



*"The best-laid schemes of mice, men and William George Bunter oft gang aley" as the proverb (new version) says, and once again, in this amusing yarn of Greyfriars School, Billy is taught that lesson!*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

### A False Report I

"**B**EAST!" That epithet came from the fat lips of William George Bunter, of the Remove Form, at Greyfriars.

The Owl of the Remove was standing near the letter-rack, blinking indignantly at the letter which he had just read. Only two minutes previously he had rolled up to the letter-rack, full of hope. Not for the first time in his life he had been expecting a postal-order, but the postal-order had not materialised. And hope had departed from William George Bunter.

Earlier in the week he had written home a pleading letter that should have melted a heart of stone. He had fairly banked on a favourable reply. The reply had come, and in two minutes Billy Bunter had been quite disillusioned. Evidently the heart of Bunter Senior was made of something harder than stone.

"Beast!" repeated Billy Bunter, referring again, in that disrespectful manner, to his unrelenting parent.

He read carefully through the letter again.

"Dear Billy," it ran—"I am astonished that you should have the effrontery to ask me for more money. I have provided you with your regular pocket-money throughout the term, in spite of the very unsatisfactory accounts of you which I have received from your headmaster, and, to my mind, you should consider yourself lucky that I have not stopped the allowance altogether.

"This is the last week of the term, and I may tell you that, unless your school report shows a considerable improvement on that of last term, I have quite made up my mind to take you away from Greyfriars and put you into an office where you will find conditions not quite so easy as at school. Your future therefore rests with your report. As to money, please don't annoy me by mentioning the subject again. I will send on the amount of your railway fare to reach you on breaking-up day.

"Your father,

"SAMUEL BUNTER."



"Beast!" almost groaned Billy Bunter, for the third time. "Threatening me with an office job! Oh, the rotter!"

He rolled off into the quad. in a state of great indignation, not unmixed with alarm. And under the old elms he applied his fat brain to the contents of his father's letter.

Billy Bunter had many complaints to make about his treatment at Greyfriars. The food, he declared, was insufficient in quality and (more particularly) in quantity; Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, seemed to consider, strangely enough, that Bunter was a dunce; and the fellows, in their perversity, seemed to regard Bunter as an egregious duffer. Bunter could have filled a book with complaints about his treatment at Greyfriars.

Notwithstanding that, he was by no means anxious to exchange his present life for one in a City office. Bunter had only a vague idea of what City life meant, but he rightly conjectured that it would give him a good many more reasons for complaint than he had found at Greyfriars. And the more he pondered on his father's threat, the more alarmed and dismayed he grew.

"Blow the blessed report!" muttered Billy Bunter gloomily.

The fat junior realised, as he thoughtfully paced under the elms, that any prospects of his term's report showing an improvement on the last one were very remote indeed. Only the previous day Mr. Quelch had told him that he was more ignorant and slothful than ever. The chances were that the report, far from showing an improvement, would show the very reverse.

"Oh, dear," groaned Bunter, "I wish —"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter, old barrel?"

It was Bob Cherry, of the Remove, who came up and interrupted, in his usual cheerful way, the Owl's gloomy thoughts.

"Ow! You made me jump!" growled Bunter. "Can't a fellow have a stroll under the elms now?"

"Not if he's talking to himself all the time!" grinned Bob Cherry. "The right place for him then is the nearest mental

home! What's biting you, anyway, old fat man?"

"Nothing, ass!" snorted Bunter, then became a little more polite in his tone. "I—I say, Bob, do you know whether Quelch has posted off our term's reports yet?"

"Not so far as I know," answered Bob Cherry, looking rather surprised. "Why do you want to know, Bunter?"

"Oh, nothing! I only wondered, that's all," answered Bunter evasively. "Do you know whether Quelch has gone out this afternoon?"

"Yes. I believe he and Capper have gone down to Friardale to arrange about their luggage," answered Bob. "But what's the merry game, Bunter?"

"Find out!" grunted Bunter.

Having extracted all the information he could get from Bob, the fat junior saw no reason for wasting any more courtesy over him. Politeness, in Bunter's eyes, was a means to an end, always.

He rolled away, leaving Bob Cherry staring after him quite breathlessly.

Billy Bunter rolled across the quad., and made his way up the steps into the School House. His little eyes were gleaming with renewed hope, for an idea had occurred to William George Bunter.

Reaching the House, he mounted the main staircase and made a bee-line for Masters' Passage. It was a half-holiday, and a fine day, and there were very few people about. Bunter was hopeful that there would be even fewer about in Masters' Passage!

He soon gained his objective, and cautiously rolled over to the door that gave access to the celebrated apartment of the Remove Form-master—an apartment which held many painful memories for Bunter.

After a quick look round to assure himself that he was not being watched, he stealthily opened the door and entered Mr. Quelch's room. After that, he closed the door hurriedly behind him, and, with a triumphant grin, stood within the sanctum sanctorum from which on other occasions he had been only too glad to flee.

Bunter was not inactive for long. He realised that Mr. Quelch's end-of-term work





After a quick look round to assure himself that he was not being watched, Bunter stealthily opened the door and entered Mr. Quelch's room (See Chapter 1).

would, in all likelihood, bring him back as soon as his business in Friardale was completed, and time was therefore precious. The Owl hardly dared to imagine what would follow if Mr. Quelch caught him in the nefarious act which he contemplated. He was quite certain, anyway, that the results would be exceedingly painful; of that there could be no possible doubt, no possible, probable shadow of doubt whatever. Consequently, Bunter went to work with all speed.

Crossing over to Mr. Quelch's desk, he began to rummage among the piles of examination papers and exercise-books that

stood there. He very quickly found what he wanted, and his heart gave a jump at what he saw. Luck was apparently with him. The term's reports were all in their envelopes, ready for sealing and posting.

With his heart almost thumping out of his fat body, Billy Bunter picked out the envelope which was addressed to his father. Apparently the home address of the Bunter family was no longer the celebrated Bunter Court, about which the Owl had so often exercised his fat tongue, for the envelope was addressed to a numbered suburban house such as a common or garden mortal might have lived in. But the envelope contained Bunter's report all right; reading it, Bunter fully appre-

ciated that.

"Beast!" he remarked as he read Mr. Quelch's general remarks on his term's work.

"Beasts!" he muttered venomously as he read the comments of Mr. Lascelles and Monsieur Charpentier on his progress in mathematics and French respectively.

He read down the report, with frowning brows. Undoubtedly, it was far worse than that of the previous term. One glance at it by Bunter Senior would be sufficient to condemn Bunter Junior to a stool in the City—without the option, so to speak. Bunter blinked at the report indignantly.



"Beasts!" he said yet again. "Rotters, every one of 'em! But I'll get the better of them yet!"

He sat down at Mr. Quelch's desk, and began opening drawers and going through papers and stationery with an intentness that seemed to indicate that his life depended on it—as, indeed, in a sense, it did. At last he found what he wanted, and drew it out and set it before himself with a breath of relief. It was an empty report form.

For a quarter of an hour after that Billy Bunter was tremendously busy. He filled sheet after sheet of scrap-paper with odd words and incomplete sentences. To an uninitiated observer, his proceedings would have seemed very mysterious. But Bunter knew what he was doing.

At intervals he carefully filled in a section or two of the blank report form, then he would apply himself industriously to the scrap-paper again.

At last he rose from the desk, with a grunt of satisfaction. The report form was now completely filled in, and Bunter's eyes gleamed triumphantly behind his big spectacles as he held it up to examine it.

Taking into consideration the hurried nature of his work and his lack of skill in the art of the forger, Bunter had not done badly.

He had, to the best of his ability, imitated the handwriting of Mr. Quelch, Mr. Lascelles, and Monsieur Charpentier, and had produced a report on his term's work more in keeping with his own ideas than the real one had been. In something resembling Mr. Quelch's neat hand, he had described himself as "diligent" and "industrious," and he had caused the other masters to apply equally glowing adjectives to him.

Unfortunately, those same adjectives were also equally badly spelt. But Bunter, whose strong point was not spelling, saw no blemishes, and his fat face wore a look of smug contentment as he folded up his false report and placed it in the envelope. To him, the completed document was the masterly product of an ingenious mind, and he congratulated himself that it would

deceive anyone. Whether it was going to deceive Bunter Senior or not, however, remained to be seen!

Grinning cheerfully, Billy Bunter cautiously quitted the Remove Form-master's room, and scuttled away to his own quarters as quickly as his little fat legs would carry him.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Bunter Senior Is Annoyed.

T<sup>AP</sup>!

"Come in!" called out Mr. Quelch.

Half an hour had passed since Bunter's surreptitious visit to Masters' Passage, and Mr. Quelch had just arrived back in his room again. He had hardly sat down before a tap sounded on the door.

In response to the invitation, Trotter, the page, put his head through the doorway.

"Which Mr. Bunter's in the Visitors' Room, sir," he announced. "Wants to see the 'Ead, and the 'Ead ain't in!"

"Mr. Bunter? That will be the father of Bunter, of my Form, I presume," commented Mr. Quelch. "Kindly request him to come to my room, Trotter."

"Yessir," said Trotter, and vanished.

Mr. Quelch did not look very pleased at the prospect of an interview with Mr. Bunter. End of term was a busy time for the masters at Greyfriars, and Mr. Quelch had a lot of work to do that afternoon. The most charming visitor would not have been very welcome just then, and Mr. Bunter was not particularly charming. Mr. Quelch felt, however, that he, as Bunter's Form-master, was more fitted to deputise for the Head than anyone else, and, with a sigh, he put his work on one side and prepared to receive the unexpected caller.

Mr. Samuel Bunter entered on the heels of Trotter shortly after, and shook hands rather perfunctorily with the Remove Form-master.

"Good-afternoon, sir," he grunted. "You're Billy's Form-master, if I remember rightly. I came to see Dr. Locke, but you'll do!"

The manners of Mr. Bunter, like those of his son, were not exactly of the kind that



stamp the caste of Vere de Vere, and Mr. Quelch regarded him rather grimly for a moment. Parents, however, had to be humoured, and the Remove Form-master, with an effort, put on a more agreeable expression again, and motioned Mr. Bunter to a chair.

"Pray be seated, Mr. Bunter. I presume you wish to discuss some matter connected with your son—or sons," he added, remembering the existence of Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form.

Mr. Bunter nodded.

"Quite right. I've come to talk about my son, Billy. I'm just about tired of the young scallywag."

If Mr. Quelch had expressed his thoughts, he might have said that he didn't wonder at it. But Mr. Quelch contented himself by nodding gravely.

"To put it plainly," said Mr. Bunter, looking sourly at the Remove master, "I'm beginning to wonder what I'm getting in return for the school fees I've been paying for some years now."

"Hem!" said Mr. Quelch, in a non-committal manner.

"When I sent my son here," continued Mr. Bunter, warming up to his subject, "I expected you to educate him and make a man of him. What do I get? I find that every term he becomes more lazy and mercenary, and more pestering in his demands for money. As to educa-

tion—why, the boy can hardly spell his own name correctly! Take the letter he wrote me earlier this week."

Bunter Senior drew a dirty-looking sheet of notepaper from his pocket and glanced at it with lowered brows.

"Does it give you any satisfaction to know that a pupil of yours spells 'money' 'm-u-n-n-y'?" he asked scornfully. "Are you content to realise that a member of your Form thinks that 'immediate' is spelt 'i-m-m-e-j-a-t-e'? Because if you are, I'm not!"

"Really, Mr. Bunter——" began Mr. Quelch protestingly.



"No wonder my son can't spell!" hooted Mr. Bunter. "With a master like you to teach him, it's a wonder he can speak decent English!" (See Chapter 2.)



"I'm not asking for excuses!" grunted Mr. Bunter. "I know he's lazy and good-for-nothing. But if you're going to tell me you can't teach him better than that, I'm going to tell you you're talking rot!"

"My dear sir——" protested Mr. Quelch, quite shocked.

"Rot!" repeated Mr. Bunter truculently. "That's what I say, and that's what I mean! And I tell you, Mr. Quelch, I'm about fed-up with it!"

"You have made that quite clear," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Have you come here merely for that purpose, sir, or had you any intention of asking Dr. Locke's opinion on the matter?"

"Well, I'm always willing to listen to reason," grunted Mr. Bunter, growing a little calmer again. "Matter of fact, I really came here this afternoon to see what sort of a report he's going to get this term. I've already told him that unless it shows an improvement on last term's I'm going to take him away, and get him a job where he'll be made to work. I thought I might decide one way or the other this afternoon, and let Dr. Locke know my decision before the school breaks up."

"I see," murmured Mr. Quelch, quite a hopeful light coming into his gimlet eyes at the mention of the possibility of Billy Bunter's being taken away. "In that case, Mr. Bunter, you have called at the right moment. I have your son's report here, ready for posting to you. You may read it now, with pleasure."

He picked out an envelope from the heap on his desk and handed it to Mr. Bunter. Mr. Bunter, with a nod, took the envelope and abstracted the all-important document.

Then he began to read it.

For several seconds he said nothing. But as his first eyes travelled down the report the expression on his podgy face became quite extraordinary.

Mr. Quelch, who had turned to his desk again, did not notice the transformation. The first indication he received of the state of Mr. Bunter's emotions was when that gentleman's voice produced a sort of sudden explosion of wrath and contempt.

"Dear me, Mr. Bunter, are you ill?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch rather anxiously.

"Ill? Huh! Ill?" almost choked Mr. Bunter, glaring at the Remove Form-master with a glare such as the fabled basilisk might have envied. "No, sir, I'm not ill! So this is my son's report! By gad!"

He stared at the report again, as though it fascinated him; then suddenly he jumped to his feet and brought his clenched fist down on the desk with a crash that made Mr. Quelch jump.

"No wonder my son can't spell!" he hooted. "With a master like you to teach him, it's a wonder he can speak decent English!"

"What?" gasped Mr. Quelch, hardly able to believe his own ears for a moment.

"Little did I dream when I sent my boy to Greyfriars that he would be instructed by an *ignoramus*!" roared Mr. Bunter angrily. "Call yourself a schoolmaster! A man like you is a disgrace to the scholastic profession!"

"What? What?" gasped the horrified master of the Remove, regarding Mr. Bunter in astonishment. "Have you taken leave of your senses, sir? Are you mad?"

"Certainly not!" snorted Mr. Bunter furiously. "Mad, indeed! I should be mad to allow a son of mine to remain in your charge any longer! Where can I find my son?"

"But——" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Bunter did not stop to hear any more.

He raged out of the room, slamming the door as he left, with a slam that made the windows rattle.

And, left to himself, Mr. Quelch fairly collapsed into his chair again.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER The Unhappy Ending I

"THE pater! Oh, crumbs!"

Billy Bunter started at the visitor to Study No. 7 in great astonishment. The last person on earth he had expected to walk in was his own father.

"Well, Billy! A surprise for you, eh?" said Bunter Senior, shaking hands in a



## High Days & Holidays



### SKATING !

THE ice is thick on Friardale Pond,  
And off we cycle merrily ;  
Of skating we are keenly fond,  
A ripping sport—yea, verily !  
The air is cold and crisp and keen,  
The trees are hung with icicles ;  
With faces sunny and serene  
We speed upon our bicycles.

Soon we are circling round the ice  
With shouts of mirth and merriment ;  
And Bunter, spurning our advice,  
Is eager to experiment.  
To "cut a figure" he resolves,  
Such is the Owl's precocity ;  
Then, like a catherine-wheel, revolves  
With sudden wild velocity !

But Billy Bunter fails to keep  
The ruthless laws of gravity ;  
A crash ! a splash ! he founders deep  
Within a yawning cavity !  
"Rescue him, boys !" cries Hurree Singh,  
"Or he will perish downfully !  
And that would be a shocking thing—  
He owes me half-a-crownfully !"

We rescue Bunter from his plight,  
But get no word of gratitude ;  
He glares at us, then speeds from sight,  
Such is his selfish attitude.  
The rest of us go gaily on  
With our light-hearted jollities ;  
We all agree that skating's "Bon !"  
The finest of frivolities !

none too affectionate manner with his celebrated son.

"What the dickens brings you here, pater ?" asked Billy Bunter. "Didn't you say——"

"Didn't I say I was waiting to get your report before settling on your future, eh ?" finished Mr. Bunter grimly. "Yes, I did. However, I decided to have a run down and look up the school for myself. Don't stare at me like a codfish, boy !"

Billy Bunter nervously put forward the armchair for his ruffled-looking parent.

"I say, pater, don't you feel peckish after your journey ?" he asked hopefully.

Any visitor to Greyfriars was fair game for William George Bunter, of the Remove, and the visit of a hungry parent would surely lead to a visit to the tuck-shop—with Billy Bunter very much there, of course ! The unexpected appearance of Bunter Senior might not be so unfortunate, after all.

"Peckish ?" repeated Mr. Bunter thoughtfully. "Well, now you come to mention it, Billy, I could do with a snack."

"Let's come over to the tuck-shop, then," said Bunter promptly. "No trouble at all, pater ! I'll show you the way."

"Nonsense !" grunted Mr. Bunter. "I thought from your manner that you had some food in your study."

"Well, I can soon get some in, if you'd prefer it here, pater," said the Owl of the Remove obligingly. "What do you say to some nice ham patties and sausage-rolls, now ? And say a few chocolate eclairs, and a plum cake ?"

"Very nice, Billy," said Mr. Bunter, a glimmering of the truth coming to him. "And who is going to pay for this little snack, may I ask ?"

"H'm ! I will, of course, pater !" said Bunter, blinking rather less enthusiastically at his fond parent. "The only drawback is, as you know, that I haven't any money just now."

"Then how, in the name of all that's wonderful, do you propose to pay ?" hooted Mr. Bunter.

"I thought that probably you'd be willing to advance me the cash," answered Billy



Bunter hopefully. "Of course, you can deduct it from my holiday allowance——"

"How do you know you are going to get any holiday allowance?" barked Mr. Bunter.

"Oh, crikey! I—I thought——"

"Well, don't!" snapped Bunter Senior. "I'll manage without the snack, thank you, Billy!"

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at his father through his big spectacles, and flopped into a chair without pressing the matter further. Apparently the visit of Bunter Senior was not going to provide him with a cheap supply of tuck, after all.

"I have just left your Form-master," announced Mr. Bunter, abruptly switching on to the subject which was chiefly engaging his mind.

Bunter started. With a forged report burdening his fat conscience, the news that his father had seen Mr. Quelch did not exactly fill Bunter with delight.

"I—I say, pater, d-did anything happen?" he said anxiously.

"I don't know exactly what you mean, but certainly something did happen!" grunted Mr. Bunter. "Your Form-master gave me the opportunity of studying your report while I was with him, and——"

"Oh, lor! D-did he see it?" gasped the Owl, his fat jaw dropping at the thought that Mr. Quelch might have seen the document.

"Why should he see it?" asked Bunter Senior irritably. "The man had already written it up and signed it. What are you getting at?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Bunter, greatly relieved. "I say, pater, what sort of a report was it? Pretty good, I should think, wasn't it?"

"I hardly noticed," was Mr. Bunter's unsatisfactory reply. "I was more concerned to notice the extraordinary ignorance of the so-called schoolmaster who drew it up."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"It's a disgrace to Greyfriars and a disgrace to England that an uneducated man like Mr. Quelch should hold a responsible position here!" said Mr. Bunter emphati-

cally. "Small wonder, with a man like that to instruct you, that you are such an ignorant young wretch!"

"Here, I say, pater——" protested the fat junior.

"Your precious Form-master—a Form-master at a public school, by gad!—spelt 'diligent' 'd-i-l-i-j-e-n-t'!" almost choked Mr. Bunter.

"Well, that's how it's spelt, isn't it?" said Billy Bunter, in surprise.

"Of course, you'd think so!" hooted the angry parent, with a glare at his hopeful son. "That's how he teaches you to spell it, of course! And this is what I've paid your fees for! Oh, by gad!"

"B-but——"

"'Steady' he spells 'stedly'! It's a public scandal!"

"Still, it's a good report, pater, isn't it?" persisted Bunter anxiously. "I should think it ticks last term's all right, so you'll let me stay on now, won't you?"

"Let you stay on!" roared Mr. Bunter excitedly. "In charge of that man? Never! You're going to get the remainder of your education where I got mine—in the City!"

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at his father in utter dismay. He had gone to a deal of trouble and exposed himself to grave risks in preparing a report which would redound to his credit, and save him from an uncongenial career in a City office. And all the trouble he had taken had simply brought about the precise state of affairs he had sought to avoid! Bunter was completely dismayed.

"I am going to see Dr. Locke before I leave to-day," said Mr. Bunter grimly, "and Dr. Locke is going to get a piece of my mind, too! I'll tell him exactly what I think of his assistant masters and his school! I'll——"

"I say, don't you think you'd better drop it till after the hols., pater?" interrupted Billy Bunter, in alarm. "And, by the way, you didn't leave that blessed report in Quelch's study, did you?"

"Certainly not! That is to say——"

Mr. Bunter stopped, and started to search



his pockets, and it was while he was thus engaged that a fresh visitor entered.

When Mr. Quelch had collapsed into his chair, after Mr. Bunter's exit, he had been too perplexed and indignant to do anything for a few minutes.

But as he became calmer, he realised that there must be some simple explanation of his guest's extraordinary outburst. Mr. Bunter was a stolid and reasonable-looking man; it was not to be supposed that he had been seized with a sudden fit of insanity.

Mr. Quelch considered the matter, and as he sat weighing it up, his eyes fell on Bunter's report, which Mr. Bunter had unknowingly dropped in his hurried departure.

The Remove Form-master picked it up and glanced down it.

Then he jumped.

He straightened it out and read it intently from beginning to end. His expression as he began was grim. By the time he had finished, it was positively terrifying.

"B-Bless my soul!" he gasped. "Bunter! That incorrigible, deceptive, wicked boy! It is almost incredible!"

For quite a long time. Mr. Quelch stood there holding Bunter's report in his hand. It seemed to mesmerise him.

And then he acted. With his thin lips tightly compressed and his gimlet eyes fairly blazing, the Remove Form-master made a bound for the door, and strode

down Masters' Passage in the direction of the Remove quarters. He raced up the stairs two at a time, and the one or two stray Removites who happened to be about got out of his way very quickly. Mr. Quelch often looked angry. But he had rarely looked so angry as he did that afternoon.

When he reached Study No. 7 in the Remove passage, he did not trouble to tap before he walked in. He simply walked in. And he felt a grim satisfaction at finding Bunter Senior and Bunter Junior there.

Billy Bunter's fat knees simply knocked together as he looked up and recognised the visitor.

"G-good-afternoon, sir," he stuttered feebly, with a ghastly effort at an innocent smile. "Th-this is my father, sir!"

"I am aware of that, Bunter!" said Mr.



"Well, Billy! A surprise for you, eh?" said Bunter senior, shaking hands in a none too affectionate manner with his celebrated son. (See Chapter 3.)



Quelch icily. "I am glad he is present to hear what I have to say. Now Mr. Bunter——"

"I say, sir, perhaps you would rather be alone with him," almost groaned Bunter. "I—I've just remembered I promised to meet a fellow, too."

"You will stay where you are!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Now, Mr. Bunter——"

"Well, what's the matter?" grunted Bunter Senior. "I've already told you what I think of you. Isn't that enough?"

"No, sir; it is not," said Mr. Quelch, his eyes glinting. "When I listened to your outburst a few minutes ago, I not unnaturally supposed that you were suffering from a sudden mental attack, and——"

"Mental attack? Me?" roared Mr. Bunter excitedly. "Why, I'll——"

"Please listen to me," interrupted the Remove master. "Not knowing the contents of the document you were reading, my supposition seemed the most obvious explanation."

"Not knowing the contents?" repeated Bunter Senior in astonishment. "But dash it all, sir, didn't you write most of it yourself?"

"I did not!" said Mr. Quelch, in grinding accents. "I wonder at a man of the world like yourself believing for one single moment that I could be responsible for such an extraordinary production."

"But you signed it!" hooted Mr. Bunter. "Your name was at the bottom!"

"Admittedly. But I did not sign it!" said Mr. Quelch, turning his piercing glance on to the terrified Owl of the Remove. "The person responsible for that report is your own son, here!"

"What?" howled Mr. Bunter, his eyes almost starting out of his head. "You mean Billy? What the thunder——"

"I didn't do it!" groaned the fat Removite. "I don't know what you're talking about, sir. I'm as innocent as a babe."

"You dare to tell me you did not fill up this report form?" ground out Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir; that is to say yes, sir," gasped the unhappy Bunter. "I haven't done any-

thing, sir. If you think I went along to your room while you were out and put that in the envelope in place of your report, you're mistaken!"

Mr. Quelch choked, while Mr. Bunter simply gasped at his promising son.

"Is this true, Billy?" muttered Bunter Senior thickly, at last.

"I've told you it's not," mumbled Billy Bunter desperately. "I didn't copy the different handwritings and fill up a blank report form. I wouldn't dream of doing such a thing!"

"Wretched boy! Then how do you know that that is what has happened?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, dear! I don't!"

"What?"

"I don't, sir. I was only guessing," groaned Bunter, mopping the perspiration from his brow.

Mr. Quelch turned to Mr. Bunter, with an eloquent gesture.

"In a sense, I am glad this has happened during your visit," he said coldly. "You brought a number of accusations against me for failing to succeed with your son. Perhaps now you appreciate the difficulty of my task."

"By gad!" breathed Mr. Bunter. "The—the wicked young scoundrel! How was I to guess this? I beg your pardon most humbly, Mr. Quelch. Obviously I was much too hasty. I am more sorry than I can tell you!"

Mr. Quelch nodded, a little mollified.

"Perhaps you could hardly be expected to see the explanation," he said. "At all events, you have now seen for yourself."

"And I was going to take him away from the school on account of a forged report!" muttered Bunter Senior. "The young rascal! I suppose he will be expelled in any case now?"

Mr. Quelch eyed the trembling Removite grimly.

"I am afraid your son's obtuseness is so great that he has received more consideration than a normal lad, otherwise he would have been expelled before," he answered.



"Undoubtedly, however, his offence merits a severe flogging."

Bunter gave a yelp.

"I say, pater, didn't you say you wanted me to start work in an office?" he asked, all his former desire to stay on at Greyfriars vanishing now. "I'm quite willing to, you know, and——"

"You're going to stay on at school!" barked Mr. Bunter. "I can see now that Mr. Quelch understands you better than I do, and I sincerely hope that he will flog some sense into you next term."

Mr. Quelch nodded grimly.

"I will leave you now," he said. "You will entertain your father during the remainder of his visit, Bunter, and report to me immediately he leaves!"

The Remove Form-master then shook hands with the elder Bunter and departed.

And William George Bunter, of the Remove, his podgy face the picture of woe, was left with his angry parent. He had



Mr. Quelch raced up the stairs two at a time, and the one or two stray Removites who happened to be about got out of his way very quickly! (See Chapter 3.)

plotted and worked to remain on at Greyfriars, and he had succeeded. But now that he had succeeded, he wished from the bottom of his fat heart that his attempts had ended in dismal failure!

—THE END—