared at the drayman, his breath quite taken away by the cheek of a common mortal addressing him as “old codger.”  
“What? Stand back! Hold your tongue! Do not interfere here, I warn you.”  
 “I say, help!” shouted Wharton. “Help!”  
 “Come!” snorted Sir Hilton, jerking on again.  
 But there was, so to speak, a lion in the path! The big drayman stood in the way, with an angry expression on his rugged face. As Sir Hilton jerked on, the big man give him a push on the chest with a hand that was like a leg of mutton, and the baronet gasped and spluttered and staggered>  
 “You ’old on, sir!” said the drayman. “You’re a-hitting of that there young covey with that blooming stick, and I asks you, as man to man, wot’s he done?”  
 “Ruffian,” gasped Sir Hilton, “Stand aside! Instantly!” It seemed almost incredible to the lord of Popper Court that a big, rough drayman should venture to come between the wind and his nobility! But there the drayman was---almost a mountain of bone and muscle and sinew, as tall as Sir Hilton, and twice as heavy, and not to be shifted. And from the thickening crowd came several voices encouraging the burly man.  
 “I asks you, wot’s the boy done?” said the drayman, with calm stolidity. “Nice sort of a father you are, a-walloping a kid like that!”   
   
 “What---what! I am not the boy’s father!” shrieked Sir Hilton.   
 “Then, if you ain’t the boy’s father, who are you a-hitting him for?” demanded the drayman indignantly. “Let the boy alone!”   
 “Yes, let him alone!” came two or three encouraging voices.  
 “Stand aside!” roared Sir Hilton. “I am taking a truant back to school---”  
 “No business of yourn, if you ain’t his father!” retorted the drayman. “You let ‘im alone!”  
 “Make him let go, please!” express Wharton, his eyes dancing. He had hoped that help of some sort might turn up before Greyfriars was reached. It could not have turned up in a more efficacious form than this! Sir Hilton was a rather powerful man, but the huge drayman could have picked him up in one hand.  
 “ You leave it to me, lad!” said the good natured drayman. “I ain’t seeing a man lay into a kid with a stick like that there! Now, sir, I says, as man to man, you let that kid go, I says, or I’ll make you!”  
 “Rascal! Fool!” spluttered Sir Hilton. “I will have you taken into custody! I---I will---I—I--- Hands off! Villain! Scoundrel! Good gad!”  
 Sir Hilton Popper lashed out fiercely with his stick. The drayman caught it with a mighty arm, brushing it aside like a fly. Then he took hold of Sir Hilton Popper, and crumpled him up.  
 “’Ook it, kid!”  
 Wharton did not need advice on that point, as soon as Sir Hilton’s grasp was jerked off him.  
 “Thanks!” he gasped. “You’re a good sort!” and he flew.  
 Bump!  
 Sir Hilton Popper sat down on the pavement. He sat hard! He sat and spluttered, amid laughter from the Courtfield crowd.  
 “Now, you beyave!” said the drayman, shaking a warning finger at him. And he went back to the Peal of Bells with his friends, leaving Sir Hilton Popper sitting on the pavement, wondering whether the universe was falling in pieces around him.  
 When he got to his feet at last he glared round for Harry Wharton. He did not see him! The captain of the Remove, as if he had been a Boojum, had suddenly, silently vanished away.  
 Sir Hilton Popper took his way to Popper Court, in a frame of mind that was not merely fierce, but absolutely ferocious. His prisoner had escaped, and gone back to rejoin the other young rascals on the island. But Sir Hilton was not going to be long after him. And then the vials of wrath were going to be poured on the devoted heads of the Greyfriars rebels, and they were going to be made to feel that life was hardly worth living! At least, Sir Hilton hoped so.  
  
 **THE SIXTH CHAPTER.  
  
 The Attack!**  
  
“JOLLY, ain’t it?” said Bob Cherry.  
 “The jollifulness is terrific!”  
 “Gripping!” said Frank Nugent.  
 “I say, you fellows, this is better than classes with old Quelch!” remarked Billy Bunter. “So long as the grub doesn’t run out, we’re all right here.”  
 Most of the Greyfriars Remove agreed with Bob that it was jolly on the island in the river. The most studious fellow in the Form would hardly have preferred Latin in the Form-room. Besides, the more studious fellows could get on with Latin sitting under the trees, if they liked. Few liked!   
 The river rippled and glowed in the sunshine of July. Fleecy white clouds sailed in a sky of azure. Billy Bunter, with his fat limbs reposing in a couch of ferns, remembered his breakfast with pleasure, and thought of dinner with happy anticipation.  
 The fact that he was under sentence of the “sack,” and only saved from that condign fate by the remove rallying round him and defying authority, did not seem to worry the fat Owl of the Remove. Bunter had a happy way of dismissing troubles from his podgy mind.  
 The only cloud on the horizon, from Bunter’s point of view, was the possibility that the “grub” might run out!  
 So long as the grub was all right, everything was all right, so far as William George Bunter could see.  
 Some of the fellows were clambering in the great branches of the old oak in the middle of the island. Some of them were fishing, though the catches were few and far between.  
 Skinner, Snoop, and Stott had retired to a quiet spot to smoke cigarettes. Lord Mauleverer was dozing in the shade, with his straw hat over his aristocratic features. But most of the fellows were at work.  
 Harry Wharton was absent, having gone to Courtfield to telephone to the Head of Greyfriars. Most of the rebels agreed that, if the Head would “come round,” the sooner the rebellion ended the better. Still, they were not particularly keen for it to end. It was, as Bob declared, jolly on Popper’s Island, and a great improvement on classes with Quelch.  
 Fortifications were going on, under the direction of Bob Cherry. There had been no attack since that made by the prefects the Head’s order, which had been beaten off. But it was fairly certain that another would not be long in coming. The rebels were going to be ready for it.  
 Several expeditions had been made to the shops in Courtfield. Among other things, coils of thick wire had been brought to the island in the boat belonging to Coker of the Fifth, now in possession of the rebels. Almost all round the island the trees and thickets grew to the water’s edge. It was possible for an enemy to land anywhere by scrambling through the thickets. But “paid ” was going to be put to that by means of a wire entanglement. Line after line of thick wire was run from tree to tree, and bush to bush, round the margin of the island. Piles of cut branches and logs were stacked behind the wire.  
 “ They won’t to get through that in a hurry!” remarked Bob Cherry. “Why, we can hold out here all the summer, if we liked.”   
 “Only we shall have to be careful about the grub!” said Billy Bunter. “I say, we’ve run out of jam already!”  
 “Awful!” said Johnny Bull sarcastically.  
 “Oh, that’s all right! I can laugh it!” said Bunter you retire. “So long as there’s plenty of marmalade, I can do without jam.”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Still, we shall have to be careful.” said Bunter. “ I’m not thinking of myself, of course. It’s not much I eat, as you know! But you fellows---”  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here’s Wharton!”  
 A rather breathless figure appeared on the bank. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent jumped into Coker’s boat, and pulled across, to bring the captain of the Remove to the island.  
 “Been in a scrap?” asked the Bounder, as Wharton stepped from the boat on to Popper’s Island. “You look it!”  
 “Old Popper popped up in Courtfield and bagged me.” answered Harry. “But I got away! I fancy we shall see him here before long.”  
 “Good egg!” said Smithy. “We want a little excitement.  
 “I say, Wharton, did you get it?” called out Billy Bunter.  
 “Which?” asked Harry.  
 “The jam, of course, fathead! I reminded you just before he started that we were short of jam.  
 Harry Wharton laughed.  
 “I wasn’t thinking of jam, fathead, when old Popper got me by the neck. I’ve formed to the head, you fellows. I’m afraid there’s nothing doing. He seemed waxy.  
 “We can keep it up as long as he does!” said the Bounder. “What can they do, anyhow? The prefects have been licked, and we’re ready to lick ‘em again, if they show up!”  
 “Hear, hear!”  
 “I say, you fellows------”  
 “Don’t you worry, Bunter, we’re keeping you safe!” said the Bounder.  
 “Yes, I know that.” said Bunter peevishly. “But I was thinking about the jam! I think some fellow ought to go into Courtfield for the jam! I’ll pay for it, of course. I told you fellows I was expecting a postal order------"  
 “Give us a rest!”  
 “Beast!”  
 Harry Wharton was looking up the river in the direction of Popper Court. That mansion was not very far away, though hidden from sight by the thick woods along the Sark. After what had happened in Courtfield that morning, Wharton had no doubt that Sir Hilton Popper would lose no time in dealing with the schoolboys on the island.  
 “Here they come!” he said suddenly.  
 A boat came gliding down the river. Joyce and another keeper were pulling, and Sir Hilton Popper sat in the stern, his eyeglass gleaming back the rays of the sun.  
 “The jolly old enemy!” said Bob Cherry. “Does that old duffer really think that three of them will be able to handle us? We’re ten to one.”  
 “If he does he will soon find out his giddy error.” grinned the Bounder.  
 “Line up!” called out Wharton.  
 “I say, you fellows---" Bunter scrambled out of his nest of ferns--- “I---I think I’d better see about cooking the dinner.”   
 And Bunter rolled up the path to the interior of the island.  
 Most of the Remove gathered at the landing place, which was on the shore of the island opposite the Popper Court bank. The boat came gliding down between the island and the bank, and the two oarsmen pulled in. Harry Wharton waved his hand to Sir Hilton Popper, sitting like a grim gorgon in the stern, and the baronet’s eyes I gleamed at him.  
 “Keep off!” called out Wharton. “We’re not allowing anybody to land here!”  
 The two keepers glanced over their shoulders at the crowd on the island. They rested on their oars at a little distance. Landing in spite of such heavy odds did not seem to them an easy proposition.   
 “Keep your distance, Popper!” shouted the Bounder.  
 Sir Hilton stood up in the boat.  
 “I order you off my island!” he roared. “I see that you have a rowboat. Get into it at once and return to the school! Otherwise, force will be used!”  
 “Same here!” chuckled the Bounder.  
 “And the forcefulness of our esteemed shelves will be terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Popper!”  
 “Whose island?” inquired Harry Wharton.  
 “What---what ? My island!” hooted Sir Hilton. “What do you mean? You know that you are trespassing there!”  
 “we got no anything of the kind.” answered the captain of the Remove coolly. “I’ll tell you what, old bean! If it’s your island, we wouldn’t be found dead on it! Trot out your title deeds! Press”  
 “Wha-a-t?”  
 “As soon as we’ve seen them- we’ll get off the island—if it’s yours.” said Wharton. “That’s a fair offer.”  
 “The fearfulness is terrific!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Sir Hilton Popper made no answer. Perhaps he was too lofty and dignified to enter into such a discussion with rebel schoolboys. In point of fact, all the countryside knew that the island was common land, and had been so from time immemorial, till Sir Hilton enclosed it as part of his estate. Sir Hilton had “got away” with it, so to speak, because it was nobody’s special business to go to law about it with so big a potentate.  
 But whether Sir Hilton’s claim was well or ill founded he was very obstinate about it. His keepers had orders to turn all trespassers and picnickers off the island, which they generally did. But turning off the whole Greyfriars Remove was a much larger proposition.  
 “What about it, old bean?” chortled the Bounder.  
 “Joyce, get to the island at once! Do you hear me?” roared Sir Hilton. “What are you delaying for? Are you afraid of these schoolboys? I will deal with them as soon as I land.”  
 “Yessir!” gasped Joyce.  
 The two keepers pulled on. The boat ran into the island shore and bumped among the willows.  
 Sir Hilton had a heavy Malacca cane in his hand, and he grasped it almost convulsively. Once he was a close quarters with the Greyfriars fellows, he expected to finish matters with that malacca. He was going to want right and left,- and drive off having crowd of the head—at least, that was the programme. It remained to carry out the programme.  
 Joyce held onto a branch to steady the boat while Sir Hilton landed. A tomato, accurately hurled by the Bounder, got him under the chin, and the head keeper staggered lost his hold, and plumped into the boat.  
 He rocked wildly; and Sir Hilton, stepping out, stepped into a foot of mud, instead of on the shore. His boots squelched in mud, and the water washed round his bony knees.  
 Three or four fellows get the boat a shove, and it spun away on the current, and floated down the river, with the two keepers sprawling in it. Perhaps Joyce and his man could not stop it. Perhaps they were not keen to do so. Anyhow, the boat whirled away on the current.  
 “Good gad!” gasped Sir Hilton Popper.  
 He tramped through mud, and stamped on the island shore. The Removites swarmed round him. Up went the malacca, and right and left it whacked, amid yells and howls.  
 “Now, then, young rascals! Leave this island at once! Off with you!” roared Sir Hilton. “Go! Get into your boat! Go!”  
 Whack! Whack!  
 “Oh, my hat!”  
 “Oh, scissors!”  
 “Collar him!”   
 “Up-end him!”  
 “Yaroooh!”  
 That the Greyfriars rebels would venture to lay disrespectful hands on his lordly person had probably not occurred to Sir Hilton.  
 But it did. They climbed them on, hard and fast.  
 There was a crash as the lord of Popper Court went down, and his malacca flew from his hand.  
 He struggled frantically; but the hands that grasped him seemed innumerable. Sprawling in the grass he roared and struggled, and kicked and threatened, all in vain. He had ventured into a hornet’s nest; and the hornets were too many for him. But the lord of Popper Court was helpless in the hands of the Philistines.  
  
 **THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Three men in a Boat!**“SIT on him!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Got him!”  
 “Duck him!” shouted the Bounder.  
 “Good egg!”  
 “Good gad!” gasped Sir Hilton. “Release me! I order you to excuse me! I---I------ Uurrgh! Good gad!”   
 “Sir Hilton Popper almost wondered whether he was dreaming. Really it seemed more like a nightmare than reality.  
 He was dragged by his feet, held on all sides by many hands. His arms, his neck, his ears, his coat tails, and even his hair were grasped. He wriggled, but he could only wriggle. The odds were overwhelming, and he had not the ghost of a chance. He stared tottering and panting in the midst of a yelling and laughing crowd.  
 “Got him!”  
 “The duckfulness is the proper caper.”  
 “Shove him in!”  
 “Hold on!” gasped Wharton, as the excited juniors began to heave the gurgling baronet towards the water. “Hold on! Draw the line, you men! He’s too jolly old to duck! He will get rheumatism and things.”  
 “Let him!” snapped the Bounder.  
 “Young rascals! Urrgh! Scoundrels! Gurrgh! I will have you arrested! Wurrgh!” stuttered Sir Hilton, incoherently. “Yuffgh!”  
 “ Look out!” shouted Bob Cherry.  
 The boat was coming back. Joyce and his man were far from keen on a scrap with the Greyfriars crowd; but they came to the rescue of their master. The keepers’ boat bumped in the willows again.  
 “Help!” gurgled Sir Hilton. “Help here! Joyce! Wilson! Help! I will discharge you! Gurrgh! If you do not immediately------ Wurrgh!”  
 “Go for ’em!” roared the Bounder  
 And he leaped recklessly into the keepers’ boat without waiting for the enemy to land.  
 “Look here!” gasped Joyce. “You------ Oh, jiminy! Ooogh!”   
 A dosing Fellows followed the bounder. There were plenty left to hold the Lord of Popper Court. The boat rocked and shipped water. The two keepers, resisting valiantly, went down in the boat, with water swamping over them. They had come to their master’s rescue; but they needed rescue themselves badly. But there was no rescue for them. Swamped with water in the rocking boat, they heaved and wriggled under a swarm of yelling juniors.  
 “Give over!” gurgled Joyce. “ I tell you, give over! Ooogh!”   
 “Chuck a rope here!” shouted Smithy.  
 Peter Todd tossed in a rope. With the other fellows holding the two keepers, the Bounder tied them back to back. Then they sat in the bottom of the vault with six inches of water lapping found them.   
 “Now chuck that old goat in!” shouted Vernon-Smith.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”   
 “Release me!” shrieked Sir Hilton. “I order you------ I--- Oh gad!”   
 “In you go!” chuckled Bob Cherry.  
 “Head first!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Gently does it!” said the captain of the Remove. “Remember his jolly old venerable years!”   
 Sir Hilton Popper was no longer young, but he was not exactly venerable. However, he was rather glad that the young rascals, excited as they were, had a proper respect for age.  
 The baronet was not “chucked” into the boat head first; he was lifted in and plumpeb down on the stern seat.  
 His stick, his hat, the eyeglasses, together with his gloves, were scattered far and worried, and the rest of him was very untidy and dishevelled. But he was still game, and the moment the juniors famished and—he grasped at the nearest fellow—who happened to be the Bounder—and smacked his head right and left.  
 “Whooop!” groaned Smithy. “Oh crumbs! You potty old ass--- Yarooooooop!”  
 Sir Hilton was promptly collared again. He was jammed down to the seat once more, and this time he was not left loose. The Bounder, his ears crimson and burning from hefty smacks, took a turn of the rope round his wrists and tied them behind him to the tiller---after which the Lord of Popper Court was unable to do any further damage.  
 “Now shove off!” shouted Smithy.  
 The juniors scrambled out of the boat.  
 Many hands shoved at it, and it was sent rocking out into the stream.  
 It turned on the current and drifted away slowly down the Sark, followed by yells of laughter from the island.  
 “Good gad!” gasped Sir Hilton Popper dazedly. Really he could hardly believe that these awful things were happening.  
 He stumbled to three his hands. But the bounder had tied them too safely for that. His struggles only swayed the tiller and caused the boat to wobble as it drifted down the stream.  
 “Joyce!” howled Sir Hilton. “Joyce, get up! Release me! Do you hear me, Joyce? Release me, you fool!”  
 “I can’t stir a ’and!” gasped the head keeper. “Look at me!”  
 “And look at me!” groaned the under keeper. “Oh lor’!”  
 “You must free yourselves somehow!” roared Sir Hilton. “Can I remain like this? Have you no sense?”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!” came a yell from the island.  
 Sir Hilton glared back at the laughing crowd on the landing place. Bob Cherry waved a hand in farewell.  
 “I---I---I------" gasped Sir Hilton. “Joyce, if you do not contrive to release me me immediately I will discharge you!”  
 Joyce did not answer that. He was wriggling in his bonds, anxious for release on his own account. But there was nothing doing.  
 The boat drifted on, wobbling and rocking. A bend of the river hid the island and its laughing crowd from sight. Sir Hilton gazed wildly at the near bank. He was anxious for help, but at the same time he did not want to be seen in his present ridiculous position. So he was both sorry and glad that’s no one was to be seen on the towpath.  
 “Good gad!” he gasped.  
 The current on the Sark was slow, but it was steady, and the board drifted on. The prospect of arriving at the village of Friardale tied up in the boat was simply, horrifying to Sir Hilton Popper, but there seemed no help for it.  
 But as the drifting boat drew near the Greyfriars boathouse he discerned a figure on the bank. It was that of Mr. Quelch, the master without a form.  
 Mr. Quelch had decided on a walk to fill up the idle morning, and there he was. He glanced at the boat and then stared at it, and then the stare became fixed and amazed.  
 Sir Hilton yelled to him.  
 “Help! Do you hear me? Help!”  
 “Goodness gracious!” exclaimed the Remove-master.  
 He approached the margin of the water, staring blankly at the boat, but it was yards out of his reach.  
 “Will you help me?” shrieked Sir Hilton.  
 “I cannot reach you, sir!” gasped Mr. Quelch. “What---what---what has happened?”  
 “Your boys, sir, have treated me like this!”. “Those rebellious young scoundrels on my island, sir! They have ventured, sir, to tie me up in my own boat! I order you to release me, sir! Do you hear me?”  
 “I am not deaf.” answered Mr. Quelch coldly. “And if you will explain how I am to reach you I shall be happy to release you.  
  
“P’r’aps you could steer the boat in, sir!” gasped Joyce. “Your ‘ands being on the tiller, sir------"  
 Sir Hilton jerked at the tiller the wrong way, and the boat surged out farther from the bank. He snorted and jerked again. Mr. Quelch watched from the towpath.  
 Probably he was shocked to see the state to which the lord of Popper Court had been reduced by the Remove fellows. At the same time and his features were twitching as if he found it hard to repress a smile. But it was no smiling matter to Sir Hilton or the two wretched keepers sitting in six inches of water.  
 The boat, very clumsily steered, drew in towards the bank again. Mr. Quelch followed it, ready to grab as soon as it came within reach. It bumped on a wedge of mud thick with rushes that jutted into the river, but before the Remove-master could get to it it drifted off again. Quelch’s grasp missed it by a yard.  
 “Fool!” roared Sir Hilton.  
 “Sir!” gasped Mr. Quelch, pink with indignation.  
 “Will you help me or not? I quite believe, sir, that you are in sympathy with these young scoundrels on my island. I have no doubt, sir that you would be glad for me to be exhibited to the whole village tied up in this ridiculous posture! I have no doubt of it, sir!”  
 “If you will get within reach------”  
 “Fool!”  
 “These expressions, Sir Hilton------”  
 “Dolt!”  
 “Really, sir------”  
 “Imbecile!”  
 Sil Popper was far too exasperated to measure his expressions. But really it was not judicious to apply those fancy names to the man upon whom he relied for help.  
 Mr. Quelch’s lips set in a tight line, and his eyes glinted.  
 “If you’d steer N, sir------” said the head keeper.  
 “Silence, Joyce! How dare you speak!”  
 “The man’s advice is good, sir.” Said Mr. Quelch. “Unless you steer within my reach------”  
 “Idiot!”  
 Sir Hilton wobbled the tiller again. Once more the boat impinged on the rushes, and Mr. Quelch bent over, and his fingers touched the gunwale.  
 “Now hold on, you clumsy bolt!” roared Sir Hilton.  
 Mr. Quelch had been on the point of holding on pace. Now, perhaps, by accident his fingers slipped under gunwale, and, instead of holding on, he gave the boat a shove. It shot out into the river.  
 “Fool! Idiot! Imbecile! Dolt!” spluttered Sir Hilton.  
 The boat had shot far out of Mr. Quelch’s reach. It was caught in the current in the middle of the Sark and floated on faster than before.   
 Mr. Quelch gazed after it, and apparently gave up hope of reaching it at all. At all events he walked on up the towpath and give it no further heed. Probably he was fed up with Sir Hilton’s method of expressing thanks.  
 “Good gad!” gasped Hilton.  
 The boat drifted past the Greyfriars raft. Nobody was there; the school was still in class. It drifted on.  
 Half an hour later the three men in the vault were being released by a grinning, chuckling crowd of villagers at the old wharf in Friardale.  
  
 **THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Tit for Tat!  
  
“WOW!”** yelled Sammy Bunter**.** Summary was hurt.  
 And he was indignant.  
 So far as Bunter nine or of the second form could see, there was no reason at all why Coker of the Fifth should have kicked him in passing.  
 But Coker had---hard!  
 Horace Coker’s mental processes were not always easy for common mortals to follow.  
 The facts were these. Sammy was the brother of Billy Bunter of the Remove. Billy Bunter had inked---or was supposed to have inked---Coker’s Form-master, and had been sacked for that exploit. The Remove rebellion had followed. The Remove rebels had bagged Coker’s boat for use in their island refuge. They had handled Coker on that occasion forcibly. Coker, therefore, passing Sammy of the Second in the quad, kicked him, and felt completely justified in so doing. Besides, kickings were good for fags---in Coker’s opinion, at least.  
 Having given Sammy Bunter that completely justifiable kick, Horace Coker walked on, leaving the fat fag yelling.  
 Sammy blinked after him through the big spectacles that made him look so like his major vengefully.  
 Coker dismissed that trifling incident from his mind at once. But it was not so easy for Bunter minor to dismiss it. A kick lingers longer in the memory of the kickee, so to speak, than of the kicker.  
 The fact that Sammy yelled, that he pressed a fat hand in anguish to his podgy trousers, and squirmed, did not worry Coker. Coker had far more important matters than that to think about.  
 He walked on under the elms, his rugged brow corrugated with thought. He was not even aware that Sammy rolled after him.  
 Sammy Bunter, at the moment when Coker landed that kick, had been deeply engrossed in a problem. Gatty of the Second had given him in orange, nicely wrapped in paper. Bunter minor had been delighted with that generous gift---until he unwrapped the paper. Then he discovered that the orange was an exceedingly ancient one---in fact, green with age. That explained why George Gatty had given it to him---evidently from a misdirected sense of humour.  
 Summary had been examining that orange with keen eyes and spectacles to ascertain whether some small portion of it yet remained in an edible state. Coker’s kick had interrupted that urgent investigation, and Sammy had dropped the ancient orange.  
 Now he picked it up again.  
 None of it was edible—not a spot! Indeed, it was not very easy to hold it together in one piece. But Sammy Bunter had thought of a use for it.  
 As an article of diet, that orange was useless. But landed in the back of Coker’s neck, it might yet serve a useful purpose! So the wrathful fag, orange in hand, stalked Coker of the Fifth under the elms, watching for a chance to land it in the back of Coker’s neck.   
 Coker of the Fifth, oblivious of Sammy and such small fry, glanced round him under the trees, and spotted Potter and Greene on a bench there. He joined them, and sat down.  
 The bench backed on an elm. Sammy Bunter, with deep cunning, approached that elm by a roundabout course to get behind Coker.  
 “Don’t go!” said Coker.  
 Potter and Greene of the Fifth had risen as their great leader sat down . Coker’s arrival seemed to remind them that it was time to get moving.  
 “ Well, I’ve got to speak to Wingate about the cricket.” remarked Potter.  
 “No good talking to Wingate about cricket.” answered Coker. “he doesn’t know anything about cricket.”  
 “He’s put me in the first eleven.” said Potter.  
 “That shows that he doesn’t know anything about it!”  
 “Oh!”  
 “He’s left me out.” said Coker. “Silly ass, you know! But never mind Wingate now! Sit down! I’ve something to say.”  
 Coker generally had. It was seldom that his chin had a really long rest. Potter and Greene sat down again. After all, it was nearly tea-time, and Coker couldn’t keep them long. And Coker, as usual, was going to stand tea in the study. A fellow had to be tactful with Coker.  
 “I’ve been thinking!” went on Coker.  
 Potter and Greene forbore to ask him what he had done it with. They only wondered.  
 “Those little sweeps have got my boat on Popper’s Island.” resumed Coker. “I’m not letting them keep it, of course. How long have they been there now---nearly a week? Nobody seems able to handle them------”  
 “No bizney of ours!” yawned Greene.   
 “Don’t be an ass, Greene! If the Head had sense enough to make me a prefect, I’d handle them fast enough! They’ve beaten off the prefects, and the silly chumps don’t seem keen to try it on again. Old Coker’s tried it on, and I hear that he’s caught a cold, that’s all. They’re just gloating, and fancying that they’re going to carry on as long as they like! Well, they’re not!”  
 “Blessed if I see what the beaks are going to do!” said Potter. “ The Head’s put the Sark up out of bounds for school. He doesn’t seem able to think of anything else. Perhaps he’s waiting for them to get fed up with playing the giddy ox.”  
 “I’ve thought it out. I can’t let the cheeky young rascals keep my boat, of course. Besides, that’s the crux of the whole matter.”  
 “Good word, anyway!” murmured Greene.  
 “They get off in that boat, and get grub in from Courtfield.” went on Coker.“If the grub ran short, what would they do? They’d have to give in. Well, I’m going to get my boat back---see? The beaks and prefect’s haven’t much sense, but they’ve sense enough to see that young sweeps don’t get hold of another boat. They’ll be stranded and done for---what?”  
 “You think they’ll let you take the boat off them?” asked Potter, with a surreptitious wink at Greene.  
 “More likely to duck you, old bean, if you go after it!” said Greene, shaking his head. “I’d leave it alone, if I were you.”  
 “I dare say you would!” agreed Coker. “That’s the sort of fathead you are, Greene, old chap!”   
 “Look here------”  
 “Don’t jaw! I’m speaking! I’m not thinking of barging in in the broad daylight and giving those cheeky fags a chance of handling me as they did the prefects! explained Coker. “I’m going to use strategy. I’ve got the head for it!—we’re going after dark---”  
 “We!” ejaculated Potter.  
 “Are we?” gasped Greene.  
 “It’s up to me, and I expect you fellows to help!” said Coker. “If we get the boat away, they’re done! Well, we’re getting the boat away---see?”   
 “The Head’s put the place out of bounds---”  
 “Quite right, too.” said Coker. “But that won’t make any difference to me, of course.”  
 “And its lock up at dark------”  
 “We shall have to get out after lock-up------”  
 “Break bounds after the lock-up!” ejaculated Greene.  
 “Naturally! We’ve got to catch them asleep, otherwise the whole mob of them will pile on us---duck us in the river, very likely! They’ve got cheek enough!” said Coker. “Look what they did to old Popper and his keepers the other day. We can get out after dark and go down to the river—us three. You two fellows stay on the bank; I swim out to the island with a rope---see?”  
 Potter and Greene gazed at Horace Coker.  
 Coker’s had said that he had been thinking. They had directed it, not really believing that he had the works. But it seemed that he had. Really, it looked as if Coker had put a lot of brainwork into this.  
 For the actual fact was, as Potter and Greene had to admit, that there was something in it.  
 If the rebels lost the boat, they would undoubtedly be stranded. Food supplies would be cut off. Surrender would be only a matter of time. And such a night foray as Coker had planned was the only way of getting the boat from them.  
 The rebels were fairly certain to sleep o’ nights. In the daytime they were watchful enough, but they would be off their guard when summer’s chain had bound them. A fellow who swam off silently to the island in the middle of the night had a walk-over before him.  
 Unhooking the rebels’ boat and getting away with it would be easy business. Potter and Greene could only wonder how such a masterly scheme had come into Coker’s head.  
 “See?” repeated Coker. “You fellows needn’t get wet---I dare say you’re afraid of wetting your dear little feet! I shall swim off, loose the boat, tie the rope to it, and you’ll pull it across----with me in it---see? They’ll wake up in the morning--- stranded!”  
 “Well, my hat!” said Greene. “It might work------”  
 “You mean, it will work, Greene! I shall handle it!” said Coker.  
 “But breaking bounds------” said Potter.  
 “I fancy the Head will be glad enough, when he hears that we’ve got the boat away from those young villains, and they’re stranded.” said Coker. “He won’t make a fuss about it. Why, only yesterday old Prout saw that boat, going down to the island from Courtfield, loaded with grub. They’re making a regular picnic of it. I heard Prout telling Capper and Wiggins. Stacks of it in the boat, he said---bundles on bundles. Prout said that the boat ought to be got hold of somehow. Of course, he never thought of how. He hasn’t the brains! And I can jolly well tell you that we’re going to bag that boat tonight---this very night---and put paid to those cheeky young sweeps! And I can say------ Yaroop!”  
   
  
 Coker did not mean to say “Yaroop!” He said it suddenly and unintentionally as an ancient orange suddenly squashed on his right ear.  
 “Oh! Ow! What------ Ooooooooch!” spluttered Coker, leaping to his feet.  
 Sammy Bunter, long lurking behind the elm watching for a chance, had risked it at last. Coker had got the orange---under his ear! It burst there, and most of it ran stickily down Coker’s neck.  
 “What---what---who---how---what---” gasped Coker, dubbing squashed orange orange with his fingers, in amazement. “Who---what--- Why, it’s an orange--- a rotten orange! Groogh!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!” roared Potter and Greene.  
 “You cackling idiots!” roared Coker. “What is there to cackle at, I’d like to know? You gurgling dummies------”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Who chucked that rotten orange? Who---” Horace Coker glanced round in towering rage. He glimpsed a fat figure varnishing in the distance. “That young scoundrel, Bunter minor! –this is because I kicked him---the cheeky young rotter!  
Why, I---I---I’ll smash him! I’ll pulverise him! I’ll spiflicate him! I’ll---”  
 Coker’s rushed in fierce pursuit, and Potter and Greene, much more amused than Coker, chuckled and chortled as he went.  
  
 **THE NINTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Brainy!**  
  
“HALLO, hallo, hallo!”  
 “Who’s that”  
 “Either a fat frog or member of the Bunter family!” said Vernon-Smith.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “It’s a Bunter!” said Bob Cherry with a chuckle. “ Billy’s jolly old minor. Billy, here’s a visitor for you!”  
 “Oh, rot!” yawned Billy Bunter.  
 It was a warm afternoon. July was hot, though the heat was tempered by the wind that came up from the see. Billy Bunter was resting---he was generally resting when he was not eating. He did not seem disposed to stir on the news that his minor had appeared in the offing. Brotherly love was not strongly developed in the Bunter clan. Billy and Sammy could have missed one another’s company for weeks with mutual satisfaction.  
 But though the fat Owl of the Remove was not interested, plenty of other fellows on the island watched Sammy with interest.  
 The rebels of Greyfriars were on their guard from early morning till dewy eve, and the landing place on Popper’s Island was never left unguarded. It was always possible that a sudden invasion might happen, either from Greyfriars or from Popper Court, and the rebels’ did not mean to be taken by surprise, if it happened.  
 Some days had passed since Sir Hilton’s wild adventures among the rebels, and the Lord of Popper Court had not been seen since. But the garrison of the island did not expect to be left in peace. From the fact that Greyfriars fellows were never seen on the bank, they could easily guess that the Head had drawn in school bounds to break off all communications between them and the rest of the school. And Sammy Bunter’s stealthy and surreptitious manner, as he came in sight, showed that he was in dread of being spotted.  
 Bob Cherry was the first to note his arrival. He saw a fat face and a large pair of spectacles, very like Billy Bunter’s, peer out of the wood along the towpath. They were withdrawn after a cautious blink up and down and round about, but they reappeared, and then the fat figure of Samuel Bunter emerged into the open.  
 The juniors on the island watched him and grinned.  
 Evidently Sammy had come there to communicate with them, and was very uneasy and nervous about it. Sixth Form prefects sometimes patrolled the towpath to see that the Head’s restriction of bounds was observed. If a prefect’s eye had fallen on Sammy, in the act of communication with the Removites, it would have meant “six.”  
 “Don’t call to him!” said Harry Wharton, as Bob was about to hail the fat fag across the arm of the river. “If there’s a prefect hanging about he will hear, as well as Sammy.”  
 “True, O king!” assented Bob.  
 “I guess I spotted a hat under the trees a little while ago!” remarked Fisher T. Fish. “I’ll say it was Loder of the Sixth rubbering around.”  
 “Sorry for Sammy, if Loder catches him here!” said the Bounder. “But what the thump does he want?”  
 “May have heard that we’ve been shopping in Courtfield and have got lots of grub here.” suggested Skinner.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 The juniors watched. Sammy Bunter, evidently in an agony of uneasiness, blinked up and down the sunny towpath through his big spectacles.  
 He was taking risks---and it was not the Bunter way to take risks. Like Moses of old, he looked this way, and that way, and, like Moses, he saw no man.  
 Taking his courage in both hands, so to speak, the fat five came across, at last, to the bottom of the bank, facing the landing-place on the island.  
 Harry Wharton waved a hand to him. Nobody hailed him, as it was only too probable that other ears were within hearing. Why Sammy was there was rather a mystery, but nobody wanted to land him in the hands of authority.  
 Bunter minor blinked across through his spectacles and waved a fat hand back, and then put a podgy finger to his lips, in sign of silence. Perhaps he knew that there was a prefect in the wood---or, at least, dreaded it.  
 But it was a little difficult to see how he was going to make his communication and preserve silence at the same time. Having signed caution to the rebels, Sammy blinked round him again, up and down, and round about. Billy Bunter sat up and blinked at his minor across the water. He was as puzzled as the rest to know why Sammy was there.  
 As the juniors watched him the fat fag fumbled in his pocket and drew out a small object. He held it up to view and the juniors saw that it was a metal match box. Sammy made a motion with his arm as an indication that he was about to throw.  
 “Brainy lad!” grinned the Bounder.  
 “That’s a match box!” said Skinner. “What the thump is he going to chuck us a matchbox for? Does the fat idiot think we’re short of matches, or what?”  
 “ There can’t be anything to eat in it!” remarked Bunter. “ It’s too small. What the dickens is he up to?”  
 “Fathead!” said Smithy. “It’s a message, of course! He’s written a note, and put it inside.”  
 “That’s it, I suppose.” assented Harry Wharton.  
 “The brainfulness of the esteemed Sammy is terrific!” remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “Quite bright!” grinned Bob Cherry.  
 Really, it was rather bright of Sammy. He dared not call out from the bank, anb still less did he dare to wait there for the boat to ferry him across to the island. It was fairly clear that he had enclosed a message in that metal box, that it was the only explanation of his peculiar actions. Why he was taking the trouble was still a mystery, the rebels being, of course, unaware of Sammy’s little trouble with Coker of the Fifth.  
 “I say you fellows, that’s rather clever of Sammy!” remarked Billy Bunter. “The fact is we’re a clever family---”   
 “Here it comes!” said Bob.  
 Sammy’s fat arm swung in the air, and the metal matchbox whizzed across the arm of the Sark.  
 The next moment there was a fearful yell from Billy Bunter.  
 Sammy had very brightly selected a metal box to carry his message. An ordinary flimsy matchbox would have blown away before reaching the distance. The metal box carried the necessary distance, and a little more, with all Sammy’s beef in the throw. It was across the water, across the landing place, and did not stop—can it get on the oak was an object---which happened to be the fat nose of William George Bunter.  
 Bang!  
 “Yaroooop!”  
 Billy Bunter bounded.  
 He clasped both hands to his fat little nose and roared.  
 “Ow! Little idiot!” gasped Bunter. “I say, you fellows gimme something to chuck at him it! Anything will do, only, the heavier the better!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Sammy Bunter, on the bank, was grinning. He had not aimed the missile at his major, but he seemed rather amused when it landed on him. Apparently, he derived entertainment from Billy’s antics as he clasped his fat little nose and yelped.  
 “I’ll chuck something, old fat bean.” said Bob Cherry.  
 The juniors had been disposing of the contents of a large bag of apples, and Bob picked a big, ripe apple from the bag.  
 “Catch him on the nose if you can!” gasped Bunter.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 But Bob had no intention of catching Sammy on the nose. The big rig awful was up and want! Bob held it up, signed to Sammy to catch, and tossed it across. Bunter minor caught it, grinned, and promptly dug his teeth into it. Munching the apple, the fat fag vanished into the wood again.   
 Frank Nugent sorted the match box out of the grass. He was about to open it when there was an exclamation from Bob Cherry.   
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo! Jolly old Loder!”  
 Loder of the Sixth emerged from the trees on the bank. Evidently he had not been far away. Perhaps he had heard Bunter’s yell when he caught the matchbox with his nose. Anyhow, there he was, on the towpath, staring up and down with suspicious eyes. Fortunately, Sammy Bunter was well out of sight by that time.  
 The bully of the Sixth came down to the water’s edge and stared across at the group on Popper’s Island.   
 Bob Cherry put the thumb of his left hand to his nose and extended the fingers. Loder glared at this disrespectful gesture. Bob amplified it by pressing the thumb of his right hand to the little finger of his left and extending the fingers of the right. Loder gripped his ashplant with an almost convulsive grip. He would have given a great deal to lay it round Robert Cherry just then.  
 “Dear old Loder!” grinned the Bounder. “He looks waxy!”   
 “The waxfulness is terrific!”   
 “Give him an apple.” suggested Squiff.  
 “Good egg!” chuckled the Bounder, and he picked an apple from the bag. It whizzed across the water like a bullet. The Bounder was one of the best bowlers in the Remove, and his aim was deadly. There was a sudden fearful howl from Loder of the sixth as the apple crashed on his chin. Taken by surprise, he went over backwards, and sat down on to the bank.  
 “Good shot!” yelled Bob Cherry.  
 “Man down!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”   
 Loder scrambled to his feet, red with rage.  
 “You young scoundrels!” he roared.  
 “Give him another!”  
 Another apple flew, landing on Loder’s ear. Another barely missed him as he dodged. Loder backed away hurriedly and disappeared into the wood. He seemed to have had enough of the Remove rebels, for the moment. Another apple caught him in the back of the head as he disappeared, and a yell floated back. Then Loder of the Sixth was gone.  
  
 **THE TENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 A Tip in Time!**HARRY WHARTON & CO. gathered round, as Frank Nugent opened the match box.  
 The juniors were all curious to see what it contained. Obviously it was a message of some sort.  
 Nugent drew out a grubby and crumpled half-sheet of impot paper and unfolded it. A dozen fellows read it at once. The message was written in a scrawling hand, with a plentiful allowance of blots and smears---the customary Bunter calligraphy. The spelling was also of the Bunter variety.  
 It ran;  
 “You fellows look out! Coker of the Fifth is kumming to-nite to kollar your bote”   
 “Coker of the Fifth barging in again!” said Bob Cherry. “Just like Coker!”  
 “Coming to collar our boat?” said Nugent.  
 “His boat!” grinned the Bounder.  
 “Ours now!” said the captain of the Remove. “Coker barged into what didn’t concern him, and the board is a capture from the enemy.”  
 “Hear, hear”  
 “Prize of war!” agreed Bob Cherry. “Like his cheek to think of collaring our boat, just because it was his once.”  
 “The cheekfulness is terrific!”  
 “But how on earth did Sammy get on to it?” said Johnny Bull. “Coker can’t have told fags of the Second about it.”  
 “Bunters have ways of getting information.” remarked the Bounder. “Sammy’s as good at keyhole work as his major.”  
 “Oh, really, Smithy---”  
 “Well, it’s jolly decent of the kid to give us this tip!” said the captain of the Remove. “Loder might have bagged him, too! I suppose he found out somehow what Coker was up to. But—”  
 “He can’t, at night without making bombs.” said Peter Todd. “Is even Coker idiot enough to get out of school after the lights out, just for the pleasure of not minding his own business?”  
 “Isn’t he idiot enough for anything?” asked Hazeldene.  
 “I guess Coker is the prize goob!” remarked Fisher T. Fish. “Say, you guys, we should sure come out at the little end of the horn if that pesky geek Coker levanted with the boat!”  
 “ He won’t!” grinned Bob. “Now we know---”  
 “Forewarned is four legged, as the English proverb remarkably observes.” said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “Ha, ha, ha! Press”  
 “If Sammy’s got it right, this is a jolly useful tip.” said Harry Wharton. “We should be done for if they got our boat away. At least, we should be in a thumping bad scrape. We couldn’t fetch anymore grub without a boat, and they’d take care we didn’t get hold of another.”  
 “Oh crikey!” gasped Bunter. –“I—I say, you fellows, what should we do if the grub ran out? Oh crumbs!”  
 Bunter turned almost pale at the awful thought.  
 “Well, you’d be all right, Bunter!” remarked Peter Todd.  
 “Eh! How should I be all right, you ass?”  
 “You could live on your fat, like a polar bear. It would last you for weeks--- or years. You’ve got tons.”  
 “Beast!”  
 “The tonfulness is---”  
 “Terrific!” chuckled Bob Cherry.  
 “I say, you fellows, you mind that beast Coker doesn’t get that boat away!” gasped the alarmed Owl. “I can jolly well tell you that I shan’t stick here without grub! You can’t expect it.”  
 “What?” roared Bob Cherry.  
 “It’s not much I eat!” said Bunter warmly. “But if you fellows fancy I’m going to be kept short of food, you’re jolly well mistaken!”  
 “You fat villain!” roared Bob, in great wrath. “We’re only here at all on your account, you grubby, unwashed porker!”  
 “ you can Jo Jo cured black in the face!” roared back Bunter. “but if you think you’re going to start me, I can jolly will say------ Ow! Wow! Yow! Beast! Leave off kicking me! Yaroooooooooh!”  
 Billy Bunter fled  
 “I guess that fat gink is a pesky prize packet.” remarked Fisher T. Fish. “I’ll say we’re a bunch of all-fired ginks to be making any trouble about him!”  
 “Well, it’s the principle of the thing.” said the captain of the Remove. “A Remove man isn’t going to be sacked for nothing!”  
 “Hear, hear!”  
 “We’re keeping this up until they find out who really inkeb Prout!” went on Wharton. “Then it will be all right.”  
 “Will it?” gasped Fisher T. Fish.  
 “Of course it will! The Head won’t want to sack Bunter when he gets hold of the right man.”  
 “Aw! Wake snakes!” muttered Fisher T Fish, and he said no more.  
 There was one man in the Greyfriars Remove who had the best of reasons for not desiring the facts to come to light all but about the inking of Prout. That man was Fisher Tarleton Fish.  
 “Well, fore-warned is fore-armed.” said Bob Cherry. “: one could hold of the board if he takes a long tonight. He will find some nice fellows sitting up for him.”  
 “All ready to make him sit up!” remarked the Bounder.  
 “The sit-upfulness will be preposterous.”  
 There was no doubt that that “tip” from Sammy Bunter was very useful to the rebels on the island. They had not been blind to the danger of a night attack; every night some of them were camped at the landing place, where they were certain to be awakened by any attempt to land. But they had not thought of a single fellow swimming off from the bank to capture the boat and get it away under cover of darkness. That operation might have been carried out without awakening any of them, and in the morning they would have found themselves stranded.  
 Over supper they debated the matter. Coker, if he came, was to be allowed to get as far as the boat. The juniors agreed on that. But he would not be allowed to get away again! They had read it on but also! What was going to happen to Coker would serve as a warning to any other enterprising fellow who was afflicted with an inability to mind his own business!  
 When the time came to turn in some of the Removites went to sleep, as usual, in tents and sleeping bags. But the majority of the Form remained awake—-ready for Coker of the Fifth.  
 The board was pulled out of the water on the sloping bank. But it was not left untenanted as usual. Three fellows took their blankets into the **boat**, to camp in it for the night. Near at hand a dozen other fellows camped.  
 Coker, if he came, was likely to find himself in the midst of an unlooked-for hornets’ nest!  
 As the starry night grew older, Billy Bunter’s snore rumbled over and the river. Other fellows dropped off into slumber. Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, on their blankets in the boat, were the last to remain awake. But at eleven o’clock Bob gave a deep yawn.  
 “ You fellows keeping awake?” he murmured.  
 “Eh? Yes!” Wharton started out of a doze. “Oh, yes!”  
 “Then you can call me when Coker happens!”  
 And Bob closed his drowsy eyes and went to sleep.  
 Ten minutes later, Harry Wharton blinked sleepily at Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, whose watchful dark eyes glimmered in the shadows from his dusky face.  
 “You keeping awake, Inky?”  
 The nabob of Bhanipur grinned.  
 “The wakefulness is terrific, my esteemed chum!” he answered.  
 “Then you can call me, old chap.”  
 Anb Wharton followed Bob’s example. Really, it was hardly necessary to remain awake, as the occupants of the boat were certain to wake when Coker barged in. But the dusky nabob dib not close his eyes. With Oriental patience, he waited and watched, while the night grew older.  
 It was close on midnight when a sound across the arm of the river caught the keen ears of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.   
 He started and listened.  
 Then he bent over the captain of the Remove, and shook him gently.  
 “My esteemed, sleepy headed chum, the excellent and execrable enemy is at hand!” whispered the Nabob of Bhanipur.  
 “Oh!” gasped Wharton. He started into wide wakefulness and shook Bob by the shoulder.  
 “Whurrrr! Wharrer marrer---"  
 “Wake up, old bean! Quiet!” whispered Wharton.  
 Bob sat up  
 “Coker?” he breathed.  
 “Inky thinks so------”  
 “The thinkfulness is terrific!” murmered the nabob.  
 “Good egg!” murmured Bob.  
 And the three juniors sitting in the darkness in the boat under the threes, waited and watched.  
  
 **THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Nocturnal!**“DON’Tmake a row!” said Coker.  
 That was Horace Coker, all over!  
 Potter and Greene were not making a sound! ---cocaine was---several sounds!  
 But it was Coker’s way to give orders and instructions.  
 His comrades breathed hard, with difficulty restraining a keen desire to seize Horace Coker and jam his head against the banisters.  
 But it was no time for jamming Coker’s head on the banisters, satisfactory as that proceeding would have been. Fellows breaking school bounds at night could not be too quiet about it>  
 Greyfriars school was buried in slumber. Up to the last moment, Potter and Greene had hoped that Coker also would be buried in slumber and would not wake till the rising bell clanged out in the morning. Indeed they would have been glad, just then, for Horace Coker to be buried in anything, anywhere.  
 But Coker was awake! Coker was in deadly earnest! Coker meant business. There was no escape for his followers.   
 In a weak moment Potter and Greene had agreed to back him up in this nocturnal enterprise. Really, they had not had a lot of choice in the matter. Coker had discussed it at tea in the study. Had he discussed and after tea, they might have declined. But Coker was standing the tea, and it was one of Coker’s lavish spreads. Porter and Greene could hardly have shared in that magnificent spread and at the same time refused to back up their great leader.  
 So they had given their adhesion.  
 Now they repented it, but it was too late to back out! At the witching hour of night, the scheme seemed absolutely rotten to Potter and Greene.  
 It had not seemed so rotten when Coker told him about it in the quad; neither had it seemed so rotten accompanied by a magnificent spread in this study. But it seemed frightfully rotten when Coker woke them up at eleven o’clock and they had to turn out and dress.  
 Creeping down shadowy staircases in the dark, it seemed rottener than ever. And Coker, of course, had to stumble and barge and make a row, and at the same time whisper orders to keep quiet!  
 Porter and Greene admitted it was a brainy scheme, especially for Coker. It was probable that the Head would be glad to hear that the islanders had lost the boat, and were cut off from communication with the land and the possibility of getting in supplies. In such circumstances he would forgive the irregularity of the proceeding, and might even thank the seniors for having helped in an admittedly difficult situation.  
 But that depended on success!  
 If they succeeded no doubt it was all right! It would be a shrewd blow at the Remove rebellion, such as the Sixth Form prefects had failed to deliver. It would be one up, for the Fifth, to succeed where the prefects had failed. But if they did not succeed------ and was anything likely to succeed in Coker’s hands? It did not seem probable!  
 Success, no doubt, would see them through. But if there were caught breaking bonds at night they would be dealt with as breakers of bounds and their intentions would count for nothing! And it was an awfully serious thing to break school bounds after lights out! Fellows were sacked for that sort of thing.  
 Potter and Greene crept after Coker and waded in shallow water, blinking round him in the darkness of the shadowy branches overhead. He expected to find the board tied on to the willows, but he did not find it there. But for some minutes he blinked and blinked; then as his eyes grew more accustomed to the deep shadow he discerned the shape of the boat pulled up on the shore. He squelched out of water and mud, and approached it cautiously.  
 Twigs crackled under his feet. Willow branches brushed and murmured. Those slight sounds would not have awakened sleepers sleeping the sound of healthy sleep of youth. But they were very distinctly audible to three wide-awake fellows grinning in the darkness inside the boat.  
 Those three fellows made no sound---so far. They were waiting with cheery patience for Coker to get to close quarters.  
 He got as far as he could.  
 He reached the boat. It was upright, the keel resting in a little gully. Coker grasped it.  
 Coker had not quite expected this. Still, he was at no loss to deal with it. It was his own boat, and he knew its weight. It was not difficult for a hefty fellow like Coker to shove it down the bank into the water. Once it was there floating off, it would not matter if the noise awakened the fags. It would be out of their reach. It was only necessary to heave it down a slope into the Sark.  
 Coker, gasping the board, heaved. And then suddenly three pairs of hands, gasping Coker, heaved also. Three dark figures, leaping from the boat, strewed Horace Coker on the earth, and strewed themselves over him.  
 “Got him!” gasped Bob Cherry.  
 “Hold him!” panted Wharton.  
 “The holdfulness is terrific!”  
 “Wake up, you men!” yelled Bob.  
 Coker for the moment hardly knew what was happening. He was taken quite a surprise. But he knew that he was on his black, but one knee was planted on his chest, but somebody was trampling on his long legs, and that somebody else had a grip on his ears. And he could hear sounds of stirring and voices as if a whole nest of hornets was turning out.  
 “Oooogh!” gasped Coker. “What------ Urrgh!”  
 “It’s Coker!” chuckled Bob Cherry. “I know his jolly old toot. That’s either Coker’s voice, or an escaped foghorn”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Got him?” came the Bounder’s shout.  
 “Yes, rather! Here he is!”  
 “Good egg!”  
 There was a general scrambling towards the spot. Electric torches and bike lamps gleamed out. There was a light on the subject. It gleamed on Coker’s startled, infuriated face, glaring up.  
 “You---you---you---you young rotters!” gasped Coker. “Leggo! Gerroff! I’ll smash, I’ll spiflicate you! I’ll---I’ll------ Grooogh!”  
 “Sit on him!”  
 “Jump on him!”  
 “Mop him up!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Coker’s struggled wildly. But a dozen fellows were round him, all grabbing and grasping him. Coker had no chance.  
 “Potter!” yelled Coker. “Greene!”  
 “Oh, my hat! He’s got his pals with him!” exclaimed Johnny Bull. “Look out!”  
 “They’re not here! They didn’t come across with him!”  
 “There’s a rope tied round the fathead!”  
 “Potter! Rescue! Greene!” roared Coker.  
 “Yes, I can see those two duffers rescuing you, old bean, away from this crowd!” chuckled Bob. “We’ll bag them too, if they come across!”  
 “Catch them coming!” grinned the Bounder. “They’ll watch it!”   
 It was really improbable that Potter and Greene would attempt to swim across, and rescue Horace Coker from a swarm of the Removites. That was all together too large an order for Coker’s pals.  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hold on!” shouted Bob, as there came a tug at the rope that was knotted round Coker’s manly form. “They’re pulling!”  
 “Hold him!” yelled Wharton.  
 “Hang on!”  
 “Stick to him!”  
 “The stickfulness is terrific!”  
 “Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!” raved Coker. “Leggo! Wow! I’m being pulled to bits! Yurr-roop! Wow! Oh crikey!   
 “Ha, ha, ha ha! Hang on!”  
 Potter and Greene were doing their best. Having realized but Coker had fallen into the hands of the enemy they bethought themselves of the rope, of which one end was tied to Coker. If there was a chance of winning Coker out of the hornet’s nest, like a court battle will buckle, Potter and Greene were going to make the most of it.  
 They braced themselves to the rope, their feet planted in the earth, and put their beef into it.  
   
  
 Coker was very nearly whisked out of the hands of his captors. But not quite. The Removites were not ready to part with Coker yet. They held on to Coker as if he had been a prize of priceless value>  
 Removites hung to his arms, his legs, his ears, his collar, and nearly everything that was his. Like Potter and Greene they put their beef into it, and manfully resisted the strain.  
 It was a tug-of-war---with Horace Coker as the prize. It was really awful for Coker. The Removites held him fast. The drag on the rope was terrific. It did not drag Coker away; but it seemed as if it was going to cut him in half.  
 “Urrgh! Wurrgh! gurgled Coker. “Oh crikey! Help! Leggo! You’re pip-pip-pip-pulling me to pi-pop-pieces Wurrgh!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Hang on!”  
 “Yarooh! You’re killing me`” shrieked Coker. “Oh crikey! Leggo! You’re breaking me in half! Yarooh!”  
 “Stick to him! ” gasped Bob Cherry. “We’re keeping some of him, if those fatheads get the rest!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Harry Wharton opened his pocket knife, and sawed across the taught rope. Really, there was no telling what might have happened to Horace Coker had not the rope parted.  
 Fortunately it did part. Under the sawing blade it parted suddenly with a snap  
 There was a sudden collapse of Potter and Greene. With their feet firmly planted, and leaning back to it, they had been dragging with all their force on the unyielding rope. When it suddenly yielded, and the loose end flew across the water to them, Potter and Greene went over backwards as if they had been shot.  
 Greene crashed on the towpath; Potter crashed on Greene. Two fearful yells simultaneously awoke the echoes of Popper Court woods. Fellows staring from the island to the starlit bank so two pairs of heels kicking up into the air.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!” came a yell across the Sark.  
 “How’s that?” roared Bob Cherry.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Oh crumbs!” gasped Potter, struggling to his feet. “Oh, my hat! Ow!”  
 “Oooooh!” groaned Greene, sitting up and feeling the back of his head to make sure that it was still there. It felt as if it wasn’t. “Oh, my napper! Oh, my nut! Ow!”  
 “Coming across for Coker?” yelled the Bounder.  
 “Oh, do!” roared Johnny Bull.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Potter peered across the stream. He had no intention of attempting to cross it. Whatever was going to happen to Coker in the hands of the rebels, Potter did not want the same to happen to him, also. In the light of the break lumps under the island trees he made out the crowd of Removites, with Coker wriggling and gasping in their midst. Greene, uninterested in the fate of Coker, continued to rub the back of his head. It had hit the towpath hard when Greene went down, and there was a pain in it.  
 “Well, they’ve got him!” said Potter.  
 “Ow!” said Greene. “Wow!”  
 “We can’t do anything------”  
 “Wow! My nut! Ow!”   
 “Well, he’s asked for it.” said Potter philosophically. “Let’s hope he’ll enjoy it now he’s got it.”  
 “Ow! My napper! I think it’s cracked! Ow!”  
 “You fellows coming across?” roared the Bounder.  
 “Thanks, no!” answered Potter. “When you’ve done with that howling idiot, chuck him in, and we’ll pull him out this side.”  
 “We’re not done with him yet!” called back Bob Cherry. “We’re keeping dear old Horace for a bit! We’re going to make him tired of paying visits at such late hours and spoiling our beauty sleep.”  
 “I’ll smash you!” roared Coker.  
 “The smashfulness will be a boot on the other leg, my esteemed and idiotic Coker!” chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “I’ll spiflicate you!” where you move room move all the cliffs of them are there with a fellow found Friday guests of our gaze of a way and the  
 “I may be mistaken.” remarked Bob Cherry. “but I fancy you are going to get the spiflication, Horace.”  
 “I’ll pulverise you!”  
 “ Get that can of tar!” said B ob. “We got it for old Popper, if he blew in again; but it will do just as well for Horace!”   
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Potter and Greene sat down on the bank to wait. But was told that they could do; and Greene was still busily occupied rubbing his head. They could hear the voices on the island, and if they had had any desperate idea of attempting to rescue Coker, the mention of the tar would have banished it at once . Potter and Greene did not want any of the tar! Coker was welcome to all that he had asked for---including the tar!  
  
 **THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Horrid for Horace!**“HERE you are!”  
 Keep his nut steady!”  
 It was not easy to keep Coker’s “nut” steady! Held by innumerable hands as he was, hardly able to move a limb, Coker contrived to duck and dodge with his head, as Bob Cherry lifted the can of tar.  
 It was not a large can. There were only a couple of gallons of tar in it. But that amount, though not launch, was more than cocaine wanted on-his devoted head—much more. He did not want any! He objected strongly! His head twisted to and fro, almost like the head of a captured serpent, in his frantic efforts to keep it out of the way of the tar-can.  
 “Hold on to his ears!” said Bob.  
 “Yaroooh!”  
 “And his nose---”  
 “Urrrrrggh!”  
 “Now keep him steady! We don’t want to waste the tar! Tar costs money, and we’re not going to charge Coker anything for it---”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “ Coker, firmly held, gazed up in horror at the can, as Bob began to tilt it over. The tar within was in a fluid, sticky state. The thought of that sticky fluid on his hair made Coker shudder. It horrified him to the marrow of his bones.   
 “ Chuck it!” he gasped. “I---I say, chuck it!” Coker of the fifth so far humbled himself as to plead to fags!  
 “Just going to!” answered Bob. “I’m going to chuck it over your mop, old thing!”  
 “I don’t mean that, you little idiot!”  
 “I do, you bid idiot!”  
 “Look here! Keep that tar away!” shrieked Coker. “If you got it for old Potter, keep it for him! Look here!—I-I give you best!”  
 That was a tremendous concession for Horace Coker. Generally, Coker never knew when he was beaten. But he was convinced this time. A trickle of tar over the side of the can convinced him.  
 “Let him have it!” roared Bolsover major.  
 “Mop it over his napper!”  
 “Keep off!” shrieked Coker, wriggling in horror. “Oh crikey! If you stick that tar on my hair, you young scoundrels---”  
 “Us what?” demanded Bob.  
 “I---I—I mean, you---you Remove fellows!” gasped Coker. “I---I say, don’t be rotters! I’ll go! I---I’ll go without thrashing you! There!”  
 “Awfully kind of Coker two offer to go without thrashing thirty fellows, isn’t it?” remarked Frank Nugent.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Give him the tar!” shouted the Bounder.  
 Bob held the can over Coker’s horrified head. Just a thin trickle of tar came over the side. But he did not pour. As a matter of fact, Bob had no intention of pouring the tar over Coker’s head. He was playfully pulling Coker’s leg. But a good many of the rebels were in favour of letting Coker’s have the tar. They shouted to Bob to get going.  
 “Well, look here! If Coker’s sorry, perhaps we can let him off the tar!” said Harry Wharton. “Are you sorry you barged in, Coker?”  
 “I---I---I---” gurgled the infuriated Horace. “I’ll smash the lot of you!”  
 “ That doesn’t sound like being sorry!” said Bob. “I think I’d better let him have the tar, after all! Keep your nut steady, Coker!”  
 “Thanks!” yelled Coker. “Oh, thanks! Oh crikey! Thanks!”   
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Roll him in!” said Wharton, laughing, and Horace Coker was rolled off the island into the muddy margin of the Sark.  
 He scrambled to his feet there, gabbling with fury. He glared back, tempted to charge at the grinning enemy. Bob cherry held up the can of tar invitingly.  
 Coker did not charge.  
 He swam from the bed! A yell of merriment followed him.  
 “I rather fancy,” remarked Bob Cherry, “but Coker will think twice before he pays us another visit.”  
 “The twicefulness will be terrific.”  
 “Good-night, Coker!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Coker’s scrambled out of the water. Potter and Greene rose to their feet. They were grinning---as if they, as well as the juniors, had derived entertainment from the scene on the island. Coker gave them a speechless glare. He squeezed water out of his clothes, jammed on his shoes and coat and hat, anb started down the towpath. In the silence of inexpressible wrath, Coker tramped homeward to Greyfriars, with Potter and Greene grinning in his wake.  
 They clambered in over the Cloister wall. They arrived at the door of the Sixth Form lobby. Potter turned the door handle.  
 “Oh,my hat!” he ejaculated.  
 “Open that door, you dummy!” snarled Coker.  
 “It’s locked!”  
 “Don’t be an idiot! How can it be locked? I left it unlocked.”  
 “It’s locked now.”  
 “Don’t be a dummy! Let me get at it.”  
 Coker got at it! He twisted and wrenched at the door handle. But the lobby door did not stir.  
 “Oh crumbs!” said Coker blankly.  
 “Weil, isn’t it locked?” asked Potter sarcastically.  
 “Don’t be a fathead!”  
 “Wingate must have, right, after all.” said Greene. “ I knew Coker had woke him up! He knows somebody is out of bonds, and he’s locked the door.”  
 “That state!” upgrade pater  
 “If you’d backed me up.” said Coker, “it would have been all right! If we’d got that boat away, it would have been all right! If you’d had the sense of bunny rabbits and the pluck of Guinea pigs, it would have been all right! Now look what you’ve landed us all in!”  
 “We have?” gasped Potter and Greene.  
 “Yes, you! And------”  
 Coker got no further. Potter and Greene had to face the consequences of being caught out of bounds after the lights out. That was inevitable now. It meant detentions and impositions, at best. It might mean worse than that! It was all Coker’s doing, and he laid it all to their charge! It was the last straw! Potter and Greene, goaded, turned on Coker. They grasped him, and banged his head on the lobby door!  
 Finding solace in that proceeding, they banged it again, and yet again, and yet once more! Then they hurled Coker, roaring, away, and walked along to Wingate’s window, to tap for admittance.  
  
 **THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Loder Knows How!**   
GERALD LODER grinned.  
 Wingate coloured.  
 It was morning at Greyfriars--- underwrite on Sunday morning. But there were some faces that were not sorry! The headmaster’s face was rather like a thundercloud.  
 Passing Wingate of the Sixth in the quadrangle, Dr. Locke gave him a cold, distant stare, very different from his usual benignant look, and frowned portentously . He passed on, leaving the captain of the school with a red face--- and Loder, at a little distance, grinning.  
 The fact was that the Head’s temper had suffered of late. The Lower School regarded the remove rebellion as a tremendous lark. The seniors shook their heads over it, or grinned over it, as the spirit moved them. The masters, in Common- room, discussed it incessantly, and wondered why the Head did not put a prompt end to it. Certainly the Head would have done so, had he known a row. But he did not know how, and the prolongation of this extraordinary state of affairs was getting on his nerves.  
 The Head seemed to take the view that it was up to the prefects to handle recalcitrant juniors, and especially to Wingate, head prefect! Power was deputed to them for that purpose.  
 And they had failed him! The Head in these days was angry with everybody and everything, and especially with his prefects! Hence the cold stare, or, rather, glare, with which he passed George Wingate in the quad that morning.  
 “Looks as if Wingate’s rather at a discount!” Loder remarked to Walker of the Sixth.   
 Walker grunted.  
 “The Beak’s ratty all round.” he said. “He sniffs at Quelch, as if it was Quelch’s fault! He snorts at us, as if it was our fault! Prefects ain’t supposed to handle a scene like this! It’s a job for the beak!”  
 “Well, head prefect ought to make himself useful in an emergency like this.” said Loder. “All Wingate can do is to report fellows for trying to handle what beats him. I hear that some Fifth Form men got out of bounds last night, and he spotted them, and they were up before the Head after prayers. They’s got detentions for the rest of the term. And it seems that they went after those young rascals on Popper’s Island---so they said, at least.  
 “Lucky for them the Head believed them!” grunted Walker. “He’s a rather a simple old duck.”  
 “Well, I fancy it was true; it was like that idiot Coker to barge in and make a fool of himself. Anyhow, he tried it on, ass as he is---and Wingate isn’t even trying anything on! I fancy he wouldn’t be head prefect much longer if another man handled the matter and got away with it.”  
 Walker looked at his friend.  
 “If that’s your game, there’s nothing in it.” he said. “You can’t touch the young rotters any more than anybody else can.”  
 “The whole thing hangs on Bunter!” said Loder quietly. “Bunter’s sacked, and they’re sticking to him. If Bunter was got away from the island the whole thing would collapse at once.”  
 “ I suppose it would! Got any stunt for getting that fat, frowsy, frabjous foozler away from the rest of the mob?”  
 Just that!” said Loder. “Keep it dark, Jimmy, old man---Wingate’s not in this! Things would be rather rosier for our set in the Sixth---if I were head prefect--- what? And I can jolly well tell you that the Head couldn’t do less than make me head prefect if I handed Bunter over to him and knocked the bottom out of the whole show.”  
 “Right as rain!” agreed Walker. “But how the thump--- I tell you they’re sticking to him like glue!”  
 “Bunter’s got a brother here.” said Loder.  
 “What about that?”  
 “Suppose he got run over by a car------”  
 “Eh?”  
 “Parents sent for in a hurry---and his brother sent for, of course, with young Sammy lying in sanny all smashed up------as quotes  
 “But he won’t be run over by a car!” gasped Walker, bewildered. “Think he’s going to walk under a motor-car to please you, Loder?”  
 “You’re rather an ass, Jimmy!” said Loder. “Suppose it happened, a prefect would cut across to the island and tell Bunter. What?”  
 “ I suppose so! But it hasn’t happened, and won’t----"  
 “Bunter could be told so, all the same.” said Loder coolly.  
 “Oh!” gasped Walker.  
 James Walker stared at Loder. He began to understand. Loder grinned genially.  
 “Dash it all, it’s too thick, old man!” muttered Walker. “You couldn’t tell a rotten lie like that---”  
 “You’ve never told one?” inquired Loder pleasantly.  
 “Well, there’s a limit!” said Walker. “Bunter’s a fat little beast and the cause of all this trouble, but alarming him with a tale that his young brother’s run over by a car------ Dash it all, Loder, it’s putrid!”  
 Lorder shrugged his shoulders. If there was a chance of “dishing” Wingate, and becoming head prefect in his place, Gerald Loder was not scrupulous about the methods he used.  
 “Well, thanks for your opinion; but that’s the stunt.” he said. “It’s bound to work! And I’m going on over to the island now. No time like the present, and I’d rather take a walk than Greek with the Head, anyhow! You and Carne will come with me---keep out of sight, of course; but we must make sure of the little beast once we’ve got him off the isand. We can easily get leave from the Head. He’ll be glad------"  
 “You don’t dare to tell the head what you’ve just told me!”  
 “I shan’t go into details.” said Loder airily. “I shall simply mention that I believe there’s a chance of catching Bunter off the island. So there is, isn’t there? When he hears that his brother’s smashed up------”  
 “It’s brutal!” growled Walker. “And, look here, have a little sense! Bunter will know perfectly well that Sammy can’t have been out of gates this morning, before classes---"  
 “The accident happened yesterday.” said Loder calmly. “Sammy Bunter was run down by a car and brought home on a stretcher. His parents are here already---”  
 “Oh, my hat!”  
 “And Bunter, of course, will have to come. I shall call the news across from the bank---you won’t catch me setting foot on the island. It will work like a charm.”  
 “I---I suppose it will! I don’t see how it can fail! But—it’s a rotten —it’s a dirty trick—it’s------”  
 “Thanks!”  
 Loder walked away to the House, leaving James Walker in a rather perturbed mood. The bell was ringing for classes when Loder came back, accompanied by Carne of the Sixth. Carne was grinning, apparently not sharing Walker’s objections to the scheme.   
 “All serene.” said Loder cheerfully. “Exeat for three---and the beak quite pleased. Come on!”  
 Walker hesitated, but he followed on. While the rest of Greyfriars went into class, the three black sheep of the Sixth walked out of gates, and followed the path up the river.  
 Loder halted when the tall oak on Popper’s Island came in sight.  
 “ You fellows keep doggo here.” he said. “Bunter will come this way----and you ---grab him when he shows up---I can’t collar him in sight of that crew--- they’d be on my neck at once!”  
 “Leave him to us!” said Carne.  
 Lodes nodded and walked on up the towpath, leaving Walker and Carne sitting on the grassy bank under the trees. The belly of the six grinned cheerfully as he went. He fluttered himself that his scheme was an absolute winner, and already, in his mind’s eye he saw himself head prefect of Greyfriars in Wingate’s place.  
 “Hello, hallo, hallo” came a roar, as Loders reached the spot opposite the landing place on the island.  
 Bob Cherry was there, and—and fellows joined him at once. At the sight of a Greyfriars prefect they were on their guard. Loder---no longer grinning---came to the water's edge, with a very serious expression on his face  
 “Coming over?” shouted the Bounder.  
 “No!” answered Loder. “Don’t rag now, you fellows—it’s pretty serious! If Bunter’s there, all I’ve got a message for him from the Head! His younger brother was run over by a car yesterday------”  
 “What?”  
 “He’s in a pretty serious state, and his father and mother came down last night. Bunter’s to go at once. That’s all.”  
 “Oh, my hat!” said Bob Cherry blankly.  
 Every face was serious now. Only the Bounder give Loder of the Sixth a rather suspicions look. Smithy’s was not a trusting nature.  
 “We’ll bring him across at once!” called out Harry Wharton.  
 “Hold on!” muttered the Bounder. “Is it true? If it’s a trick to get hold of Bunter---”  
 “Oh, rot! Think the Head would do a beastly mean a thing like that? Don’t be an ass, Smithy!”  
 “Bunter!” shouted Bob. “Bunter, you’re wanted!”  
 Loder suppressed a smile. There was no doubt that that scheme was a “winner.” Stepping on the bank, he watched the Removites man the boat, and Bunter step into it, and they pulled across from the island.  
  
 **THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Not a Winner!**“I SAY, you fellows------"  
 “Buck up, old man!”  
 “Yes; but---”  
 “It may be all right, after all.” said Harry Wharton. “Poor old Sammy! He did as a good tone yesterday, too. It mayn’t be so bad, old chap.”   
 “Yes; but I haven’t finished my brekker.” said Bunter peevishly. “You might have given a fellow time to finish his brekker!”  
 “You fat villain, shut up!”  
 “Oh, really, Cherry------”  
 “Here we are!”  
 The board bumped on the bank, and Wharton and Bob Cherry, and the Bounder, jumped out, and Bob lent Billy Bunter a hand to get ashore.  
 Bunter’s fat face was worried and clouded. No doubt he was worrying about Sammy. But he was also worrying about his unfinished breakfast. Sammy’s case was urgent, of course; but so was brekker! However, Bunter scrambled ashore.  
 It was difficult for the schemer of the Sixth to conceal his delight as he saw his prey falling fairly into his hands. But Loder contrived to keep a grave, concerned face. He made no motion to touch Bunter. He was carefully keeping up appearances of being there simply as a messenger from the Head, in serious circumstances.  
 “Hold on a minute!” said Vernon-Smith, with his eyes keenly on Loder. “Let’s ask Loder------”  
 “No good wasting time, Smithy!” said Harry Wharton. “The sooner Bunter gets to the school, the better. His brother------”  
 “Bunter wants to know what’s happened to his brother.” answered the Bounder. “When did it happen, Loder---in the morning?”  
 Wharton and Bob Cherry stared at the Bounder. Obviously, the “accident” could not have happened in the morning of the previous day, as Sammy Bunter had come along to the island in the afternoon with his “tip” to the rebels. Loder, of course, was quite unaware of that circumstance, and he answered unsuspiciously;  
 “It happened after classes. I think the kid was going to Courtfield, after class, when he was knocked over. He was brought in on a stretcher.”  
 “Oh lor’!” gasped Billy Bunter, his fat face paling. He forgot even brekker, at that.  
 “For goodness sake don’t waste time jawing, Smithy!” exclaimed Bob Cherry impatiently.  
 “Perhaps I’m not wasting time!” answered the Bounder coolly. “It seems jolly queer to me that Sammy should have started to walk to Courtfield just before lockup.  
 “It happened just after classes.” said Loder. “The kid went out after class, one was brought in on a stretcher. That’s all. Bunter can please himself about going to see him or not—I’ve got to get back.”  
 Loder turned away.  
 “I say, you fellows------”  
 “Smithy!” exclaimed Wharton and Bob Cherry together.  
 With a spring rather like that of a tiger, Smithy leaped at Loder as he turned away, grabbed him by the collar, and brought him down on his back on the towpath.  
 Loder landed with a crash. The next moment the Bounder’s knee was planted on his chest, pinning him down.  
 “Lend a hand here!” roared the Bounder. “Don’t let him get away, you dummies! Can’t you see its all spoof?”  
 “Look here------” gasped Bob.  
 Loder struggled savagely. But Wharton and Bob Cherry ran to the Bounder’s side, and he was grasped and safely held.  
 “All spoof!” panted the Bounder. “ I jolly well knew it was. Nothing’s happened to Sammy Bunter.”  
 “But the Head wouldn’t------” gasped Bob Cherry.  
 “The Head’s got nothing to do with this, you ass! It’s a trick of Loder’s to get hold of Bunter. Can’t you see?” yelled Vernon-Smith, with an angry impatience. “We saw Sammy on this towpath yesterday afternoon. He had only time to get back to Greyfriars for lock-up”  
 “Oh!” gasped Bob. “And Loder says it was just after class------”  
 “It was an hour after class when we saw him here!” exclaimed Wharton.  
 “Oh gad!” gasped Loder.  
 That the Remove rebels had seen anything of Sammy Bunter the previous afternoon Loder had never even dreamed. But the fact that they had, quite disposed of his story that Sammy had started to walk to Courtfield after class and had been knocked down by a car on the road.  
 “The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley,” as the poet has remarked. Loder’s precious scheme had “ganged agley” with a vengeance.  
 “Own up, you rotter!” roared Bob Cherry, taking Loder by the ears and banging his head on the hard, unsympathetic earth. “You lying worm, what have you got to say now?  
 “Yarooooh!”   
 “Own up, you worm!”  
 “Ow! Leggo! Leave off!” shrieked Loder, struggling frantically. “I---I own up! Yarooh! Leggo! Oh gad! Leave off banging my head! Wow!”  
 “I say, you fellows, if it isn’t true------"  
 “It isn’t, old chap! Its all right!”  
 “Then I can go back and finish my brekker!” said Bunter brightly. “Of course, I was fearfully worried about Sammy---heart broken, in fact. But I’m jolly hungry, you know—"  
 “Kick him!”  
 “Whooop!”  
 “Go and get that tar, Smithy!” gasped Bob. “We’ll take care of Loder. Lucky we never mopped over Coker, after all. Go and get it.”  
 “You bet!” grinned the Bounder. “Keep him safe!”  
 “We’ve got him!”  
 Vernon-Smith jumped into the boat again. Bunter jumped after him in hot haste. Brekker called Bunter, with a call that was not to be denied.  
 The boat shot across to the island again.  
 While it was gone Loder struggled madly for freedom, but he struggled in vain. Wharton and Bob Cherry had him down, and they kept him down!  
 Loder was still wriggling and struggling when the boat came back to the island with as many Remove fellows in it as it would hold. Bunter remained on the island; brekker claimed Bunter. But all the other fellows were keen to lend a hand in dealing with Loder.  
 They scrambled ashore in an excited mob. The Bounder had that can of tar in his hands and a cheery grin on his face. That tar had been laid in for Sir Hilton Popper. It had very nearly been bestowed on Coker of the Fifth. Now Loder was going to get it!  
 “Hold him,” grinned the Bounder--- “and keep clear!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Don’t you dare!” shrieked Loder’s. “—you young villains---scoundrels-Oh gad!  
Keep off! Gurrrrggh!”  
 Loder sat up, in many hands. More hands than you could have planted were grasping him and holding him ready for the tar. Vernon-Smith tapped into the N over his head.  
 The tar streamed out.  
 Lodor gave a frantic howl as he felt it dropping on his head. He made a terrific effort to tear himself loose, but he could only move his head---and moving his head only caused the tar to stream down his face, instead of landing on his hair.  
 It streamed and streamed and streamed---two gallons of it, soft and sticky! Loder’s hair was a mass of it; his face was covered with it; it ran behind his ears and down his neck. He disappeared from view under a coating of thick, sticky tar. He was transformed into a negro of the deepest dye---black, but not comely.  
 Some of the Remove fellows were splashed and smeared a little; that could not be helped, and they did not mind; Loder was getting nearly all of it. The sticky fluid flowed slowly but steadily, amid howls of laughter from the Removites and howls of rage from Loder, till the can was nearly empty; then the Bounder jammed it down on Loder’s head like a hat. It fitted quite nicely down into his tarry nose.  
 “Oh, you young villains! Gurrrrgh!” gurgled Loder, as a trickle of tar went into his mouth.   
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Behold he is black, but comely” chortled the Bounder.  
 “The blackfulness is terrific, but you, remains is not preposterous!” chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “Now kick him out!”  
 “All kick together!”  
 “I say, give a fellow room to land him one!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Loder staggered to his feet, streaming tar. He clutched wildly at the tarry bonnet on his head. But he had no time to get it off; those were landing on an on all sides. How many kicks he received Loder could not have counted---but they were many, they were hard, and they were heavy. Still bonneted by the tar can, Loder started at a wild run down the towpath, roars of laughter following him. At a distance he stopped to tear the can from his head, and then ran on again, gasping, gurgling, panting, streaming with perspiration and tar.  
 Wharton and Carne, seated under the trees, jumped up at the sound of running footsteps.  
 “Is that Bunter?” exclaimed Walker. “Why, what--- Who---who’s that blessed nigger------”  
 “Loder!” shrieked Carne.  
 “Loder! Oh, my hat!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Loder panted up; he glared with a black face and wildly rolling eyes at the two almost convulsed prefects.  
 They yelled.  
 “You silly dummies,” shrieked Loder, “ what are you cackling at? Look what they’ve done to me! Look!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!” yelled Walker and Carne.  
 Loder, glaring with fury, barged on. What he wanted most just then was a bath, with hot water and soap---plenty of hot water and plenty of soap---and a scrubbing- brush. Walker and Carne followed him, doubled up with merriment. They did not need to ask Loder whether his scheme had failed; only too evidently it had. Loder did not look like becoming head prefect of Greyfriars yet awhile. And the Remove rebels were going as strong as ever on Popper’s Island.  
THE END.