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"BILLY BUNTER FLIES EAST"

A Comedy

by

Maurice McLoughlin

Introducing

Characters from the Greyfriars

School Stories by

Frank Richards

This Script is the property of

City Stage Productions, Ltd.,  
117, Hamilton Terrace,  
London. N.W. 8.

Characters:

William George Bunter	( The Owl of the Remove)
Harry Wharton	)
Bob Cherry	)
Huree Jamset Ram Singh	) The Famous Five
Frank Nugent	)
Johnny Bull	)
Mr. Quelch	The Remove Form Master.
Major Duclos	)
Krishna Gupal	) Two Mysterious
	) Characters
Captain Shirkay	



SCENE ONE.

The Scene is Study No. 1. of the Greyfriars Remove. A square room with one door which leads out to the Remove Passage. The walls are old and panelled. The room is furnished with a large table R. C., four dining chairs, a cupboard, two comfortable worn leather armchairs and some shelves containing books, cups, trophies etc. . . In the corner of the room are slung some football boots, and a ball.

As the curtain rises we see HARRY WHARTON, JOHNNY BULL and FRANK NUGENT setting the table for tea. Already a large cloth is on the table together with plates of cakes, pies, jam etc., and a very large plum cake on a stand in the centre of the table. The boys are putting round plates, knives etc. as they talk.

WHARTON: Inky's a long time with that French bird. What's his name ?

NUGENT: Duclos. Major Duclos. What's the idea of him coming to tea with us ?

WHARTON: Search me. He particularly asked to see Inky, according to the Head.

BULL: It wasn't a bad lecture he gave. I always thought Archaeology was a lot of rot. He made it quite interesting.

NUGENT: What about that little Indian chap he has with him. Is he coming to tea as well ?

WHARTON: I suppose so. I've put a place for him. I must say he handles the English language a great deal better than Inky does. (Stands back from table) There ! We've done them proud. I doubt if even Bunter could polish that lot off in one sitting.

NUGENT: I shouldn't like to bet on it.

The door opens and BOB CHERRY bursts in.

CHERRY: Hallo, Hallo, Hallo. The Giddy Feast all prepared ?

WHARTON: Just finished. We'll need a couple more chairs. A few extra cups too, I'm thinking.

CHERRY: Come along and we'll raid my Study.

BULL: What about leaving all this. Don't like to chance it in case Bunter's on the prowl.

CHERRY: Don't worry about Bunter. He's occupied.

NUGENT: Detention ?

CHERRY: That's right. He's detained eating a cake.

WHARTON: A cake ? Whose cake ?

CHERRY: Our cake !

BULL: Our cake ?

CHERRY: That's it. That cake there ! (Points to the large plum cake)

BULL: Don't act the goat. How can he be eating that cake when it's there on the table?

CHERRY: He is though. You see when I knew we were having a special plum cake I took the precaution of ordering two. One for us and one for Bunter.

WHARTON: You mean you bought a special cake for that fat gormandiser !

CHERRY: Right first time !

BULL: You want your brains tested. You've given it to him ?

CHERRY: I didn't have to. That fat robber helped himself. I let it be known that the cake for our party was in my study cupboard. . . I let it be known loudly in Bunter's hearing. Now the Study cupboard is like Mother Hubbard's.

WHARTON: You mean Bunter swiped it ?

CHERRY: He did.

BULL: You must be off your Rocker. Buying a cake for Bunter and then letting him snaffle out of the cupboard. If you were ass enough to buy it for him, why not give it to the fat chump ?

CHERRY: Because, my prize fathead, if I'd given it to him he might have been suspicious. He might not have eaten it.

NUGENT: Would that matter ?

CHERRY: It would. I particularly want Bunter to eat that cake. I've improved on it since I bought it.

WHARTON: How ? You mean you've iced it ?

CHERRY: Doctored it, would be a better term.

BULL Oh I see. You've fixed the cake !

CHERRY: You've got it.

WHARTON: And he's taken the bait ?

CHERRY: He has. I saw him sneak into the Study half an hour ago and if I know Bunter, when he came out the cake came with him.

BULL: (grinning) What have you put in it ?

CHERRY: Some Castor Oil...

They laugh.

CHERRY: ... A spot of ink...

More laughter.

CHERRY: ... and some glucose, to take the taste of the Castor-oil off a bit. It should do Bunter a lot of good. They tell me Castor oil and glucose have a wonderful effect on the constitution.

WHARTON: (laughing) Poor old Bunter ! That'll teach him to keep his paws off other people's grub.

CHERRY: That's what I thought. Although of course my first thought was for his health...

They laugh.

NUGENT: Let's come to your study and get the chairs and crockery... For once I don't think we need worry about leaving food on the table. —

They exit, still chuckling.

No sooner have they gone than the table cloth moves and BUNTER emerges from under the table. He holds a cake identical with the one on the table.



BUNTER:           Beasts ! (Looks at the cake he holds) Castor Oil ! . . .  
Ink ! Glucose ! ! The rotters ! . . .

                  He looks around, then sees the cake  
                  on the table.

BUNTER:           (cackling as he sees it) Give me Castor oil would they !  
He, he, he! I'll show the beasts !

                  Chuckling he takes the cake from the  
                  stand on the table and replaces it with  
                  the Castor oil cake.

BUNTER:           I wonder how they'll enjoy that ! . . .

                  BUNTER is about to skip out with the  
                  cake when he hears the boys returning.  
                  He looks round desperately, then skips  
                  under the table again. He looks up and  
                  takes a jam tart for luck.

                  The BOYS enter. They set the chairs  
                  near the table, and put the cups down.

NUGENT:           I think we're all set now.

CHERRY:           That cake looks terrific. I could do with a slice now.

WHARTON:          Now, hands off ! Wait for the guests.

CHERRY:           Can't think why these chaps should want to see Inky.

BULL               Well, one of them is an Indian.

NUGENT:           I suppose they'll like cake ?

CHERRY:           If they don't we'll scoff the lot. Or invite Bunter to tea.  
Although I don't think the poor old fat man will be in a fit  
state to eat any more today.

                  They laugh. . .

                  The door opens and HUREE SINGH enters,  
                  or "Inky" as his friends call him. He has  
                  with him MAJOR DUCLOS and KRISHNA  
                  GUPAL. MAJOR DUCLOS is a tall athletic  
                  Frenchman in his forties. He is very polite,  
                  has a French accent. KRISHNA GUPAL is  
                  a small stoutish Indian, middle-aged and  
                  nervous. In contrast to Inky's weird  
                  vocabulary, his English is excellent if a  
                  trifle sibilant.

INKY: Here are our esteemed guests. (Waving to boys) These are my esteemed chums. (Introduces them) Major Duclos and Krishna Gupal.

WHARTON: Glad to know you sir. Welcome to Study No. 1... Take a pew.

DUCLOS: You wish me to take which ?

INKY: He means the sitfulness is the proper caper.

CHERRY: Park yourself in a chair, Sir.

GUPAL: They wish us to be seated Major...

DUCLOS: Of course, of course... (He and GUPAL sit)

WHARTON: (to DUCLOS) We enjoyed your lecture, Sir.

BULL: Yes. I was just telling these fellows that I'd always thought Archaeology was a lot of rot.

NUGENT: Ahem !

CHERRY: But you made it very interesting. All that guff about the Middle East ...

DUCLOS: Guff ?

GUPAL: The young man means that he enjoyed your lecture, Major.

DUCLOS: Ah, yes. The Middle East is most interesting. I have done much work there. But there is a place of greater interest to me, which is why I wish to see our friend here.

INKY: I do not knowfully anything of Archaeology, Major. In factfully, my ignorance is terrific.

DUCLOS: Ah, my young friend. I do not wish your help in my studies. But I believe it is true that you are on excellent terms with the Maharajah of Ullapoor.

INKY: Yes. The Maharajah is nearfully inclined to my esteemed home State of Bhanipur.

GUPAL: You see Major. Did I not tell you that the Maharajah would be well known to our friend ?

CHERRY: As a matter of fact that's where we're spending the holidays isn't it, Inky ? In Ullapoor ?

INKY: Indeed. Our absurd holiday is to be spent in that very place.

WHARTON: We're going to do a spot of climbing there.

DUCLOS: But this is wonderful. I have for many years longed to explore the north of Ullapoor, at the foot of the mountains there is the Temple of the Red Dragon.

INKY: I have heardfully been told of this Temple.

DUCLOS: It is deserted now and much feared by the natives. But at one time it was the chief Temple of a mysterious tribe who worshipped the Red Dragon God.

GUPAL: The Major is most anxious to obtain a permit to visit the Temple, to trace the history of this tribe, now vanished.

CHERRY: Why couldn't the Major join forces with us Inky ? You don't think the Maharajah would kick, do you?

DUCLOS: The Maharajah does not care for exploration in his territory. Many people have endeavoured to obtain a permit to visit this Temple, now in ruins.

WHARTON: I'm sure he wouldn't mind if you were a pal of Inky's. As a matter of fact you'd probably be able to steer us right on a few things out there.

DUCLOS: I should be delighted. Although I have never been to Ullapoor I have done research in similar country. It would please me greatly to join with you.

INKY: Then my absurd Major Duclos, I will advise the Maharajah that you are with me and he will, I can surely guarantee, raise no objections.

GUPAL: There Major, your problem is solved.

CHERRY: Perhaps the Major could fly out with us. Inky has chartered a plane, he's rolling in the stuff you know.

DUCLOS: He rolls ?

GUPAL: The young man says that Huree Singh is most wealthy. They may take us in their plane.

WHARTON: You leave it to Inky Major, he'll fix it. Now let's tuck in at this grub.



They sit and are about to eat when  
MR. QUELCH enters.

QUELCH: Oh, I beg your pardon Wharton. I did not realise you had guests... (To DUCLOS) Congratulations Major Duclos, a most instructive and entertaining lecture, if I may be permitted to say so.

DUCLOS: You are too kind, Sir.

QUELCH: I trust you will pardon my intrusion. I merely wished to ascertain the whereabouts of one of the boys in my form. (To WHARTON) I am endeavouring to trace Bunter, Wharton I suppose you haven't seen him ?

WHARTON: No, Sir...

QUELCH: If he should come in here, tell him I am searching for him. He should have had an imposition on my desk half an hour ago.

CHERRY: Perhaps he isn't feeling too well, Sir.

QUELCH: That possibility had occurred to me, Cherry. Bunter complained of not feeling well during Latin this morning, but I took it as a manoeuvre to avoid the lesson. Perhaps I could send someone to the dormitory to investigate ...

He bows and exits.

CHERRY: I bet he finds Bunter groaning in his bed.

DUCLOS: Is this one of your friends ? He is ill ?

CHERRY: He's liable to be, any minute.

WHARTON: He's a fat porker in our form. You haven't seen Greyfriars if you haven't seen Bunter. (Cutting cake)

BULL: He's a good miss, if you ask me. If he'd had his way he'd have been coming on holiday with us.

NUGENT: Not if we were in our right minds.

WHARTON: / You must try a piece of this cake, Major - it's something special. You too, Mr. Gupal...

Hands them a piece.

DUCLOS: Merci...

GUPAL: Thank you.

They both take a bite of cake, and cough.

CHERRY: How is it, Sir ?

DUCLOS: (between splutters) C'est... C'est magnifique ! ...

GUPAL: Ugh... Excellent.

WHARTON: (taking a piece) It's a special cake that we bought when we knew you were coming... (Bites) Ugh... it's er... lovely...

All the boys bite a piece of cake.

DUCLOS: Oh, it is excellent cake indeed.

Following his lead they eat the cake, but with unhappy expressions.

DUCLOS: It is customary to deride English cooking. But after a cake such as this, what can one say ?

BULL: Very little - if one can speak after it.

Suddenly there is a violent hiccough from under the table.

They all look at one another, awkwardly.

CHERRY: Ahem ! ... Have you done any climbing at all, Major Duclos ?

DUCLOS: A little. But as an archaeologist I do not have a great deal of time to spend climbing the mountains, you understand.

WHARTON: Of course, Sir. It must be jolly interesting, reading all those old inscriptions and things.

DUCLOS: It is, it is. One may stumble across a forgotten language.

NUGENT: Then I suppose you wouldn't know how to pronounce it ?

DUCLOS: One may, how you say, take a chance. In Arabia I find a papyrus... with several unknown words on it. One of them looks like "E...E...U...G." Now I say, how would one speak such a word ?

There is another loud hiccough from BUNTER.



DUCLOS: (turning to CHERRY) Not quite, my young friend, but very nearly right. In fact it should be spoken thus...

He opens his mouth, and there is another hiccough from BUNTER.

BULL: Sounds exactly the same to me.

DUCLOS: Mon Dieu! Did I say that?

GUPAL: I think perhaps the excellent cake has affected your speech, Major. The word should be pronounced in this manner, as I see it ...

GUPAL opens his mouth, another hiccough, from BUNTER.

DUCLOS: There! It is exactly the same, is it not?

CHERRY: Some more cake Major ...

DUCLOS: Non! ... That is to say not at this moment. But it is so delicious perhaps I might take a piece with me.

BULL: (hastily) Take the lot. We've got plenty more like it.

CHERRY: (sotto) I hope not.

There is another knock on the door and QUELCH enters, again.

QUELCH: Pardon my interrupting you again Wharton, but I have sent Vernon-Smith to the Dormitory and Bunter is not there. In view of the fact of his complaints of illness I am a little perturbed.

WHARTON: Would he be in the Common Room, Sir?

QUELCH: I have looked in the Common Room myself. He did not appear for tea in the Hall, either I am told. For a boy of Bunter's excessive appetite to miss tea is a matter of some concern.

CHERRY: Perhaps he's having tea with someone else in their Study sir.

QUELCH: I have had enquiries made in all the Junior Studies. In the circumstances Wharton, I wonder if you, as Head boy could organise a quick search to ascertain his whereabouts. He surely must be in the Junior school somewhere.

WHARTON: Of course, Sir ... Will you chaps excuse me ...

CHERRY: We'll all come and give you a hand, the more the merrier. Inky can look after his guests.

BULL: That's the idea . . .

NUGENT, CHERRY, BULL and WHARTON leave with QUELCH.

CHERRY: (as he goes) Shan't be long Major Duclos . . . Don't be afraid to finish off that cake while we're gone.

DUCLOS: But I am! . . . That is to say, I have had sufficient. (to INKY) My young friend, Mr. Gupal and I have to be in London tonight. Do you have a time-table to search for a train for us, perhaps?

GUPAL: I think there is one from Friardale at Six-O'clock. We may catch it if we are speedy.

INKY: I haven't one in this study. . . But I will searchfully beg one from one of my esteemed chums in the next study. (he rises) You may partakefully consume some of that absurd cake in my absence. (exits)

GUPAL: Do you think it possible that the cake is poisoned Major?

DUCLOS: Why should they want to poison us. Non! It is just that the English should be prohibited from entering a Kitchen. (lights a cheroot) Well, Gupal, it was easy was it not?

GUPAL: So far it is. We shall be able to reach the Temple by travelling with the boys, but when we get there it may not be so simple if these boys are with us.

DUCLOS: Imbecile. It will be simplicity itself. While these boys are engaged in puffing and gasping up mountains, we shall search for the Eye of the Red Dragon.

GUPAL: They may suspect what we are searching for.?

DUCLOS: Why should they? I am an Archaeologist am I not? What else should I do but search for things in the ruins.

GUPAL: And when we find this Ruby, what then. Do we return with the boys. Suppose they know we have it?

DUCLOS: When we find this jewel, we shall be the richest men in the world. In America I can name my own price.

GUPAL: But the boys. . . If they know they will make us return it to the Maharajah of Ullapoor. It is his by rights.

DUCLOS: (incisively) They will not know. If they should find out...  
(very sinister) It will be too bad for them. (airily)  
There are many accidents to Mountain Climbers, are there not?

Suddenly there is a penetrating snore from under the table.

DUCLOS: Mon Dieu! (jumping up)

GUPAL: (also up) W...W... what was that?

DUCLOS: There is something in the room.

GUPAL: It... It sounded like a pig.

DUCLOS: A pig... What would a pig be doing in the room at a school?

Another snore.

GUPAL: There, it is a pig. No human being could make that noise.

DUCLOS: Hand me that spoon. (points to gear in corner)

GUPAL: That's not a spoon - it's a cricket bat.

DUCLOS: Whatever it is, hand it to me, fool.

DUCLOS takes the bat and handling it as though fencing, dabs under the table with it.

DUCLOS: (poised like a Musketeer) Voila! The Creature moved. It must be a dog. The English have a great love for dogs in their rooms. (he makes a big thrust at BUNTER)

BUNTER: YAROOH!!!!!! Ouch!!!... Stop it you beasts ! I haven't got your rotten cake!

BUNTER emerges.

GUPAL: It is a boy.

DUCLOS: A very plump boy, also. What are you doing under the table boy?

BUNTER: I say, put that bat down. (rubs himself) I shouldn't be surprised if you haven't fractured my tibia.



- DUCLOS: You have been there all the time. During our meal. You have been sleeping under that table.
- BUNTER: Asleep! Me! Fat chance a fellow has to sleep with everyone poking him in the tibia with bats. I haven't had a chance to drop off since your lecture this afternoon... I say, I'm starving, do you mind if I help myself to a tart... (he does so)
- DUCLOS: Sit down, boy.
- BUNTER: Thanks... (looks at table) I see you've been eating that rotten cake... He. He. He!!! I'll just have a mince pie.
- DUCLOS: (carefully) If you weren't asleep, why were you snoring?
- BUNTER: Me?... Snoring?... I don't snore.
- GUPAL: You made a noise under the table.
- BUNTER: I expect it was my asthma. (he rubs his back) I caught it swimming you know... I'm champion of the School... I think I'll try one or two of those sandwiches... (he takes a handful)
- DUCLOS: (casually) If you were not sleeping, you may have heard what my friend and I were discussing.
- BUNTER: Oh I did, every word. These sandwiches are crab, I think.
- GUPAL and DUCLOS exchange significant glances.
- DUCLOS: You did hear us then... What did you think of the little joke we intend to play on your friends?
- BUNTER: What joke? You know, these might be lobster.
- DUCLOS: I mean the little jest my friend and I made - the idea of pushing the boys over a mountain... (he gives a false chuckle, in which GUPAL joins, badly) You understand it was just a joke, of course.
- BUNTER: (munching) If you ask me, it was a good idea. Cheeky lot of beasts. They didn't ask me to go to India with them. It just so happens I'm free this holiday - we've got the builders in at Bunter Court - adding a new wing you know.

- DUCLOS: It was just a little joke. (BUNTER eats) And naturally you would not tell them of our little scheme to obtain the Dragon's Eye... We wish it to be a surprise for the Maharajah. A great treat, as you say.
- BUNTER: (eating) Wouldn't fancy a Dragon's Eye myself. But then you foreigners eat a lot of stuff I wouldn't touch. (rises) I think I'll nip out while those beasts have gone... (takes some food) Might as well take something to eat... I'll leave you that cake, he he he!
- DUCLOS: But wait... (BUNTER is gone)
- GUPAL: (nervously) Do you think he heard us Major?
- DUCLOS: I cannot be sure... In any case we must endeavour to silence him.
- GUPAL: But how?
- DUCLOS: Did you not hear? He is on bad terms with these other boys. They do not love him greatly... (walks about) That I understand, he seems stupid and greedy... But he wishes to go to India with them.
- GUPAL: He said they didn't want him. What has that got to do with it?
- DUCLOS: We shall offer to take him to India. You shall offer!
- GUPAL: Me!
- DUCLOS: I think I can ensure his silence if he thinks he can score over these other boys. You shall take him to India... It will be worth the expense for the sake of the Dragon's Eye Ruby...
- GUPAL: But what shall I do with him...
- DUCLOS: We shall think about that later. We must find him before we leave... (at this, BUNTER hustles in again)
- BUNTER: I say, I shall have to wait here for a bit. That beast Quelch is at the end of the corridor...
- DUCLOS: I am glad to see you... I have been thinking that your friends are unkind to a boy of your intelligence and strength. They may be jealous... (BUNTER's face lights up) Now my friend here (dramatically) is really a Prince!

GUPAL: (astonished) Who? Me?

DUCLOS: Ah! It is no use hiding it any longer Your Excellency. I think our young friend must know the truth... (to BUNTER) He is Prince Ranjit of Mussapore... Admit it Excellency.

GUPAL: Am... Am I?

DUCLOS: Do you not think it would be a wonderful idea to invite our young friend to your Palace, for a holiday?

GUPAL: Yes... Yes of course.

DUCLOS: (to BUNTER) He has the most wonderful chef in Asia... The food... C'est magnifique!! (kisses fingers)

BUNTER: I shouldn't want any Dragon's Eyes to eat.

DUCLOS: Don't worry my friend. I shall see you have no Dragon's Eye. The food will be rich, and whatever you order you shall have.

BUNTER: What about turkey?... well basted?

DUCLOS: Can you manage a well basted turkey, Excellency? (X)

GUPAL: (beginning to feel the effect of the cake) Y...e...es.

BUNTER: I like bacon for breakfast you know, well done.

GUPAL: Ugh... h... h... h!

BUNTER: And puddings...

GUPAL: Stop!!! You shall have it... Anything, but stop!!!

DUCLOS: (eyeing GUPAL) There, you see my young friend. Now, in two days when the others have left we shall get in touch with you and His Highness will take you to India with him. Leave the arrangements to us.

BUNTER: Well, it's pretty decent of you. And those other beasts will look pretty sick... X Have a piece of cake... Oh no, that's the one with the castor oil in it...

GUPAL: C... castor oil? *transport.*

DUCLOS: That cake?



BUNTER: Yes. Hope you chaps didn't scoff too much of it.

DUCLOS: (sits, apprehensively) I do not feel so well.

BUNTER: It's good for you. Might make you a bit sick, but nothing to worry about... Here, have one of these mince pies, they're nice and juicy...

DUCLOS:  
GUPAL: Oh... Ugh... Ugh.

BUNTER: A jam tart perhaps. ...

They wave him away.

BUNTER: You don't mind if I have one. (takes four) and I'll expect to hear from you about the holiday. It might be a good idea to drop your Chef a line Prince, tell him a few of my specialities.

DUCLOS: Leave us... leave us... (bends over holding his stomach)

BUNTER: Right. But you might let him know I don't care for too much fried food. The fat isn't good for me.

More groans. BUNTER is about to leave, when the door opens. He just manages to duck under the table as INKY enters.

INKY looks at the two GUESTS.

INKY: My esteemed Major, are you sickfully inclined.

DUCLOS: It... It is nothing. Did you find the train?

INKY: I phonefully contacted the station. It is as you suggested, in fact the six o'clockfulness is terrific.

DUCLOS: Come, Krishna we have little time...

INKY: I have arrangefully invited a taxi for you. It will be here, momentarily.

DUCLOS: Then perhaps you will excuse us... (GUPAL rises)  
Thank you for a magnificent tea. (groan) We shall be in touch with you regarding the trip to Ullapoor, within the next two days. Alas my friend is unable to accompany us.

INKY: No?

DUCLOS: Non. He has business in London. Perhaps you will say goodbye to your friends for us. I look forward to meeting them...

INKY exits with them.

As soon as they have gone, BUNTER emerges. He starts to collect up the food from the table, as he does so the boys are heard outside. He just has time to take a plate of tarts under the table before they enter.

CHERRY: Hallo, hallo, hallo! (looks round) The birds have flown. (looks at table) I say, they certainly got stuck into the grub. No wonder they had hiccups! They must have been starving.

BULL: They haven't left us much.

NUGENT: I couldn't eat a lot, I feel a bit queasy.

WHARTON: So do I.

As he speaks there is a loud hiccough from BUNTER under the table.

They all look at each other.

CHERRY: Well, that was Major Duclos!

WHARTON: It sounded as though it came from under the table.

CHERRY: You don't think the Major popped under there to do a spot of archaeology?

Another hiccough.

WHARTON: Give me that cricket bat!

BUNTER: Stop it you beast! I'm not here!

CHERRY: BUNTER!!... Come out you fat robber!

BULL: Bump the gormandiser! (WHARTON is poised with bat)

CHERRY: No, wait a tick Harry.

WHARTON: I'll get him out.



CHERRY: Give it to me... (takes bat) Now you fellows watch, this will be interesting. (calls) You aren't there, are you Bunter?

BUNTER: No!

CHERRY: There he's told us he isn't. So if we all take it in turns to swing this bat under the table we can't hit Bunter, can we... I'll take first swing... One... Two...

BUNTER: Help!... Stop it!... (he rushes out) I say you fellows, it's all a mistake. I didn't scoff any of your tea. It was those foreign beasts. I tried to save it for you.

BULL: You what!!!

BUNTER: (backing away) I put up a terrific struggle, but they knocked me out. That's how I came to be under the table.

CHERRY: You mean when you weren't there?

They laugh.

BUNTER: Oh really, Cherry. I hope you don't think I made this up.

CHERRY: We do. We does. Still perhaps you're right old fat man. The only trouble is that we can't bump Major Duclos for scoffing all our grub... In fact there's only one person we can bump.

BUNTER: Who's that?

CHERRY: You, old fat bean.

He drops the bat and they make a rush for  
BUNTER.

BUNTER: Help! Keep off you rotters... I've hurt my tibia!

BULL: We'll hurt it a bit more.

The door opens and MR. QUELCH appears.

QUELCH: (icily) And what, pray is the meaning of this disturbance. (sees BUNTER) BUNTER! Where have you been, I have been searching the Lower School for you.

BUNTER: I... I... I've been here sir... I was here all the time. I came to tea with these fellows.

QUELCH: Don't prevaricate Bunter. I have twice been to this study during tea. You were not here.

BUNTER: I...I was sir...You can ask these chaps.

QUELCH: I have the evidence of my own eyes Bunter. I need no confirmation.

BUNTER: But I was here sir. I was under the table.

QUELCH: UNDER THE TABLE!!...Were you aware of this Wharton.

WHARTON: Not at the time sir...

QUELCH: And what were you doing under the table, Bunter?

BUNTER: I was reading sir, Latin. I...I came in here to borrow a book. I hope you don't think I came in here to scoff Cherry's cake.

QUELCH: I should hazard an opinion that the latter contingency is the more likely. Why should you take a Latin Grammar under the table?

BUNTER: I've strained my tibia sir... (rubs his stomach) I have to read on the floor. (laughter from BOYS)

QUELCH: (dryly) If your tibia is in that position Bunter, you must be in a very peculiar state of health. However, perhaps you can tell me where you have put the imposition I set you this morning?

BUNTER: I didn't have time sir...I...I was so wrapped up in my Latin Grammar.

QUELCH: Indeed. Where is the Latin Grammar you were reading under the table?

BUNTER: Oh lor!...I think I must have dropped it out of the window sir...when I was writhing in agony with my tibia.

QUELCH: Wretched boy! ... Cease your prevarications. I can see that corporal chastisement is the only remedy that will make any impression on you. Bend over...

BUNTER: W...What about my tibia sir. You might injure it.

QUELCH: It's a risk I am prepared to take. Do as I tell you.

BUNTER bends over chair. QUELCH lifts cane.

QUELCH: (pausing) The book you dropped out of the window seems to have made its way into the seat of your trousers Bunter. Kindly remove it.

BUNTER: Oh help... (takes a book out from seat)

The BOYS laugh.

QUELCH: Silence! (takes book) You appear to have been studying Latin Grammar from a Greek Translation Bunter. Over the chair please.

BUNTER bends. QUELCH raises cane.

BUNTER: Yaroooh!!!

QUELCH: Silence! I haven't touched you yet...

He thereupon gives BUNTER two smart strokes on the reception of which BUNTER yells the place down.

BUNTER: Yaroooh!... Ouch!!! My Tibia!!! It's fractured!!!...

QUELCH: And I still require that imposition Bunter. I shall expect it on my desk by mid-day tomorrow.

He exits.

BUNTER: Oooh... the beast! He might have injured me for life.

BULL: Don't worry, we're going to do that...

The BOYS move in on BUNTER.

BUNTER: Keep off you chaps... I say, you aren't going to bump me are you.

BULL: We are... Come on Franky...

NUGENT: (sits) I don't feel so good...

WHARTON: Neither do I... (sits)

CHERRY: : Is it just here?... (rubs stomach) I think I've got it, too. Must be something we've eaten.



BULL: Can it, you fellows... You're making me feel sick.

BUNTER: He...He...He...

CHERRY: Ugh... What are you cackling at, you fat owl?

BULL: He's the one who ought to be feeling sick?

INKY enters, he is groaning and holding his stomach.

INKY: Oh...dear... The painfulness is terrific...(collapses)

NUGENT: Ooooooh...It must have been that wretched cake.

BUNTER: You probably ate too much...If you don't mind my saying so, there's one thing I hate to see in a man and that's greediness...

CHERRY makes an effort to get up after him, but stops, groaning.

BUNTER: Well, I hope you fellows feel better by the holidays. They tell me the food abroad is very rich, full of oil and fat...

Groans from the BOYS.

BUNTER: He he he!...I say, you probably won't be wanting this stuff. (cakes etc. left on table) I might as well take it... Sure you don't want one jam tart Wharton?

WHARTON: Ooooooooooh...G...get out!

BUNTER, still chuckling, starts to pack the food in his pockets. He then changes his mind, and gathers up the corners of the table cloth. He makes a bundle and throws it over his shoulder, goes to door.

BUNTER: (at door) Oh, I shan't want this. (he takes what is left of the cake and puts it back on the table) I don't really care a lot for castor oil...!

He goes.

The BOYS all look up at each other.

CHERRY: Castor Oil!

WHARTON: The fat robber! He switched the cake on us!!

NUGENT: Castor oil!!... Ughhhhhhhh!

CHERRY: Let's get after the fat spoofer!

They rise, but fall back in their seats  
groaning, as the

CURTAIN FALLS

END OF SCENE ONE.

Billy Bunter Flies East.

Scene for Curtain Drop  
between  
Scene One and Scene Two.

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Tannoy Speaker. O.S.: Will Passengers for Air India, Flight six to Calcutta please take their seats in the Plane immediately....Passengers for Calcutta, Flight Six, Air India, you plane will be leaving in six minutes.

As the Speaker is sounding GUPAL wanders on stage from L. with two suit cases. He is peering anxiously out to R. He puts down his bags C. and looks at his watch and then moves to R. He suddenly sees someone and waves urgently, beckoning them.

BUNTER enters from R., puffing and panting. Gupal meets him R.C.

Gupal: (excitedly) Where have you been - the plane leaves in five minutes.

Bunter: I say, can you lend me ten bob?

Gupal: Ten shillings! What do you want ten shillings for?

Bunter: That cheeky beast of a taxi-driver out there won't let me have my bags until I've paid him. I told him he ~~only need send the bill to Bunter Court.~~

Gupal: You have left him waiting for his fare - holding your suitcases?

Bunter: The cheeky rotter seems to think I want to bilk him. I suppose a Postal Order didn't turn up for me at the Hotel this morning? I've been expecting one, you know.

Gupal: No! Here be walking on with my cases, I'll pay the taxi-driver. (he rushes off R.)

Bunter picks up Gupal's cases, puts them down at once as they seem heavy, and sits on them.

Gupal enters, or rather staggers in with Bunter's bags.

Gupal: I gave you the money for tropical clothes, are you sure you didn't buy a couple of suits of armour? (puts them down)

Bunter: I say, be careful with those bags. I didn't want them banged about.

EXPLICIT



Gupel: (puts them down) You can carry them yourself. I don't wonder you had no money left for the taxi. You must have enough clothes here to last you the rest of your life!

Bunter: ~~WHY~~ Isn't there a porter or someone to carry them for us. I mean to say, I hope you're not too mean to give a chap a decent tip for carrying a few cases, just because I happen to be temporarily short of cash.

Gupel: (picking up his own cases) By the time we have found a porter the lane will be gone. Come along!!!!

Bunter: (not moving) You might give a fellow a chance to take a breather... (sits on his cases)

Gupel: (Moving to him) Will you get up and bring your cases!!!

Bunter: I can probably manage this one if you can take three.

Gupel: (takes one of Bunter cases) Anything to get you on the plane.

He grabs Bunter and attempts to drag him off L. As he does so the case Bunter is holding bursts open and a pile of food including a large turkey scatters over the floor

Bunter: You..you..foreign fathead! Now look what you've done.

Bunters starts to gather it up.

Gupel: So that's how you spent the money I gave you for clothes.

Bunter: You don't expect a fellow to go all that way without a snack - I don't trust these airlines when it comes to food.

TANNOY SPEAKER. Will the remaining two passengers for Flight six to Calcutta please take their seats, the plane will be leaving in three minutes..

Gupel grabs Bunter by the collar and drags him off R. in a welter of cases, turkey and cakes.....

.....OO.O.....

SCENE TWO.

A few days later.

The Scene is the ruined Temple of the Red Dragon in the foothills in the Northern part of Ullapoor.

We see a section of the Temple. It is built in heavy stone blocks.

A wall runs from D. R. to threequarters B. L. Then the wall turns at right angles to cut to D. L. Giving a triangular shaped setting. Halfway along the wall from D. R. to B. L. is a large entrance to the Temple, through which can be seen semi-tropical trees and beyond them, snow-capped mountains. The other entrance is smaller, a small opening in the wall D. L.

Against the centre of the wall from B. L. to D. L. is a pedestal built of stone blocks. On this pedestal stands the figure of the Red Dragon Idol. It has the body of a lion and a large head of a Dragon, open-mouthed, after the style of the dragons seen in Burmese Temples. In the forehead of the dragon's head is a gap where its single eye was once situated. The idol was once painted red and yellow. The colours have faded but are still discernable.

A number of small stone stairs are set in the D. L. side of the idol so that it is possible to climb these and stand on the pedestal.

Along the floor of the Temple are strewn several large stone blocks about two and a half feet square, giving a Stonehenge effect to the interior.

The sun is shining brightly through the large entrance lighting the temple clearly. It is early evening.

As the curtain rises a shabby turbanned FIGURE, is standing at the main entrance looking to the distance. Suddenly the FIGURE turns and we see it is a bearded native. His beard is grey, but despite his aged appearance he moves with some agility as he suddenly skips out of sight, scrambling between the blocks of stone and out through the exit D. L.



A few seconds after he has gone MAJOR DUCLOS, in appropriate tropical clothes enters through the main entrance. He rushes eagerly to the pedestal, gazes at the idol, then returns to the entrance, where the voices of the boys can now be heard.

DUCLOS stands at the doorway and beckons them. CHERRY and WHARTON are the first to enter. They are warm and mopping their brows.

CHERRY: Hallo, hallo, hallo! So this is the giddy old Red Dragon's hideout!

WHARTON: Phew! It's a bit cooler in here.

CHERRY: (going to pedestal) Well, here's the dragon himself.

DUCLOS: It is hundreds' of years old. The tribes that at one time worshipped in this Temple have long since vanished. . . (he shrugs) Where they went is a mystery. . . A mystery, my young friends, that I hope to solve.

INKY, NUGENT and BULL enter.

BULL: Nice to get in here out of the sun. . .

NUGENT: I should think it's even hot enough for Inky.

INKY: My dear Nugent, I was just about to remarkfully suggest that weather was cool.

CHERRY: Listen to the fathead! Cool!

BULL: That's the old Red Dragon up on his perch then.

DUCLOS: I was explaining its antiquity to your friends.

CHERRY: It reminds me of St. Jims. . .

WHARTON: St. Jims?

CHERRY: It looks like Towser, George Herries' bulldog.

They laugh.

DUCLOS: One should not laugh. This thing may add greatly to our architectural knowledge.

CHERRY: It won't have to do a lot to add to mine.

- WHARTON: Why don't we bring our food in here. We can have it in the cool.
- CHERRY: Good idea! Let's nip down to the camp and bring the food up here.
- DUCLOS: Why bother to bring the food here. Let us look round the Temple and go back for a meal.
- WHARTON: It's so cool in here. What do you think Franky?
- NUGENT: I'm all for it. No flies either. Come on, the camp's not far.
- DUCLOS: But surely, all this trouble...
- WHARTON: It won't take us five minutes.
- DUCLOS: Is it wise to leave the Camp for so long...?
- CHERRY: Those bearer chaps will be there, they'll keep an eye on things. They certainly wouldn't help us bring the food up here - they seem scared stiff of the place.
- INKY: The scarefulness is terrific!
- DUCLOS: They believe the Temple to be inhabited by evil spirits. The ghost of the Red dragon among them.
- CHERRY: Well, the ghost won't worry us. Unless he wants to scoff all our tea... Pity your friend Mr. Gupal couldn't come Major... I suppose he wasn't scared?
- DUCLOS: Ah non! ... Mr. Gupal is an important man of business. His interests would not permit him to come on the Expedition. He has been kind enough to give me his financial support, for which I am most grateful.
- BULL: Let's get the grub. I'm starving.
- WHARTON: I suppose you'd rather stay and look round the Temple sir?
- DUCLOS: Oui! If you permit I will commence my investigations.

The boys exit.

As soon as they have gone DUCLOS mounts the steps to the pedestal. He examines the figure of the dragon, feeling in the eye space, thoughtfully.

As he is doing so, the mysterious NATIVE appears once more. The NATIVE watches him, from the entrance, D. L. As DUCLOS turns the NATIVE skips out of sight again, through the entrance L.

DUCLOS walks about for a few seconds, touching the walls. Then he gives a low whistle. Once more he whistles. Through the main gate, GUPAL appears.

- DUCLOS: How long have you been here?
- GUPAL: Since yesterday evening. What delayed you?
- DUCLOS: Huree Singh and his friends wanted to spend a night with the Maharajah.
- GUPAL: (anxiously) Did the Maharajah know you were coming to the Temple?
- DUCLOS: (airily) But of course! The Maharajah is most interested in the history of the Temple.
- GUPAL: You're sure he isn't interested in the dragon's eye, the ruby.
- DUCLOS: Mon ami! This jewel has been missing for fifty years. Why should the Maharajah, suspect myself of any interest. Am I not a well known archaeologist?
- GUPAL: As long as you're sure.
- DUCLOS: You can relax, Gupal. The boys will be off on the mountain climbing and we shall have the Temple to ourselves.
- GUPAL: I have had information. Information which may help us...
- DUCLOS: Not now. The boys will be here shortly. They have a stupid idea to eat their food in this place... And did you leave our fat friend in the hotel...?
- GUPAL: No..
- DUCLOS: No!... Then where is he?
- GUPAL: He is at my camp... in the valley below.



DUCLOS: You have brought him here! Near the Temple and the boys!!! Sacre! Are you a maniac?

GUPAL: The hotel was full... What else could I do?

DUCLOS: (clasping his head) What could you do? ... Anything you could do - but bring him here. What if he meets with the boys and tells them of our plans?

GUPAL: He keeps asking me when we shall reach my Palace.

DUCLOS: What Palace?

GUPAL: The one you gave me - when you made me a Prince. He keeps telling me he is hungry.

DUCLOS: Why should I have such an idiot to assist me... Why, oh why!!! He must be kept away from here, you understand!...

As he speaks there is a loud series of yells off. They look up. BUNTER rushes on, terrified and yelling.

BUNTER: Help! Murder! ... It's after me!!! (he clutches GUPAL)

DUCLOS: Be quiet you fool! What is the matter? What is after you?

BUNTER: Out there by the trees. I think it's a tiger - or a crocodile.

DUCLOS: A tiger or a crocodile. Don't you know which?

BUNTER: Well it might have been an elephant. I could hear it behind me... tearing up trees in the jungle. It was thrashing through the forest...

GUPAL: (nervously) D... Do you think it was a tiger Major?

DUCLOS: There are no tigers here. Only a few leopards, at night.

BUNTER: It could have been a leopard. I think it was tearing up roots with its trunk...

DUCLOS: A leopard with a trunk!

BUNTER: Or its horns... I couldn't turn round, it was breathing down my neck. I could feel its fangs.

GUPAL: I... I think you had better investigate Major. Not that I am afraid.

DUCLOS with a snort, takes a revolver from his pack and exits.

BUNTER: I'd have been all right if I'd had a gun... I tried to wrestle with it but it was too big...

There is a shot. GUPAL and BUNTER both jump out of their skins.

BUNTER: I hope he's got it... It was probably some terrible creature that has never been seen before. I'd almost swear it had horns and a trunk... some monster...

As he speaks DUCLOS enters again. He is holding a tiny dead Mongoose.

DUCLOS: Here is your monster!!!

BUNTER: Oh I say... I'm sure it was bigger than that...

DUCLOS: If it breathed down your neck it must have had a ladder.

BUNTER: W... What is it?

DUCLOS: A Mongoose.

BUNTER: Oh really. I may not know much about animals but that's not a goose.

DUCLOS: Idiot! It is a small Rodent...

BUNTER: I can see it's not a goose... I say when are we going to get to this Palace of yours Prince Gupal. I'm absolutely starving.

GUPAL: It... it will not be long... (he looks hopelessly at DUCLOS)

DUCLOS: His Highness will take you there, in due course. Do not be impatient. Meanwhile you must keep out of sight as the boys from your school are camped not far from here.

BUNTER: You mean Wharton and those beasts?

DUCLOS: Precisely. But they must not know you are here. His Highness does not want them at the Palace. Is that not so your Highness? ...

No answer.

DUCLOS: Your Highness!

GUPAL: Eh?...

DUCLOS: You do not wish the other boys to know that our young friend is going to stay at your magnificent Palace.

GUPAL: Oh... no... no, of course not.

BUNTER: Well, when do we move on to this Palace. I'm sick of sleeping in a rotten tent. I had a beetle on me last night. I'd like some decent food, too.

DUCLOS: It is not far. I would like his Highness to stay one more night. Later I hope to join you at the Palace, when the boys have gone.

As he speaks the boys are heard off.

Here they are! Quickly out of sight, the pair of you.

GUPAL makes for the door L. and exits. But BUNTER falls over a block. He has no time to get up before the boys are in so he hides behind it. The boys are carrying a huge hamper. They also have another basket of food.

WHARTON: Put them in the middle here...

They dump them.

CHERRY: Find out anything about the old dragon worshippers Major Duclos?

DUCLOS: I have had very little time, just a cursory glance round.

BULL: You didn't see any ghosts?

DUCLOS: Non. An archaeologist must not allow the thought of ghosts to interfere with his work.

CHERRY: They'd better not interfere with our climbing, either.

The boys have opened the hampers and set them before them. They hand DUCLOS some sandwiches.

DUCLOS: No thank you, I am not hungry.

WHARTON: You'd better have something sir. These sandwiches are delicious.



DUCLOS: Very well, just one.

BULL: Here, have a couple sir. (hands him three)

The boys start to eat.

DUCLOS is holding his sandwiches. BUNTER taps him in the back and as he turns BUNTER snatches the sandwiches.

NUGENT: I must say the Maharajah's kitchen have only the best.

INKY: When the hamper is finished. We shall have to resourcefully cook our own food.

CHERRY: And we're not having everything covered with curry, either Inky. It's hot enough. (to DUCLOS) Do you like curry sir... I think... (stops as he sees the sandwiches are gone) I say, you made short work of them!

BULL: My hat! You were hungrier than you thought!

DUCLOS: Yes.. yes. I found I had an appetite...

WHARTON: Well, pile in then. There's enough to go round. (hands DUCLOS more sandwiches)

DUCLOS: Merci!... (he takes one in his hand and puts three on the block beside him. No sooner has he done so, than BUNTER whips them away.)

CHERRY: I don't know what he did to keep these fresh but the chap who made them deserves a medal. They... (he stops again as he sees DUCLOS sandwiches have gone)

The other boys follow CHERRY's gaze and look at DUCLOS, who sits there awkwardly.

WHARTON: My Sainted Aunt!... They've gone!

DUCLOS: I...I... have an extensive appetite.

CHERRY: You're telling us. Have some cakes sir...

DUCLOS: (protesting) No... no, please. I have had sufficient.

BUNTER digs him in the back.

BULL: You must be pretty ravenous to scoff them like that Major Duclos. Here, we can't eat all these ourselves.

BULL forces a number of cakes on DUCLOS. He takes them and puts them on his lap. BUNTER reaches round and tries to get at them. DUCLOS smacks at his hand which is withdrawn. He hits his own stomach and the boys look up.

WHARTON: What's the matter sir...

DUCLOS: (rubbing his stomach) Nothing... it was just a twinge of pain.

NUGENT: That's because you eat your food so quickly I expect.

CHERRY: I should leave those cakes sir. Don't want to knock yourself up, now you're here.

DUCLOS: Of course... I shall leave them until later.

WHARTON: Just put them on the block there. We'll put them away in a minute.

DUCLOS puts them down nervously. The boys look away and in a second BUNTER has snatched them.

WHARTON: I hope that guide the Maharajah fixed us up with knows his stuff Inky. Those mountains look a bit tough to me.

INKY: He is an expert. Knowing the mountains likefully the backness of his handful.

CHERRY: Perhaps that guide would have liked a few cakes. We can keep what the Major has... (looks as they are gone again)

DUCLOS: (positively writhing with embarrassment) Ah. My young friends, it is fine food you have brought... I like it.

CHERRY: S...S... So I see.

DUCLOS: But really, I have had my fill.

BULL: You have?

DUCLOS: I will have nothing more.

BUNTER prods him in the back and he tries to push him away and nearly falls off his seat.

DUCLOS: Perhaps just one of those sandwiches, then.



WHARTON: Have two or three sir...

BUNTER prods him in the back.

DUCLOS: Non! Non!... (another prod) Er..yes. I may be able to eat them.

CHERRY: I shouldn't be at all surprised.

They hand him three sandwiches. He holds them in his left hand then takes one with his right and starts to nibble at it.

WHARTON: (seeing how slowly he eats) Anything wrong with them sir?

DUCLOS: Non! They are excellent. I eat slowly, always.

CHERRY: (sotto) Well, nearly always.

There is a noise from outside the gate. The boys turn to look. Immediately they look away BUNTER pops up and snatches the sandwiches.

BULL: What was that?

NUGENT: Sounded like someone moving about.

CHERRY: Perhaps one of the bearers has chanced his arm up here after all. (turns to DUCLOS) But you said... (sees the sandwiches have gone) Oh my Sainted Aunt!!!

The other boys also look at DUCLOS, staggered, they just can't imagine how he gets rid of it. The MAJOR munches hastily and pretends to be eating.

WHARTON: I... I... think we'll pack the rest of this away. (looks at DUCLOS) If... if you've really had enough, that is.

DUCLOS: Yes.. yes. I have, I have.

Suddenly the old NATIVE peers round the gateway. WHARTON sees him. He vanishes again.

WHARTON: (quickly) Did you see that?

NUGENT: What?

WHARTON: An old man with a turban and a beard. He was watching us through that entrance there.

CHERRY: You're seeing things.

BULL: Perhaps that was what we heard. Let's scout round.

DUCLOS: (rising) An excellent idea. You look out there my young friends. I will go through this gate. (D. L. )

CHERRY: Might have been the ghost of the jolly old red dragon. Come on, you fellows.

They exit through main entrance.  
No sooner have they gone than DUCLOS turns and drags BUNTER out from behind the block by the scruff of the neck.

BUNTER: Ouch! Stop it you beast!... You'll hurt my tibia!

DUCLOS: (incensed) Idiot! Fool! Lunatic! Do you want to give everything away! Prodding my spine!!

BUNTER: I'm starving. Surely a chap's entitled to a bite to eat.

DUCLOS: A bite! You have a stomach like a hippopotamus!

BUNTER: Oh really! There's no need to get personal. I haven't had a square meal in days. That Prince Gupal hasn't any decent grub at the camp. The sooner we get to his Palace the better.

DUCLOS: Quickly! Get back to your camp before the boys return. Or they will all expect to go to the Palace with you!

BUNTER: I think I'll take some of that food with me. I might get a little peckish on the way back.

DUCLOS: Get out, you fool!...

DUCLOS chases BUNTER off. The boys return.

WHARTON: He's gone.

INKY: The gonefulness was terrific.

CHERRY: If he was ever there.

WHARTON: I tell you I saw him. He had a turban and a beard!!

CHERRY: Perhaps he did an Indian rope trick and vanished.  
Did you see him out there Major?

DUCLOS: Non!... There was no-one.

The boys start to pack the food away.

BULL: What's in this small hamper?

WHARTON: Something special, they said.

NUGENT: Let's take a look. (they open it)

CHERRY: Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look at this, Christmas puddings!

WHARTON: Five of them!

NUGENT: One each!

INKY: The absurd puddingfulness is terrific.

They take them out and look at them. They  
are in basins.

NUGENT: They smell pretty good, too.

WHARTON: Put them back. They'll keep. (to DUCLOS) We've been  
talking it over sir. We think it might be a good idea  
to move our camp to near the Temple.

DUCLOS: Oh!

CHERRY: The old Temple makes a good dining room and so on.  
We could leave the grub here. It wouldn't be in the  
way of your Archaeological grubbing out - ahem, that is  
to say, your work.

DUCLOS: It might be...

WHARTON: We'll push it all over here in the corner.

DUCLOS: But the bearers. They will not come here.

CHERRY: That's all right. They can pitch their camp a bit farther  
off if they like. Don't worry, we'll fix it.

DUCLOS: It will mean much work...

WHARTON: Leave it to us, sir... get us fit for climbing. Come on  
you chaps...



The boys push the baskets over to the corner the leave. DUCLOS watches with misgivings. As soon as they have gone. GUPAL enters.

- DUCLOS: Why are you here?
- GUPAL: The fat boy. I am searching for him.
- DUCLOS: Did he not come back to the camp. I sent him back there.
- GUPAL: No. I haven't seen him.
- DUCLOS: You are a fool. Why do you not watch this Bunter youth. He has been here stealing food and prodding my spine.
- GUPAL: He keeps asking for food. It's like having a cuckoo in the nest.
- DUCLOS: He must go. You must dispose of him.
- GUPAL: How?...
- DUCLOS: I don't care. Take him up a mountain, lose him.
- GUPAL: How can I carry him up a mountain...
- DUCLOS: Put him on an elephant!
- GUPAL: It would be easier to put the elephant on him... Now listen, about the dragon's eye. What do you make of this. One of the Natives from these parts was tortured some years ago. He gave nothing away... all he said was that the red dragon now sees with his voice alone... What do you make of that?
- DUCLOS: (walks thoughtfully and looks at the idol) He sees with his voice alone... his voice alone...
- GUPAL: It sounds stupid to me.
- DUCLOS: Yes... it is senseless..(suddenly) No... wait... Could it mean that when the jewel was taken from the Maharajah and brought back here it was secreted... Yes, it could be. It could be in the mouth or throat of the idol. (pause) That open mouth it could be in there...
- GUPAL: (eagerly) Let's look...
- DUCLOS: Non! Not now. Those boys will be back... we shall come back here tonight, when they are asleep...

GUPAL: You really think it's there?

DUCLOS: It may be. It is a simple hiding place... Everyone here is terrified of the Temple... We shall search tonight after midnight. Meet me here.

GUPAL: What about the fat boy?

DUCLOS: He will be asleep. If he isn't - put him to sleep. Now go. I shall go and assist the boys with the camp gear - and ensure that they do not camp too near the Temple.

GUPAL: I must have some food for this Bunter. May I take some for him from those Hampers?

DUCLOS: No. Let him wait.. (smiles) Tell him about the wonderful food at your Palace...

GUPAL: What Palace?

DUCLOS: Fool! How many more times do I have to tell you that you are a Prince and you have a Palace... Tell Bunter to wait for food like the Red Dragon God.

GUPAL: What?

DUCLOS: It was the habit of the tribe here to leave offerings of food before the Idol (points to it) for the Dragon's enjoyment.

GUPAL: (nervously) But it's just a stone image. How could it eat food.

DUCLOS: Don't ask me.. just keep your eyes open for that fat fool.

DUCLOS exits.

GUPAL wanders over to the large hamper and looks in it. While he is doing so the OLD MAN enters. He sees GUPAL and nips behind a block. Then BUNTER enters. He also sees GUPAL looking in the hamper. Without seeing the OLD MAN, BUNTER hides behind a block, between GUPAL and the OLD MAN.

GUPAL: They won't miss some of this food. I'll take it for that fat hippopotamus.

GUPAL starts to remove food from the hamper and put it on the block behind him, which is BUNTER's hiding place.

As he puts each item behind him, carelessly not looking, BUNTER removes them and places them on the block behind him, equally carelessly.

The OLD MAN peeps out and sees the food. As it passes from GUPAL to BUNTER and BUNTER puts it on the rock behind him the OLD MAN smiles and takes it all. This procedure goes on until GUPAL has taken as much as he wants. GUPAL then turns to collect the food he has removed from the hamper and placed on the block.

GUPAL: (turning) That should be enough for him to go on with... (he looks and gives a gasp seeing it all gone) The Red Dragon!!!! It has eaten my food!!! ... Oh struth! Help!!! (he takes one look at the idol and rushes out)

BUNTER: (emerging from behind his block) He he he! That'll teach the beast to keep a fellow short of food. This should keep me going for a bit anyway. Wonder what's in that small hamper...

BUNTER goes to the small hamper, still not looking round for his food.

BUNTER: (looks in small hamper) Christmas puddings!... Five of them!... Those rotters won't miss one of those. (takes one) I'll put it with the other grub!

As he speaks he turns. He sees the food has gone!!!

*Boys enter for Bunter to head Bunter both col*

X  
BUNTER: It's gone! Help!...

He starts to rush out with the pudding. When the boys enter from both entrances... He is trapped and rushes up the steps and hides behind the Red Dragon idol.

WHARTON: The Major has gone... (does a "take") That's funny.

CHERRY: What? The Major going?

WHARTON: No, I thought I saw someone dash across the Temple?

BULL: Who? Not that Old Man again?

CHERRY: Was it the ghost?



WHARTON: To tell the truth I thought it was Bunter!

BULL: Bunter!!!

CHERRY: Now I know you're seeing things.

NUGENT: It must be the heat.

INKY: I was just about to remark on the coolfulness of the day.

BULL: Oh dry up Inky. You'd be cold in a furnace. I've heard of some bad effects from heat - but seeing Bunter!!!

CHERRY: I think I'd rather just pass out than have a vision of that fat gormandiser.

WHARTON: It was just my imagination...

BULL: (glances in hamper) I say! Someone's been swiping the grub!

They all look.

CHERRY: It looks as though Major Duclos had a quick snack after we left. Unless Bunter's ghost stuffed himself. Did you notice whether your hallucination was in the middle of a meal Harry?

WHARTON: Oh dry up!... It must have been that Old Man. Let's take a look round...

They wander round. As they do so they near the block where the OLD MAN is hiding and gradually he sneaks round the block keeping on the blind side all the time. The OLD MAN comes to the hamper and climbs in to keep out of sight.

CHERRY: Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the food! Beside this block here. (he is looking where the OLD MAN was hiding)

BULL: How on earth did it get there?

WHARTON: It must have been that old boy with the beard! Let's take a look outside. He may be waiting for a chance to nip in and collect it.

NUGENT: (looks in hamper) One of the puddings has gone, too!

CHERRY: Come on!!! I'm going to pull this old boy's whiskers!

They exit together through the main entrance.  
BUNTER emerges from behind the idol.

BUNTER:           Beasts!... I think I'll have another one of those puddings.  
This one will do for breakfast!... Must find a place  
where those rotters won't see it...

He suddenly has an idea and hides the pudding  
in the mouth of the red dragon idol.

BUNTER:           He... he... he! They won't look in there for it!... Now  
for another for supper!

BUNTER comes down the steps and goes  
to the small hamper. He takes another pudding.  
He is about to leave when he hears the boys.  
He has no time to leave so he attempts to hide  
in the hamper where the OLD MAN is already  
hiding. He tries to get in and gives a yell  
of fear as he feels someone else in there.  
He gets out and rushes out as the...

CURTAIN FALLS.

END OF SCENE TWO.

SCENE THREE

The scene is the same. Late the same night as the previous scene. The Temple is lit by the blue light of the moon. The lighting increases as the scene progresses and the moon rises.

After a few seconds DUCLOS appears through the main entrance. He peers round and creeps cautiously into the Temple. As he does so, GUPAL rises from behind the block D. L., He does not see DUCLOS who is turned away from him. As a result the pair back into each other. GUPAL gives a shriek.

- DUCLOS: (turning on him) Gupal ! Be silent you fool !
- GUPAL: Major Duclos ! I thought you were the Red Dragon !
- DUCLOS: How can I be the Red Dragon, idiot ! It is up there ! Look !
- GUPAL: (nervously) It was up there this afternoon but it came down and took my food.
- DUCLOS: Are you insane ! You are as stupid as the superstitious natives who offered food to the Red Dragon.
- GUPAL: He didn't wait for me to offer him any - he just came down and took it.
- DUCLOS: Am I saddled with a half-brain! How can a thing of stone come down and eat your food ?
- GUPAL: I don't know ! If I did I wouldn't be scared. It took the food off one of the blocks.
- DUCLOS: Scatterwit ! The food must have fallen off the blocks - the boys found it when they returned to the Temple. They also discovered two puddings missing, did you thieve those also ?
- GUPAL: No. I don't like puddings.
- DUCLOS: You are sure you didn't take them for the Bunter ?
- GUPAL: No.
- DUCLOS: There is an old man, a native, hanging about here. It may have been him took them. Those stupid boys are thinking I may have eaten them.



- GUPAL: You didn't ?
- DUCLOS: Non ! Idiot ! Do you imagine I would feast from stodgy English puddings. I have a sensitive stomach.
- GUPAL: Perhaps Bunter took them. He wasn't at the camp when I returned.
- DUCLOS: He was not ? Tell me then, where is the Bunter now ?
- GUPAL: He's come back to the camp now. But he's still hungry. He keeps asking when we get to the Palace. Why did you have to give me a Palace ?
- DUCLOS: Because you are a Prince, half-brain ! You must have a Palace or the Bunter will not want to go with you.
- GUPAL: Where is my Palace ?
- DUCLOS: How should I know ? You have no Palace !
- GUPAL: But you just said so. Make up a place for me to have my Palace, this Bunter is driving me mad with his groans and grumbles.
- DUCLOS: Have it where you like, at the top of a mountain, perhaps then you can push this Bunter off ? Hein ? Is he asleep now ? (DUCLOS nods) Excellent ! Then if we are fortunate to find the Dragon's Eye where we think - we can leave tonight and then the Bunter can have a Palace in your tent ! ... (He roars with laughter)
- GUPAL: You mean we just go and leave him - and the boys ?
- DUCLOS: Why not ? ... I have prepared a route where we can leave Ullapoor undetected.
- GUPAL: They may follow us ?
- DUCLOS: Why should they ? No-one will know we have the jewel. It will be sold in America and we shall be rich men.
- GUPAL : It wouldn't be better to go back and say goodbye to the Maharajah ?
- DUCLOS: It would not ! We must take no chances... Now up the steps and look in the mouth of the Red Dragon.
- GUPAL: Eh ?
- DUCLOS: I said go up the steps and feel in the mouth of the idol.

GUPAL: Who ? ... M...m...me ?

DUCLOS: There is no-one else here, is there ?

GUPAL: Yes...

DUCLOS: Who ?

GUPAL: Well, there's you !

DUCLOS: You are suggesting that I climb up and feel for the jewel ?

GUPAL: That's right... I ... I ... think you'd be better at it than I am.

DUCLOS: Fool ! I think you are still in fear of this idol. Perhaps you think it would bite your hand off ?

GUPAL: I'd rather not give it the chance.

DUCLOS: (impatiently) Preserve me from such idiots ! ... Stand and watch the entrance, I will get the jewel myself. And do not shriek the place down if you see a rabbit !

DUCLOS climbs up the steps and climbs round by the Red Dragon pedestal. GUPAL goes to the gate and looks out.

GUPAL: (turning) Can you feel anything ?

DUCLOS: Not yet, fool. Watch for the boys I tell you.

DUCLOS: (feeling) I have something... It ... it is all sticky. Sacre ! ... What can it be ... (He pulls out the pudding BUNTER has put there)

GUPAL : What is it ?

DUCLOS: I do not know. I will bring it down there.

DUCLOS jumps down and moves to C.  
GUPAL joins him.

DUCLOS: Mon Dieu ! It is a pudding ! ... A PUDDING !!!!!

GUPAL: A pudding ! From the mouth of the Red Dragon ! It has eaten the pudding !!!! It ate all my food !! I knew it !! Oh help !!!!

GUPAL turns and with a terrified look at the Red Dragon rushes through the main entrance.

DUCLOS: Come back !!! Come back you idiot !!! ...

DUCLOS puts the pudding down on a block and rushes out after GUPAL.

As soon as he has gone BUNTER enters warily from the entrance D.L. He climbs the steps to the pedestal.

BUNTER: (feeling in dragon's mouth) The beasts ! They've found it !

BUNTER climbs down from the pedestal. He suddenly sees the pudding where DUCLOS has put it on the block.

BUNTER: He, he, he ! ... There it is !

BUNTER snatches up the pudding and is about to leave through the D.L. exit when the OLD MAN appears. He doesn't see BUNTER who makes for the other exit. Voices are heard. BUNTER appears to be trapped. He backs against the pedestal, his hand, as he creeps round, touches the Dragon's left forefoot. Immediately there is a creaking noise and the centre block at the front of the pedestal revolves on it's axis like a revolving door. BUNTER nips in and the door closes behind him as the door revolves right round to its former position. The OLD MAN has also heard the voices, and ducked out even before BUNTER disappears.

BOB CHERRY enters. He catches a glimpse of BUNTER and does a "take".

BULL: (following him in) What's the matter, Bob ?

CHERRY: It must be the heat.

BULL: It's not hot now - it's night-time.

The other BOYS enter.

WHARTON: Anyone here ? Find out what the yelling was ?

BULL: Bob's complaining about the heat - now it's cool.



INKY: Brrrrr... I was just thoughtfully about to comment on the coldfulness.

CHERRY: I ... I thought I saw him.

NUGENT: Who ? The Old Man ?

CHERRY: No. Bunter.

BULL: Oh, come off it ! That's what Harry said this afternoon and you thought he was potty.

NUGENT: He's probably dining with his titled relations at Bunter Court.

WHARTON: I know how you feel, Bob. But it couldn't be him. Where did you think you saw him ?

CHERRY: He went into ... (Looks at idol) He seemed to go into the Red Dragon.

WHARTON: Wh...a...a...t !!!

CHERRY: That's what it looked like.

BULL: If the Red Dragon can eat Bunter he's entitled to all the respect the natives give him.

CHERRY: (walking to pedestal) He seemed to disappear into this.  
(Feels it)

The other BOYS gather round.

WHARTON: It's solid stone - even Bunter wouldn't make any impression on that. It must have been the heat Bob. Or you saw that Old Man nip across the Temple.

DUCLOS enters.

DUCLOS: What are you boys doing here ?

WHARTON: We heard someone give a yell about five minutes ago. We came to take a look round. What did you come for, Sir ?

DUCLOS: I also thought I heard a cry. It may well have been a monkey, or some creature of the jungle.

BULL: Bob thought he saw a creature of Greyfriars. Bunter.

DUCLOS: (sharply) Who ? ...

- CHERRY: You wouldn't know him, sir. He's one of the Remove men at Greyfriars... A fat gormandiser, incidentally. He'd eat us out of house and home if he were here.
- DUCLOS: (bitterly) Don't I know it !
- WHARTON: What was that, sir ?
- DUCLOS: (quickly) Oh, nothing. It would be absurd for a boy from your school to be here and you not know it. Has this Bunter any friends in these parts ?
- CHERRY: He hasn't any friends anywhere. The fat rotter tried to come with us but Inky wouldn't wear him. No, don't worry, sir, it was just my imagination.
- DUCLOS: Possibly the heat. You boys go back to your tents - I will just take a look around and see if I can see anything before I return... (Looks and sees pudding has gone) Mon Dieu ! You boys have been eating a pudding perhaps ?
- WHARTON: Pudding ? ... No, Major, we shouldn't eat pudding at this time of night.
- DUCLOS: You have seen no pudding then ?
- CHERRY: No... Are... are you still hungry Major ?
- DUCLOS: Moi ? Hungry ? ... Why should I be hungry ?
- CHERRY: That's rather what I was thinking, sir - after all that stuff you put away this afternoon.
- DUCLOS: (stiffly) I think it would be well if you boys went to your tents and slept if you wish to climb in the morning.

The BOYS leave. DUCLOS looks around and then after a few seconds he cannot find the pudding so he exits by the D.L. entrance, hissing "Gupal" as he goes.

As soon as he has gone the pedestal door revolves again and BUNTER emerges holding the pudding.

He is about to leave when DUCLOS enters again dragging GUPAL by his ear practically.

BUNTER whips up the steps and hides behind the Red Dragon.

DUCLOS: Why did you rush off like that ? Where have you been ?

GUPAL: I went back to the camp. Bunter is not there !!

DUCLOS: He must be about the Temple somewhere. The boys came in and Cherry thought he saw him. You must get rid of this Bunter, Gupal.

GUPAL: Where is the pudding ?

DUCLOS: I do not know. It has gone. I will look once more in the mouth of the Red Dragon for the jewel. . .

He climbs up on the pedestal. BUNTER  
creeps round the idol avoiding him.

DUCLOS: (feeling in mouth) Nothing ! And the Dragon is hollow so if it was not resting in the throat or mouth it cannot be there . . . (BUNTER gives a hiccough)

GUPAL: What did you say ?

DUCLOS: I said nothing. It was you who spoke.

GUPAL: I didn't say a word.

DUCLOS: (climbing down) Idiot ! Do you think I am deaf . . . Now listen to me. I have had a thought about this pudding.

GUPAL: So have I.

DUCLOS: What thought ?

GUPAL: I've been thinking the Red Dragon might have eaten it.

DUCLOS: How long are you going to continue with the stupid thought that this stone idol can eat food? . . . If it consumed half what you imagined it would be sick from indigestion !

BUNTER gives a terrifying hiccough from  
behind the Red Dragon.

GUPAL: (almost shrieks) You hear !!! It has indigestion !

DUCLOS (turns in astonishment) Mon Dieu ! (He grabs GUPAL who is about to rush off again) I have an idea who is there. (Grimly, he takes out his gun)

BUNTER: (peeping) I say, put that away. There's no-one here !



DUCLOS: As I thought ! The Bunter !!!!

GUPAL: The Dragon has eaten him !

DUCLOS: If the Dragon hasn't, I shall. Gupal, watch that gateway.  
(DUCLOS leaps up the steps)

BUNTER Put that gun away you beast ! It might go off !!

DUCLOS edges round the idol to try and get BUNTER who also edges round. This continues for a few seconds until BUNTER gets to the steps and rushes down still clutching the pudding.

DUCLOS: Grab him, Gupal - he has the pudding.

BUNTER in his hurry runs clean into GUPAL and they both collapse on the floor. DUCLOS is there with the gun.

DUCLOS: Get up and give me that pudding.

BUNTER: P...p... put that down. You can have the rotten pudding.

GUPAL: Look !!!!

They turn and the OLD MAN is looking through the doorway L.

DUCLOS: The Old Man !! Here take this and guard the Bunter.  
(He hands GUPAL the gun and rushes after the OLD MAN who dashes out again)

BUNTER: D...Don't point that thing at me, your Highness. It's o...only a pudding.

GUPAL: You had better put the pudding down there and put your hands up... stand near the pedestal please.

BUNTER puts the pudding on the block nearest the pedestal and raises his hands. His hand comes in contact with the forefoot of the Red Dragon, he presses it to open the revolving block.

The creaking noise makes GUPAL start.

GUPAL: W... What's that noise...

BUNTER: Look !! Over there !!!! (Points to main gate)

GUPAL: What... what is it , (He turns, shaking)

By this time the door is opened. It takes BUNTER a split second to grab the pudding from the block and dash inside the pedestal.

By the time GUPAL turns round he has vanished.

GUPAL: I ... I can't see anything... Fat Boy' !! Where have you gone ! !!!

DUCLOS enters looking frustrated.

DUCLOS: He was most agile for an old man ... (Sees BUNTER has gone) Where is the Bunter !!!

GUPAL: He... He's... gone !!

DUCLOS: Gone !! Where could he go?

GUPAL: I don't know !!! He just disappeared. I think perhaps the Dragon has eaten him.

DUCLOS: (grabbing GUPAL by his shirt) Fool ! Dumb-brain !!! You have allowed to escape that fat idiot of a boy. Give me the gun before your hand shakes a bullet from it. Did you take the pudding from him?

GUPAL: Yes. I put it down there... (They both look) That's gone too !!!

DUCLOS: He must have taken it ! ... (Nearly going berserk) The Bunter has escaped with the pudding... Don't you understand you... you gaping Gupal ! We are lost !!!

GUPAL: (astonished at his vehemence) Lost ? ... Just because he's run off with a pudding ? The boys have some more puddings in the basket, I saw them.

DUCLOS: Idiot ! ... The Bunter has the pudding from the Dragon's mouth. He must have hidden it there earlier.

GUPAL: You can still get another pudding, if that's all you want.

DUCLOS: Puddings ! Puddings ! Do not keep speaking of puddings to me. I want that certain pudding and you should know why.

GUPAL: You're hungry?

DUCLOS: Non ! NO! NO! ... Why do you think the jewel was missing from the Dragon's mouth when I felt just now?

GUPAL: Because it had gone! ... Or it wasn't there in the first place.

DUCLOS: Nit-brain !... I will stake my life it was there. Then the fat Bunter pops in his pudding and Voila ! What happens when the pudding goes in the Dragon's mouth?

GUPAL: That's what I've been saying - he eats it !

DUCLOS: Eats it ! The Dragon is a thing of stone. No, mon ami, use your brain. The Jewel was there but when the fat Bunter pushes in the pudding there the jewel sticks...

GUPAL: You ... you mean the Dragon's eye, the priceless ruby is stuck in that pudding that Bunter has taken?

DUCLOS: Certainment ! And you ... priceless numb-wit, you have let the Bunter walk away with it ! ... We must search for him, it is our last chance. To get him quickly must be our object. You comprehend?

GUPAL: Yes... What do you think he will do with the jewel?

DUCLOS: I KNOW what he will do with it unless we get to him first.

GUPAL: What?

DUCLOS: He will do what he does with everything else - he will EAT IT !!!!

The Curtain falls as DUCLOS drags  
GUPAL out...

END OF SCENE THREE.



SCENE FOUR

The scene is the Temple, the following morning. It is daylight and the sun is shining brightly.

The door from the Pedestal opens slowly and BUNTER emerges. He peers round, looking for food.

BUNTER:           Beasts! They've taken the hampers away... Quite a nice little basement inside there... If only I had something to eat I'd be quite comfortable. (he hears someone coming)

As INKY enters. BUNTER presses the foot of the dragon and goes through the open door. As INKY enters he seems to catch a glimpse of BUNTER when the door closes. He does a "take".

CHERRY:           (enters carrying hamper and ropes) Hallo, hallo, hallo! Nice morning to start some climbing Inky... (looks at him) What's the matter?

INKY:               B...B...B...

CHERRY:           Don't tell me. You thought you saw Bunter!

INKY:               The Bunterfulness was terrific.

CHERRY:           And now he's gone. (puts hamper on block near pedestal)

INKY:               Into the air, thoughtfully.

CHERRY:           Well, it's coming to something if you're going to be affected by the heat.

The other BOYS enter. Carrying haversacks.

WHARTON:          Are we going to eat anything before we go?

CHERRY:           Inky's had sunstroke. He saw Bunter - that makes three of us.

BULL:              I think you're all potty. It must be one of those things that catch on from one person to another.

NUGENT:           Like measles?

BULL: More or less.

CHERRY: I'd sooner have measles than keep seeing Bunter.

WHARTON: It's like those chaps in the desert who keep seeing water. It's what they call a mirage - the heat, you know.

CHERRY: Have you seen Major Duclos?

WHARTON: He's about somewhere. I passed his tent and it was empty.

BULL: If we're going to have any breakfast, we needn't wait for him.

CHERRY: I should think the Major ate enough yesterday to last him the next four weeks. I'm not hungry, let's get out to the foot-hills. We can take some grub with us.

BULL: I could do with a bite.

NUGENT: It must be talking about Bunter has made you hungry.

WHARTON: I'm with Bob. Let's push off now, before it gets too hot. (opens haversack) You can put some of the food in here Johnny and eat on the way.

BULL: I'll get indigestion.

CHERRY: A spot of climbing will soon shift that.

JOHNNY BULL, grudgingly rises and opens the hamper, starts to take out the food which he places on the block near the pedestal.

CHERRY: I've got the rope here, we ought to try lashing it round us.

NUGENT: The guide will show us all that.

CHERRY: I was thinking we might try a spot of climbing on our own this morning. We can take the guide when we do some serious climbing.

BULL: I say, do we take these three puddings?

WHARTON: I think we'd better. Or that old man will be sneaking in to grab them. Two have gone already.

NUGENT: It wouldn't surprise me to know that Major Duclos scoffed them.

CHERRY starts to tie them up together.

CHERRY: This is the way... Leave that grub Johnny I want to try out this lashing business.

BULL: Wait a jiffy. When you're all starving at mid-day, you'll be glad of this. Good job we've got tins for the sandwiches. After today we shall have to eat the tinned stuff.

JOHNNY BULL is opening large buiscuit tins, checking sandwiches.

WHARTON: Is the rope supposed to be as tight as this?

CHERRY: That's how the guide did it. I hope it's strong enough. Good job we don't have that fat pirate, Bunter with us. I shouldn't fancy my chances on any rope that was tied to him.

The BOYS laugh. They are still trying the ropes round themselves.

INKY: The ropefulness is terrific.

CHERRY: Let's try it out. I'll go up these steps to the old Red Dragon, you fellows come after me.

CHERRY starts to go up the steps.

CHERRY: Get the hang of it?... Tug gently on the rope... (NUGENT, who is next to him, pulls hard) Not as hard as that fathead!

While they are trying out the rope. BULL has laid out the food and the three puddings on the block near the pedestal.

WHARTON: Come and take a look Johnny. See the idea...

BULL walks to D. L. to look at them.

BULL: I get it.

While he is watching, the pedestal door opens and BUNTER nips out to grab a pudding from the pedestal. He goes back in with it.

WHARTON: Lash up, Johnny. You'd better try it.



BULL: I'm putting this grub in the haversack. I shan't be half a mo'

CHERRY: And if one of us is dangling over a precipice, we give a tug and pull him up. . .

They all give a tug and jerk INKY who is the end one. . .

INKY: My dear Cherry. Cease your absurd puffedness!

BULL: (almost yells) There's another one gone!!!!!!

The BOYS, who are half up the steps, turn.

WHARTON: Another what?

BULL: Another Christmas pudding. I put three on that block - now there are only two.

WHARTON: (unlashing himself and INKY - the end two) Let's have a look. (moves round to BULL)

BULL: There you are! Two only!

INKY: But where can the absurd pudding have disappearfully vanished to?

BULL: How should I know?

WHARTON: You were standing next to them. You didn't leave one in the hamper? (looks)

BULL: I tell you I put them down there, three of them.

CHERRY: (on pedestal, next to red dragon idol) You don't think the old red dragon could have scoffed the pudding. (pats the idol's nose)

BULL: (irritably) Oh don't be a chump! Did one of you blighters take it?

NUGENT: (on stairs) How could we, fathead! We were all tied together.

CHERRY: There might not have been three puddings. Perhaps Major Duclos has taken one for breakfast.

BULL: I tell you there were three. You saw them didn't you Harry.

- WHARTON: I didn't look in the hamper this morning. You're sure you did take three out.
- BULL: Do you think I'm potty! I put them down there I tell you!
- CHERRY: I think the old red dragon had it myself. (feels in the mouth) He doesn't seem to bite... (puts his arm right in) I say, look here, the thing's hollow. I can feel right inside him... There's a little dent in the roof of his mouth... Doesn't seem to me as though he's eaten any pudding recently.
- BULL: Oh chuck it! I'd like to know where that pudding went.
- CHERRY: Perhaps if he's had something to eat he'd like something to drink. (pours some water from his bottle down the mouth of the dragon)
- Suddenly from the dragon comes an "OUCH".  
It seems to echo through the Temple.
- CHERRY and NUGENT nearly fall off the pedestal with surprise.
- The BOYS all stare at the red dragon, aghast.
- CHERRY and NUGENT nip down the steps, as though bitten.
- CHERRY: D... did you hear that noise?
- BULL: W... what could it be?
- WHARTON: I... I... don't know. It said "ouch"... or something like that.
- BULL: It couldn't!... (pulls himself together) It's only made of stone.
- WHARTON: Something made a noise.
- INKY: The noisefulness was terrific...
- NUGENT: It was after you poured the water in Bob. As though something didn't like getting wet.
- CHERRY: Sounded more like someone to me.
- BULL: It would have to be a midget to hide in there.

WHARTON: I've got it. You say the thing is hollow Bob. I'll bet there's some sort of bird or animal built a nest in there. I expect your little shower gave it a shock.

CHERRY: Might be... Give me your water bottle Inky... (he takes it and dashes up the steps to dragon) Let's see if we can drive it out, whatever it is.

WHARTON: Be careful Bob. It might be dangerous... a snake or something.

CHERRY: I'm watching my step... Here, catch this. (he pours the contents of the bottle down the dragon's throat)

From the dragon: "YAROOH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!  
BEAST!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

CHERRY nips down again... very quickly.

WHARTON: It... it sounds like a voice...

CHERRY: That shook it up anyway... It seemed as though it spoke.

NUGENT: Of course... Although I don't know...

The BOYS are recovering from their scare.

BULL: What don't you know?

NUGENT: I was thinking, it... it could be a parrot.

WHARTON: A parrot?

NUGENT: Yes, a bird, fathead! They talk, don't they? And they build nests.

There is a general atmosphere of relief.

CHERRY: I think you've hit the giddy nail on the head Franky. (moves to steps) Let's see if we can entice it out.

WHARTON: It would be rather a lark to have a parrot at Greyfriars.

CHERRY: No it wouldn't - it would be a parrot. (groans from BOYS) We might be able to train it to tell when Bunter was on the prowl for food.

They laugh.



From the dragon comes Bunter's echoing voice: "Cheeky beasts!"

- WHARTON: My hat! There it is again! Not so loud this time.
- CHERRY: I'm going up! (mounting stairs to pedestal) I'll see if I can reach the nest. (puts his arm in) It must be right down inside the idol.
- NUGENT: That's why it echoes.
- CHERRY: Give me the rope Harry. I'll dangle it inside. You know how parrots grab things with their beaks.
- WHARTON: (passing up rope) You mind it doesn't nip your fingers. They've got beaks like razors.
- CHERRY: (pushing the rope in) It doesn't seem to be taking any notice...
- BULL: Don't shove all the rope in there!
- CHERRY: Hallo, hallo, hallo! I think I've got a bite.
- WHARTON: Ease it out gently Bob. You don't want to hurt it.
- CHERRY: It's holding tight!... (tugs harder) Feels more like a ton weight on the end than a parrot!... Do you think the rope has caught on something?
- NUGENT: Might have done. Try and tug it out - we shall want the rope for our climbing.
- CHERRY: (pulling hard) Can't shift it... I'll pass the rope down. You can give me a hand... (he comes down with the rope) Here we are.

From the dragon: "He he he!!!!!"

- WHARTON: (taking rope with CHERRY) Hear that cackling noise from in there?... Almost as though it were laughing at us. Come on chaps, grab the rope.
- INKY: (as they all take the rope together) The cacklefulness was terrific.

The BOYS all line across the stage holding the rope like a tug of war team.

CHERRY: Now let's try and dislodge it... One, two, three...  
HEAVE!!!!

At this point the BOYS all heave, the rope comes loose. There is a fresh cackle from the dragon and they all tumble into a heap on the far side of the stage.

NUGENT: (at the bottom of the heap) Ouch!!! Geroff! You're squashing me.

INKY: Oooh!... I am as flatful as the absurd and proverbial pancake...

CHERRY: Well, we dislodged it...

They are still trying to collect themselves as DUCLOS enters.

DUCLOS: What are you boys at. Is this some game of rogger perhaps.

WHARTON: (rising) He means rugger. No, we're a soccer school sir. As a matter of fact we nearly broke our necks trying to get our rope out of the red dragon's mouth.

DUCLOS: (sharply) The dragon's mouth? What do you mean?

CHERRY: There's something in there sir.

DUCLOS: What? What is in there?

BULL: It's hollow. Something seemed to be making a row - almost talking. We thought it might be a parrot.

DUCLOS: (eyeing the idol) Possibly there might be a bird nesting there. But I must ask you boys not to touch the idol. You do not know what damage you may do to research possibilities...

WHARTON: Oh, we've hardly touched the thing. Our rope got caught on something inside, that's all.

DUCLOS: I understand. But I should prefer you to leave it alone.

CHERRY: What about this parrot we think is in there, sir.

DUCLOS: (reprovingly) The poor bird may be sitting on her eggs. You would not wish to disturb her?

WHARTON: We only dangled a rope in there.

DUCLOS: Leave the bird to me. I often come to situations such as this in my researches. Please, you may leave for your little climb.

BULL: We were just going to shove off when this parrot started squawking. (gathering haversack) Come along you fellows, we'll let Major Duclos carry on with his archaeological rot...er, researches, that is.

DUCLOS: If you would not mind. I prefer to be quiet.

The BOYS are gathering up ropes, haversacks etc...

CHERRY: See you this evening sir...

DUCLOS: Of course. I shall instruct the bearers to prepare a meal. Are you taking any with you.

WHARTON: We thought we'd try a spot of climbing on our own.

DUCLOS: I see. Do not venture any difficult climbing.

WHARTON: We'll be all right, sir. Cheerio! Watch out for that parrot!

The BOYS exit.

As soon as they are gone DUCLOS rushes to the idol. He goes up the steps and feels in the mouth. Then rubs his chin thoughtfully.

While he is up there. GUPAL enters nervously.

DUCLOS: Gupal!

GUPAL nearly leaps out of his skin. And turns fearfully to the red dragon.

DUCLOS: Idiot! C'est moi! Duclos!

GUPAL: H...have you found the jewel? The dragon's eye?

DUCLOS: How can I find it. Until I find the Bunter. I am convinced the Ruby is inside him. Has he been to the camp?



GUPAL: No. There isn't any sign of him... He must have run off into the jungle... (sits on block) I'm tired - we've looked all night.

DUCLOS: And we shall look all day. Do you think I can rest with my future in the gizzard of the fat Bunter!

GUPAL: But how shall we get it without cutting him open. A big job!

DUCLOS: (grimly) An excellent idea... But I have a better plan. You remember what I suggested last night. We shall strike through the Bunter's weakness - his love of food.

He comes down the steps...

GUPAL: We have to find him first.

DUCLOS: I am certain he is about here. He would not move far from the camp - and food. Now you will leave and bring back here the recipe I suggested last night...

GUPAL: And who will find Bunter?

DUCLOS: He will come here. Where there is food - there is the Bunter. And here is food voila!... Or so he thinks.

GUPAL shrugs and exits.

DUCLOS wanders around thoughtfully. Opens the hamper and then nods knowingly. He walks to the red dragon pedestal and climbs up again. He walks thoughtfully round the idol.

As he does so he treads on the dragon's foot. The door revolves unseen by DUCLOS who is looking at the dragon. After a few seconds BUNTER emerges. He is still wet. He goes to the hamper and looks in.

BUNTER: Beasts! They've scoffed the lot. Taken the puddings too the rotters. After soaking me too!... Good job I had that little downstairs place to dry off in.

DUCLOS hears the muttering. He turns and sees BUNTER looking in the hamper. He is so staggered he nearly falls off the pedestal.

DUCLOS: The Bunter!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

BUNTER: (looks up and sees him) Oh lor!!!!!!!

BUNTER nips back into the pedestal...  
DUCLOS comes down the steps five at a time  
rushes round to the pedestal just as the door  
closes and bumps into it.

DUCLOS: A secret door! Sacre!... There must be a crypt to the  
temple... How did the Bunter get inside.

DUCLOS pushes the door to no avail. To  
push harder he reaches up and his hand grips  
the foot as he pushes. The door opens.  
DUCLOS creeps in through one side, pushing  
the door. As he does so, BUNTER comes  
out pushing the other side. BUNTER catches  
a glimpse of DUCLOS and DUCLOS catches  
a glimpse of BUNTER.

They creep round the revolving door.  
Suddenly DUCLOS turns. So does BUNTER.

The process speeds up and DUCLOS chases  
him round at least four times.

In the middle of this GUPAL enters.

He is holding a saucepan by the handle. He  
is positively staggered watching. For from  
his point of view BUNTER goes into the  
pedestal and DUCLOS comes out.

GUPAL: W... what is happening!

DUCLOS stops, so does the revolving door  
and BUNTER going round bangs into and sits  
down with a thump.

BUNTER: Yaroo! Ouch! You cheeky foreign beast you've broken  
my tibia.

DUCLOS seizes the opportunity and jumps on  
BUNTER.

BUNTER: I say, chuck it! I haven't sneaked your rotten pudding.  
I wouldn't touch it with a barge pole. Leggo!

DUCLOS: Sit down my young friend. No-one wishes to hurt you.

- BUNTER: (sitting nervously) It's that Prince there! It's a bit thick inviting a chap to a Palace and then putting him in a rotten tent. It wouldn't do for Bunter Court, I can tell you.
- DUCLOS: Relax my young friend. His Highness wishes to take you to the Palace today. It is only a step from here.
- BUNTER: About time too. I say, I'm starved. Those rotters have taken all the food with them. And they poured water all over me...I'm still wet.
- DUCLOS: It is warm you will soon dry. Now my young friend - about this pudding, you say you didn't take...
- BUNTER: It's about all I've had to eat. I'm absolutely starving.
- GUPAL: You've eaten it!!!! The one Major Duclos took from the mouth of the Red Dragon.
- BUNTER: As a matter of fact I did. I think you had a bit of a cheek to try and scoff it yourselves. After all - I put it there.
- DUCLOS: (patiently) So. There has been a misunderstanding about the pudding. And we agree that this pudding you have not seen or would not touch with a barge pole is yours.
- BUNTER: Well, I mean to say, I did snaffle it and hide it in the dragon's mouth.
- DUCLOS: (understandingly) Oui! Oui!...But tell us my young friend did this pudding you took from the block there last night taste well?
- BUNTER: It was fair. Much the same as the other two.
- GUPAL: You...you have eaten three of these puddings?
- BUNTER: You don't expect a chap to starve. After all this talk about the wonderful food at your Palace and then being shoved into a tent and eating tinned food and biscuits. I mean to say...
- GUPAL: (stemming the flow) Did you notice these puddings were...er...lumpy?
- DUCLOS: Particularly the one you took last night.



- BUNTER: They weren't up to the stuff we get at Bunter Court. But then our chef there is probably the best in Europe. I say, what's in that saucepan thing?
- DUCLOS: Ah! Mon ami! I am glad you ask that thing. It is a special breakfast his Highness has prepared for you with his own hands. Are you hungry?
- BUNTER: I'm famished. I've only had three puddings and a couple of dozen sandwiches and some of those cakes...
- DUCLOS: Mon Dieu!
- BUNTER: ...And of course a few tins of that stuff that the Prince has down at the camp... Not that I cared for it a lot, but it tided me over...
- GUPAL: That...that's all!
- BUNTER: Well I managed to find some rather decent fruit growing on a tree out there. Rather like Apples, but bigger. I didn't like to hang about in the jungle so I only had a dozen or so...
- GUPAL: Then you can't manage the breakfast I've got ready for you?
- BUNTER: Can't manage it!... Of course I can. Haven't I just been explaining that I've hardly had a bite since we came here.
- GUPAL: Oh!... You have!
- BUNTER: Yes, I've been thinking. There's still some of that last pudding in the crypt there. I was just enjoying it when that rotter Cherry poured water all over me.
- GUPAL: You were going to eat it with this... (waves saucepan)
- BUNTER: (opening pedestal door) There doesn't seem a lot in a saucepan that size. I don't want to faint from lack of food.
- BUNTER enters pedestal.
- GUPAL: For heaven's sake let's find the jewel and get rid of him - before he eats us.

DUCLOS: He has eaten it, that is obvious. A little thing like a valuable jewel would not make the slightest impression on his digestion. Have you perfected the mixture?

GUPAL: Yes.

DUCLOS: Plenty of curry? (GUPAL nods) And spices? (GUPAL nods) You think this mixture is sickly enough?

GUPAL: (takes lid from saucepan and holds it to DUCLOS) There!

DUCLOS: (sniffing) Ugh!... That should be sickly enough even for the Bunter... Put the lid on Gupal... Yes, I think that will produce the jewel for us.

BUNTER emerges from pedestal, holding basin, and eating.

BUNTER: Wasn't so much left as I thought. I suppose those beasts did take the other two puddings with them. I don't like being short of food.

GUPAL: Come and sit down. (waves saucepan)

BUNTER: (sitting on block) What is it? Some sort of stew? I'm rather partial to stew.

DUCLOS: It is food such as only the richest princes can afford. It is a great privilege for you to have such a treat from his Highness.

GUPAL: There is a spoon in the saucepan. (hands it to BUNTER)

BUNTER: Well, let's try it. I might tell you I've a very sensitive palate.

BUNTER takes the saucepan and starts to feed himself with the spoon. GUPAL and DUCLOS watch in anticipation.

BUNTER: (critically) Not bad... Nothing like some of the dishes we get at Bunter Court of course... (goes on eating)

GUPAL: (taken aback) You...you...er...like it?

BUNTER: I've tasted worse - and better.

GUPAL: (looking at Duclos, shrugging) It may take time.

BUNTER: What may take time?

GUPAL: I was telling the Major it takes a great time to prepare such a wonderful dish.

BUNTER: (gobbling it down! Not bad. Not bad at all.

DUCLOS: Are you feeling well?...Not sick at all, perhaps?

BUNTER: No, of course not. You know your Highness, you aren't a bad cook. If things ever get sticky out here I might get the pater to take you on as assistant chef at Bunter Court. (another mouthful) I'd like the recipe for this.

DUCLOS and GUPAL exchange despairing glances.

GUPAL: You wouldn't care for a little fat pork?

BUNTER: Do you have any?

GUPAL: No...Not at the moment.

BUNTER: (resuming his food) Not much point in offering it to a chap then.

DUCLOS: Is it not pleasant to think of? I think greasy bacon is also a pleasant thought.

BUNTER: Now you're talking. I could just do with some bacon and fried bread. A few sausages, go down well with the pudding and this stuff - you don't have any chocolate do you. (GUPAL starts to sag at the thought) Here smell this, doesn't it remind you of something.

BUNTER offers the saucepan to DUCLOS, who is also looking seedy.

DUCLOS: Non! Non!... (waves it away and sits on a block) Ugh!

GUPAL: (also sits, groaning) Ooooooooooooooh!

BUNTER: (rising) That wasn't bad at all. (looks at them) You two look a bit pale, you know. Have you been eating something that disagrees with you?

Groans.



BUNTER: (puts saucepan on block beside them, they both edge away from it violently) Thank you Prince Gupal. Better than all that tinned stuff you had. I could do with a drink now. Any ginger pop or lemonade?

They groan.

BUNTER: I think I saw a bottle of something in that hamper.

BUNTER goes to the hamper and produces a bottle, takes a swig.

BUNTER: That's better... Ouch!... Yaroooh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Suddenly smoke seems to come out of his mouth. He coughs and splutters and rushes off practically on fire.

BUNTER: (as he goes) Help!!!!!!!!!! Put me out!!!!!!!!!! FIRE!!!!!!

As he goes the other two rise in astonishment and watch him.

GUPAL: W... what happened.

DUCLOS: (picking up bottle) We must get after him!... Quickly!!!

GUPAL: What did he drink!!!!!!

DUCLOS: The fuel from the spirit stove!!!!!!

They rush out after him as the

CURTAIN FALLS

END OF SCENE FOUR

SCENE FIVE

The Temple. Evening following the previous scene. It is nearly dusk and the Temple has a red glow from the sinking sun.

GUPAL is sitting on a block near the pedestal. He is dozing.

BUNTER enters wearily from the Main Gate. He looks round for food. The hamper is still there, he looks in it and shrugs. He eyes GUPAL, with disfavour.

BUNTER: Beast! I suppose he's still hanging about after those two puddings! I'll soon scare the rotter... I'll get those things out of the crypts too. He. He. He!!

BUNTER carefully opens the pedestal door and disappears inside. He has barely gone before DUCLOS enters. DUCLOS looks fatigued.

DUCLOS: (tapping GUPAL on shoulder) Gupal!

GUPAL: (up in alarm) Help! Murder!!

DUCLOS: Silence! Nit-brain!!

GUPAL: Oh! It's you Major Duclos!

DUCLOS: It is! Have you seen the Bunter?

GUPAL: No. I've waited here as you told me - for hours.

DUCLOS: So I see, asleep! If the Bunter came he could have walked over you and you would not have seen him.

GUPAL: Oh I should. I'm a very light sleeper... and I shouldn't think Bunter is a light walker. Have you seen him?

DUCLOS: Non!

GUPAL: You don't think he was burnt to a cinder by the fuel he drank?

DUCLOS: He wouldn't burn to a cinder. He would render down to a barrel of lard! Non, mon ami, he is, I am sure, alive. And inside him is the jewel we seek.

GUPAL: How will you get it?

DUCLOS: (grimly) Do not fear - I shall get it.

GUPAL: Why can't he feel it. How can anyone eat a jewel like that and not notice?

DUCLOS: Did he not eat all that foul concoction from the saucepan and ask for more. Why should a thing like a ruby bother him.

Suddenly from the small entrance the  
OLD MAN appears.

GUPAL: Look! (the OLD MAN nips out, quickly)

DUCLOS: Mon Dieu! That old man again. Wait...!!!!

DUCLOS rushes out after the OLD MAN.

GUPAL: I don't like it here in the dark...

The door of the pedestal opens. BUNTER's  
head appears.

BUNTER: Still there, the beast!

BUNTER withdraws and the door closes.

GUPAL: (hearing door, looks up) W...What was that?

BUNTER: (speaking through dragon) It was me, thou cheeky beast!

GUPAL: Oh that's all right, I thought it was... (he stops and nearly leaps six feet as he realises the Red Dragon idol has spoken) Oh help!!!... D...D...Did you speak to me O Red Dragon?

BUNTER: Of course I did, you chump - that is to say, thou chump!

GUPAL: W...What can I do for you O Master?

BUNTER: You can go back to that camp and prepare some food for that handsome, striking Greyfriars boy that is with you.

GUPAL: Th... there must be some mistake...

BUNTER: Mistake?

GUPAL: The boy with me isn't handsome... If you mean Bunter he's a fat greedy boy...



BUNTER: Why you cheeky beast!... Hm.. that is to say, thou fatheaded chump. Jolly well go and get that food ready do you hear? I'm starved... that is, the handsome boy Bunter may well be hungry.

GUPAL: Y.. Yes O Master...

BUNTER: And you can bring it back here. Leave it on the stone in front of the idol. Understand!

GUPAL: Perfectly, O Master. You wish for food to be brought here. So that you may give it to the greedy Bunter.

BUNTER: That's right. And not so much of the "Greedy Bunter" you fat little rotter! Hurry up!

GUPAL scurries out in terror, eyeing the red dragon idol as he goes.

BUNTER: (emerging from door) He He He! That put the wind up the rotter. Serves him right letting me drink that stuff! Ugh! (he gulps at the memory of it) ... As soon as he brings the food I'll know what to do to get rid of him. He, He, He!... (he is carrying a bundle under his arm) I'll put it outside, under that bush.

BUNTER leaves through small entrance with bundles, laughing to himself.

As soon as he has gone, the OLD MAN rushes in. He is about to go out through the other door when WHARTON and CHERRY enter with INKY. They carry ropes and haversacks. The OLD MAN nips into the hamper again. DUCLOS comes in from the entrance the OLD MAN entered from.

CHERRY: Hallo, hallo, hallo! You're rushing about Major?

DUCLOS: That old man. The Native, he came in here did you see him?

WHARTON: No, sir. Perhaps he didn't come through here.

DUCLOS: I could have been sure I saw him enter through that gate... (mops his brow)

CHERRY: I shouldn't worry about him. He seems harmless, except for swiping a spot of food now and again.

- DUCLOS: Perhaps so... did you boys enjoy your climb?...
- INKY: The climbfulness was terrific... I wish to tiredfully rest... (sits on block)
- WHARTON: It's cool in here thank goodness... (he and CHERRY sit)
- DUCLOS: Where are the other boys?
- CHERRY: They called in at the Camp on the way. They're going to bring the stove and brew up some tea... Would you like a cup Major?
- DUCLOS: Later... I will just take a further look for this old man. He intrigues me.
- CHERRY: Perhaps he's looking for the dragon's eye.
- DUCLOS: (sharply) What do you mean?
- WHARTON: Inky has been telling us about the Red Dragon. Apparently his eye used to be a great Ruby. The Maharajah had it at one time - but it was stolen from him, years ago.
- DUCLOS: I should not pay too much attention to such a tale.
- CHERRY: Well, Inky knows the Maharajah. And the Ruby was in his State Jewels at one time.
- DUCLOS: But why should it be here.
- CHERRY: The idea is that some fanatic may have stolen it from the Maharajah and brought it back to the dragon. That's right isn't it Inky?
- INKY: It is what is toldfully repeated by some. The ruby has certainly vanished with great mysteriousness.
- DUCLOS: (laughing) If I find it in my research I will return it to the Maharajah... but I do not think a ruby would be in such a place as this... (he smiles at such a ridiculous idea) I shall be back for my cup of tea shortly.
- DUCLOS exits.
- WHARTON: You'd think he would have heard about the dragon's eye. I thought he'd swotted up all the history on this place.
- CHERRY: Most of these Archaeologists and Professors are a bit odd, you know. Miss things right under their noses...

NUGENT and BULL enter.

WHARTON: Here they are. Bring any food you chaps?

BULL: Of course. (puts haversack down)

NUGENT: I've got the stove, too. (he dumps it and starts to set it up.) Where's the fuel?

BULL: I saw the bottle in the hamper this morning.

NUGENT goes to hamper. He opens it and the OLD MAN leaps out and runs across the stage. The boys stand aghast.

NUGENT: M... Mmmy hat!!!

WHARTON: He was in the hamper...

BULL: Let's get after him. He can run fast enough for an Old Boy like that...

They rush out through the main entrance.  
BUNTER enters, through the small entrance.

BUNTER: Those rotters have come back!... Brought some food too. (he starts to forage in the haversacks)

CHERRY: (off) Oh let's forget him, I'm starving. He's harmless.

They enter again, BUNTER just managing to nip into the pedestal.

WHARTON: We'll let the Major catch him... get the tea going Franky.

NUGENT: (gets bottle from basket) There's not much fuel in here. You don't think the old man was drinking it.

CHERRY: Even Bunter wouldn't drink that stuff.

NUGENT: (at stove) There's some more at the camp, anyway. I'll see how far this goes... give us a hand Inky.

NUGENT and INKY are with the stove.

BULL: I'll unpack this stuff for Bob to set out. Here... (he passes out plates etc. to CHERRY, who sets them on the blocks)

WHARTON: (wanders to stove which is R. C.) Any go Franky?



NUGENT: Don't know yet. . .

BULL unpacks the food and hands it behind him without looking to CHERRY. CHERRY is not looking, still putting plates round.

BUNTER eases open the door and reaches out and takes all the food that BULL hands out including bottles of orange juice which he kisses with delight.

BUNTER goes in and closes the door quietly behind him.

BULL: Might as well have one of these puddings.

He hands it and BUNTER opens the door again, snatches it and closes door.

BULL: That ought to be enough. (he turns)

CHERRY: (also turning) What ought to be enough?

BULL: The stuff I've just given you.

CHERRY: What stuff?

BULL: The food and drink I've just handed to you, fathead!

CHERRY: You only gave me these plates.

BULL: (irritated) Why, you burbling chump! Don't act the goat, what have you done with them?

CHERRY: (yelling) Who's a chump! All you gave me were these plates you silly ass. . .

WHARTON: (moving over, with INKY and NUGENT) What are you fatheads rowing about.

CHERRY) This blithering ass. . .

) (together)

BULL ) This fatheaded chump. . .

WHARTON: All right, all right! Stop yelling at the same time!

BULL: I've just handed him all the food for tea and he's pretending he hasn't got it.

NUGENT: Don't act the goat Bob, we're hungry.

- CHERRY: B..B... but he didn't. I haven't seen any food!  
I'm starving myself, do you think I'd waste time hiding it.
- BULL: You must be potty! I was standing here passing it to  
you like this. I felt you take it.. (demonstrates)
- CHERRY: Well, you didn't feel me take it. I wasn't even looking  
that way.
- WHARTON: Hold on. You didn't actually see Bob take it Johnny?
- BULL: No. But I could see you three chaps by the stove there.  
Who else could have had it.
- CHERRY: I don't know - except that it wasn't me.
- NUGENT: Could it have been the old man?
- WHARTON: He would have to be pretty nippy to get back in here after  
dashing out into the forest.
- NUGENT: He is pretty nippy. I've never seen an old man run like  
that. Talk about Roger Bannister!
- INKY: The speed of the absurd old man was devastatingly terrific.
- BULL: (not really convinced) I still think I should have heard him.
- WHARTON: He's the only one who could have done it. Unless you're  
going to suggest the Red Dragon scooped it all.
- NUGENT: What shall we do? Eat at the camp?
- BULL: There's only this pudding left now.
- CHERRY: (looking up at darkening clouds) I think we'd be better  
in here. Looks like a storm to me.
- WHARTON: I think you're right Bob. It won't take us five minutes to  
fetch our tea up here... We'll keep an eye on it this time.
- NUGENT: We could do with some fuel for the stove too... Come  
on, let's all go.
- INKY: The go-fulness with full speed is the proper caper.
- They exit... BULL looking back thoughtfully  
at the Red Dragon. As they exit through the  
main gate, BUNTER emerges chuckling.
- BUNTER: He! He! He! Now where's that other pudding.

He is about to look when DUCLOS enters from small gate. He goes back again.

DUCLOS enters and looks round. He hears someone coming and hides behind the pedestal D. L. GUPAL enters from the main gate. He is carrying a saucepan with food as instructed by the Red Dragon.

GUPAL puts the saucepan down before the Red Dragon. DUCLOS watches him in astonishment.

- GUPAL: I have brought the food as instructed O Red Dragon.
- DUCLOS: Gupal! Nit-brain! What are you doing now?
- GUPAL: I'm giving the Red Dragon his food.
- DUCLOS: Are you insane! What food?
- GUPAL: He asked me to get some and bring it back here.
- DUCLOS: (clutching his head) Mon Dieu! How have I tangled myself with such an idiot fool... You tell me the Dragon asked you to get him some food?
- GUPAL: Yes. He mentioned it just after you left me here. (to Dragon) Didn't you?
- DUCLOS: Cease this idiocy! I will not stand here and take part in a conversation between you and a stone idol!
- GUPAL: But he did...
- DUCLOS: How can he ask for food! How can he eat it!
- GUPAL: He doesn't want it for himself. He said to leave it here for Bunter.
- DUCLOS: For BUNTER!!!
- GUPAL: Yes. Althought personally, I think the Red Dragon misses his eye. (whispering)
- DUCLOS: You do? And what makes you think he misses his eye.
- GUPAL: (quietly) He described Bunter as a handsome Greyfriars schoolboy. I think he must miss his eye very badly.
- DUCLOS: (thoughtfully) He said that, did he... The voice came through there? (points to mouth)



GUPAL: Yes. Where else?

DUCLOS: (still thoughtful) ... And the Idol is hollow... Hmmm... I think I understand what happened while you were asleep. Also how the Red Dragon spoke to you... Put the food down there.

GUPAL: You think he will eat it? (he does so)

DUCLOS: (grimly) I think someone will eat it. Now, just in case the spirit of the Red Dragon has gone into the crypt, call loudly that the food is there.

GUPAL: You wish that?

DUCLOS: I do. Proceed... Shout up through the mouth...

GUPAL: (loudly) O Master I have brought the food for which you asked. (he looks round at DUCLOS for approval)

DUCLOS: Excellent. Now come here with me...

They both hide down the L. side of the pedestal. After a few seconds the door opens cautiously and BUNTER appears. He sees nobody and with a chuckle spots the saucepan.

BUNTER: He! He! He! It worked. The cheeky beast brought it.

DUCLOS: There is the Spirit of the Red Dragon. Catch him!

They both leap on BUNTER and grab him.

BUNTER: Help! Leggo you beasts! Help! My Tibia!!!!

DUCLOS: Sit him down there. (gets out revolver)

BUNTER: Hey! Put that away. It might go off!!!

They sit BUNTER forcibly on the stone block near the pedestal.

DUCLOS: It is most likely to go off mon plump jeune ami! Now, tell us what happened to the pudding you took from the mouth of the Red Dragon?

BUNTER: I told you! I ate it. What would you expect me to do with a pudding?

DUCLOS: There was something valuable in that pudding. Do you understand? A large stone, you must have noticed it if you swallowed such a thing.

BUNTER: You don't think I'd be ass enough to swallow a plum-stone, do you? As a matter of fact there was a plum-stone in it... It might have choked me. I think one of those chaps must have put it in for a joke.

DUCLOS: What did you do with it?

GUPAL: Where is it?

BUNTER: I shoved it in my pocket. I was going to shove it into something those beasts eat... I don't like jokes about food.

BUNTER feels in his pocket and produces a puddingy plumstone.

DUCLOS: (snatches it and wipes it) It is the eye! The dragon's eye!

GUPAL: He didn't eat it...

DUCLOS: We are rich Gupal. No more work for the rest of our lives. (he and GUPAL dance and embrace)

BUNTER: Hey! Wait a minute. That's a ruby or something.

DUCLOS: I knew it must be stuck in the pudding.

BUNTER: By rights that's mine. 'Finders Keepers' you know. It was in my pudding.

GUPAL: He had it in his pocket all the time.

BUNTER: I thought it was a rotten plumstone - I just told you. You'd better give it to me. You know a thing like that would buy an awful lot of food. (wistfully)

BUNTER holds his hand out for the ruby.

DUCLOS: (flourishing his revolver again) Idiot! Cochon! After the trouble you have caused us I should shoot you dead!

BUNTER: (backing away) I.. I... Say... I don't really want the ruby. I'm only too pleased you've got it as a matter of fact, even if you are a pair of foreign beasts, I'm glad you've found it... help!!!

DUCLOS: (moving to him) Silence, stout fool! If you had brains I would blast them out. Seize him Gupal! Get those ropes the boys have left.

GUPAL picks up the ropes and holds BUNTER.

BUNTER: W...w.... What are you going to do to me?

DUCLOS: It pleased you to pretend you were the spirit of the red dragon. I think perhaps it will be right for you to return to the red dragon.

BUNTER: You aren't going to tie me up and leave me in there! No-one will know I'm there - I... I'll starve!!!!

DUCLOS: (up to him) You have eaten enough food in two days to last you two years!

BUNTER: Help!... Murder! Let me go you French rotter!!!!

BUNTER gives a heave and knocks GUPAL flat on his back. He then ducks his head and butts DUCLOS in the stomach, DUCLOS is also bowled over. BUNTER rushes out by the small entrance D. L.

GUPAL: Oooooooh!

DUCLOS: Ouch! Cochon!!!!!!

They scramble up.

GUPAL: He is like a ton weight...

DUCLOS: (breathlessly) We must find him!

GUPAL: But why? We have the ruby - the dragon's eye is ours! Why bother to spend hours chasing a fat schoolboy.

DUCLOS: We must silence him now he knows the real reason for our search. If he meets the other boys and they tell the Maharajah, we shall never leave the Station of Ullapoor.

Suddenly footsteps are heard.

DUCLOS: It is the boys, returning with their tea. Mon Dieu! How these English eat!

GUPAL: Let's hide in the pedestal. We can go down into the crypt.

DUCLOS: We shall. There may be the chance to silence these boys, then the Bunter will not matter. The Maharajah does not even know he is here.

GUPAL: You... you don't mean shoot them?



DUCLOS: Non! We shall endeavour to secure them here for the night. Then the Bunter will not find them and we shall have the night to get over the border to your friends.

CHERRY: (off) Hurry up you chaps! I'm starving!

As he speaks DUCLOS and GUPAL duck into the pedestal and close the door.

CHERRY and NUGENT enter. CHERRY carries a box of food and NUGENT has the fuel for the stove.

CHERRY: I'll put the stuff down here Frank, you get that stove going.

CHERRY moves over to pedestal and NUGENT bends over the stove. As CHERRY stands near the pedestal the door opens and DUCLOS reaches out to drag him in. The door closes.

NUGENT: What did you bring Bob? ... (no answer) Bob! (turning) Where are you?

He is standing there aghast when JOHNNY BULL enters.

BULL: What's the matter Frank?

NUGENT: It's Bob. He... he's gone!

BULL: Gone? Gone where?

NUGENT: I... I don't know. I was standing here filling the stove and Bob was over there, with that tin. He spoke to me, when I turned round he'd disappeared.

BULL: How could he disappear, fathead. Probably went out there. (points to entrance D. L.) I'll take a look (goes).

As BULL goes out NUGENT wanders over to the pedestal. The door opens slowly. DUCLOS reaches out and grabs him.

The temple is empty for a second then INKY and WHARTON enter, carrying more food. BULL returns.

BULL: He's not out there!... Hallo, where's Frank?

WHARTON: How should I know. He came on ahead.

BULL: He was talking to me a minute ago. He said Bob had disappeared. Now he's gone himself!

WHARTON: I expect he just went outside for a second. Perhaps he saw that old man.

BULL: But he couldn't have done.

WHARTON: You aren't suggesting that both Bob and Frank vanished into thin air, are you?

BULL: I'm not suggesting anything! I'm just saying they've gone.

WHARTON: You're sure you feel all right Johnny.

BULL: What do you mean, you burbling chump!

WHARTON: Well, a few minutes ago you made all that fuss and said Bob had swiped all the tea!

As they speak they move close together.  
BULL in the centre before the pedestal.

INKY: Perhaps we should searchfully explore for them?

WHARTON: Put this stuff down first.

INKY and WHARTON both turn to put their food down. The door opens and BULL is snatched from between them.

WHARTON: (turning) You look out there Johnny and - (stops) Johnny! Where are you?

INKY: He has vanished! Into the air, thinly...

They both look all round, shaken...

WHARTON: W... where can he have gone!... Did he go out there Inky?

INKY: I did not see the absurd Bull pass me...

WHARTON: (purposefully) I'm going out to take a look. (moves D. L. leaving INKY by pedestal) Now don't move Inky, I don't want you to be gone when I come back...

Even as he moves away the door opens and INKY is taken.

WHARTON: I said stay where you are... (he turns) INKY!!!!  
Where are you!!!!

WHARTON rushes over to the entrance at the Main Gate.

WHARTON: (calling) Inky!! Johnny!! Don't act the goat!!!

As he exits BUNTER enters from the entrance D. L. . .

BUNTER: The beasts may have that jewel but there's one pudding left.

BUNTER is moving to the haversack with the pudding when WHARTON rushes in and crashes into him.

BUNTER: Yaroooh!!!! You clumsy ass Wharton!!!

WHARTON: B...B...BUNTER!!! Good grief! I'm seeing things! It's the heat.. It's sent me off my rocker.

BUNTER: Rushing about like that! You might have killed me! As it is you've strained my tibia... ouch!

WHARTON: Bunter!!! It IS you!! No, it can't be I'm dreaming! Someone kick me!

BUNTER gives him a hefty kick.

WHARTON: Ow! Stop that, you fat pirate!

BUNTER: You said you wanted to be kicked.

WHARTON: I..I... don't understand. How did you get here?

BUNTER: That beast Gupal invited me. He said he was a Prince and he wanted me to stay at his Palace...

WHARTON: He invited you?

BUNTER: Personally, I'm beginning to think he is no more a Prince than I am... I mean at least I have lots of titled relations and at Bunter Court...

WHARTON: Oh dry up! Why on earth should any one invite you here?

BUNTER: Oh really, Wharton. There's no need for for cheek. I might tell you I'm flooded with invitations every holiday. Smithy begged me with tears in his eyes... And Mauly...

WHARTON: For heaven's sake give it a rest. When did this Gupal ask you here?



BUNTER: When he came to Greyfriars... he told me to keep it dark. He said he didn't want a lot of low-class rotters like you at the Palace.

WHARTON: Where is the Palace?

BUNTER: We haven't reached there yet. He just kept me in a rotten tent. And the food...!!! I don't know what I'd have done if I hadn't managed to get a bit up here.

WHARTON: So that's where all our grub went! We did see you. (moves to him) You fat gormandiser!

BUNTER: Now wait a minute.. (backing) I was just going to say that I didn't think this Gupal has a Palace. He and Major Duclos just came here to get that big ruby...

WHARTON: What ruby?

BUNTER: The dragon's eye, they called it... They've got it and they want to sneak off with it. I found it first, they snatched it and tried to put me in there. (points to pedestal)

WHARTON: In where?

BUNTER: That pedestal. It has a door...

WHARTON goes to it.

WHARTON: (feels it) I can't see any door. It seems solid enough to me. (turns to BUNTER, back to pedestal)

As he turns his back, the door opens and he is snatched by DUCLOS.

DUCLOS: Quickly Gupal! Vite! The Bunter!!!

GUPAL rushes out and chases BUNTER in and out the doors while DUCLOS is struggling with WHARTON.

DUCLOS: Leave that fat fool! Help me with this one Gupal!

GUPAL leaves BUNTER who makes his exit through the exit D. L. They drag WHARTON into the pedestal and close the door behind them.

In a second or so GUPAL and DUCLOS emerge through the door.

DUCLOS: Ah Mon ami! (looks at ruby) Our task is completed!

GUPAL: B . . . . But the boys . . .

DUCLOS: In time the Bunter will come back and perhaps free them. Nothing can stop us on our road to wealth and luxury . . . the dragon's eye voila!!! (holds it up)

As he is doing so a strange figure enters. It wears a long red gown and a hideous mask, like that of the red dragon.

FIGURE: Stay . . . O thieves of the ruby . . .

GUPAL: Oooooh! . . . A Gggggggggghost! . . . The S . . . Spirit of the red dragon.

FIGURE: Give back that which thou has stolen . . . thou . . . thou cheeky foreign beasts! Get from my sight . . .

GUPAL: Oooooh!!! I'm getting Master . . .

GUPAL rushes out . . .

DUCLOS: Come back you fool . . . This is no spirit . . . I think I know who is behind that mask . . . (gets out his gun)

FIGURE: (which is of course BUNTER) Put that gun down, I tt . . . tell . . . t . . . tell thou . . .

DUCLOS: (firing over his head) The next shot will go through the mask fat spirit . . .

BUNTER turns to flee but falls flat on his face.

BUNTER: Help! I'm dead!!!! I've been shot!

DUCLOS: (laughing) Stupid fat cochon! Did you think you could scare me with that childish get-up. I have the jewel and it would take more than an ancient mask to scare it away from me.

A VOICE OFF: "Perhaps a modern revolver would be more effective Major Duclos"

The OLD MAN enters. He no longer looks old. He is erect and purposeful and holds a



revolver. He is prodding GUPAL before him.

OLD MAN: Drop your revolver please Major Duclos. Do not turn until you have done so.

DUCLOS: (turns, having dropped his gun) The... Old Man!!!

OLD MAN: Not so old Major. I could possibly give you a few years. (to GUPAL) Inside and release those boys...

GUPAL scurries into the pedestal.

DUCLOS: Who... who are you?

OLD MAN: I am Captain Shirkar of the Maharajah's Security Forces.. May I trouble you for the ruby Major?

DUCLOS: (handing it over) The Maharajah was going to get it anyway - my friend and I planned to give it to him.

SHIRKAR: That was not the impression I had just now, when you were addressing our young friend. We have been interested in your movements and association with our little crooked friend Gupal...

The boys start to come out, they still have their hands bound behind their backs.

WHARTON: There he is - I told you!

CHERRY: Bunter you fat owl! Wait until I get my hands on you!

BUNTER: I say Cherry, I don't want any cheek. As a matter of fact I was going to ask if you minded me having the last pudding... (at haversack, takes it)

BULL: Put that pudding down... (he moves across, as he does so he gets between DUCLOS and CAPTAIN SHIRKAR)

DUCLOS seizes BULL and uses him as a shield. He picks his gun up.

DUCLOS: Now, Mon Capitaine Shirkar... If you do not want this boy to die you will drop your gun and throw the dragon's eye down there.

SHIRKAR: (doing so) You will never get out of Ullapoor, Major.

DUCLOS: That we shall see... (picks up ruby and gun) Into the door please, Mon Capitaine... Here, Gupal, hold this gun



DUCLOS: (continued) while I tie up our gallant officer.

He hands the gun to GUPAL and takes SHIRKAR into the pedestal.

DUCLOS: (as he goes) When I have attended to him Gupal, we shall replace the boys... including the Bunter.

He enters... GUPAL faces the boys holding gun.

CHERRY: Don't let Major Duclos make a fool of you Gupal. You'll only be sorry.

As they are speaking BUNTER is creeping up the steps of the Red Dragon pedestal still holding the last pudding.

WHARTON: Be sensible Gupal, let us go. We'll get Inky to speak to the Maharajah, you may get off.

GUPAL: I shall be off, certainly, but with untold wealth.

DUCLOS: I am coming now Gupal, let the boys enter. I will come out first.

As he speaks BUNTER takes the pudding to the Red Dragon. He pushes it right down the Dragon's mouth. There is a loud squashing noise from inside the pedestal.

DUCLOS: (inside) OUCH!!!!

He staggers out from inside the pedestal the basin on his head and blinded by pudding running down his face.

BUNTER drops the haversack he had the pudding in over GUPAL's head. GUPAL drops the gun and in a second the boys have jumped on them. They sit on the two men as their hands are still tied. BUNTER nips down the steps.

WHARTON: Quickly Bunter, untie our hands...

BUNTER: (removing the pudding basin from DUCLOS' head) I say, it's absolutely ruined this pudding.

CHERRY: Put that basin down you chump and untie us...

BUNTER: There's a bit left in the bottom of the basin... (he starts to dig it out)

BULL: WILL YOU UNTIE US!

BUNTER: Ugh... Tastes of hair oil!

NUGENT: Undo our hands! Do you want to be shot!

BUNTER: Stop making such a fuss, you cheeky beasts... (he wanders over and undoes WHARTON's hands)

WHARTON: (undoing CHERRY) Leave that fat ass alone, he did save the day... finish off Bob, I'll get Captain Shirkar. (he goes into pedestal)

CHERRY: (undoing the others) It's a good job for us the Old fat man was here.

DUCLOS: (muttering) But for that fat Bunter - all would be well. I could kill him.

BUNTER: Shut up! You cheeky beast! If I weren't so weak from hunger I'd give you a jolly good hiding.

The boys laugh. WHARTON emerges with CAPTAIN SHIRKAR.

BUNTER: It's no laughing matter. I've hardly had a bite to eat for half an hour...

ALL: Ha! Ha! Ha!

SHIRKAR: If I may make a suggestion. We shall return now to the Maharajah with the ruby and our young friend shall have such a feast as he has never seen before.

BUNTER: Who? Me?

CHERRY: Yes, you Bunty old man!

SHIRKAR: I will escort our friends. My Police will be on their way to meet me. Come...!

He escorts the snarling DUCLOS and dejected GUPAL off. BUNTER goes to basin, which he had dropped.

WHARTON: What are you doing Bunter?

BUNTER: (licking his lips) I might as well finish this pudding - you know that hair-oil doesn't taste too badly.

They roar with laughter as the curtain falls.

THE END.