



# BILLY BUNTER'S BIRTHDAY

*By the Greyfriars Rhymester*

## ACT I.

(SCENE.—*The entrance hall at Greyfriars. Enter the afternoon postman, bearing a sack of letters and parcels, and gasping and grunting from his exertions. He shoots the contents of the sack on to the floor, and pauses to mop his heated brow.*)

POSTMAN :

A policeman's  
lot, they  
tell us,  
Is hardly one  
of glee;  
But, really, I feel  
jealous  
Of every proud  
P.C.  
For he needn't  
sweat, and  
fume and  
fret,  
And moil and  
toil like me!

(Proceeds to sort the letters and parcels, and allot them to their proper pigeon-holes in the letter-rack.)

I'm sick and tired of hiking  
On my eternal track;  
When summer suns are striking  
Upon my burdened back.

Or sleet and  
snows, they  
freeze my  
toes,  
And stretch  
me on the  
rack!

(Enter BILLY BUNTER, blinking  
eagerly at the  
postman.)

BUNTER :  
The afternoon  
delivery's  
here—  
Hooray !

### CHARACTERS

Billy Bunter	The famous fat boy of Greyfriars
Harry Wharton	
Bob Cherry	
Frank Nugent	
Johnny Bull	
Hurree Singh	
Harold Skinner	The Japer of the Remove
Mr. Quelch	The Remove Form-master
Mr. Prout	
Mr. Hacker	
Mr. Capper	
A Postman	Other masters

NOTE.—*This play may be performed by readers of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL without fee or licence on condition that the words "By permission of the Editor of HOLIDAY ANNUAL" appear on each programme.*



The postman gathered up his sack and departed laughing, and the infuriated BUNTER aimed a kick at him as he went.

POSTMAN :

Nothing for my fat friend, I fear,  
To-day.

BUNTER (*gloomily*) :

Nothing for me ? How jolly rotten !  
My birthday, too, and I'm forgotten !  
I was expecting gifts galore,  
Hampers and letters by the score.  
When nothing came for me this morn,  
I was inclined to feel forlorn,  
But murmured, 'Never mind, my friends ;  
The second post will make amends.  
My titled sire, of Bunter Court,  
Will play up like a handsome sport,  
And send me such a weighty whack  
That it will break the postman's back !'

POSTMAN :

Steady, now, Master Bunter, steady !  
I've got a fractured spine already !

BUNTER (*blinking at the mail*) :

Ha ! Here's a letter with a crest !

POSTMAN :

To Lord Mauleverer it's addressed.

BUNTER :

Oh, crumbs ! And none at all for me ?

POSTMAN (*producing a letter*) :

Wait, Master Bunter ! Here you be !

BUNTER (*snatching eagerly at the letter*) :

I knew that you must be mistaken,  
For I should never be forsaken  
At such a special time as this—  
My disappointment's turned to bliss !

(He opens the letter, peering into the envelope to see if there is any enclosure. There is none. BUNTER recites the letter aloud.)

" Dear William,—Just a line to say'

Happy returns of this glad day.  
I would have sent you a remittance,  
But cannot spare one from my pittance.  
Things on the Stock Exchange, alack,

Have never been so slow and slack.  
The Bulls and Bears, and other creatures,  
Have proved most disappointing features,  
With the result (how sad it sounds !)  
I'm down to my last million pounds !  
I send you greetings, fond, sincere,  
Also a five-pound note—NEXT YEAR !  
Now, have a hectic time—yes, rather !  
Your paupered but devoted FATHER.

BUNTER (*in great chagrin*) :

Oh, what a sell ! A paupered Pa !

POSTMAN :

Excuse me larfin' ! Ha, ha, ha !

BUNTER :

Nothing to cackle at, you dummy !

POSTMAN :

His rich relations ! Oh, lor' lummy !

(Gathers up his sack and makes his exit, BILLY BUNTER aiming a furious kick at him.)

BUNTER :

Oh, dear ! This is a crushing blow !

I feel like weeping tears of woe !

(Enter the FAMOUS FIVE, smiling.)

CHERRY :

Hallo ! The porpoise wants to blub ;

Let's lead him gently to a tub !

BUNTER :

All very well for you to smile ;  
I could outweep the crocodile !

WHARTON :

Why, what's the cause of this distress ?

BUNTER :

My pater's let me down, I guess.  
This is my birthday, as you know,  
A time for revelry—not woe.  
A time for grand and glorious feasts  
(What are you chuckling at, you beasts ?)  
I hoped to hold a celebration  
Fit for a fellow of my station ;  
A spread that would delight your hearts—  
Dame Mimble's choicest cakes and tarts ;  
Delicious doughnuts, so divine,  
Washed down with sparkling ginger-  
wine !  
And now—my hopes are rudely shattered ;  
No invitations will be scattered  
Among my vast array of friends,  
So there, alas, the matter ends.  
Unless you chaps would let me borrow  
A pound ; I'd pay it back to-morrow !

NUGENT :

Bunter, we know your funny  
tricks,  
Your assets are exactly nix !  
And, therefore, how could  
you repay  
A loan, you fat and fatuous  
jay ?

BUNTER :

Really, old chap, I promise  
you—

BULL :

We won't advance a single  
sou !

HURREE SINGH :

Has not the worthy Shakespeare said (I keep his  
maxims in my head) :  
" Neither a borrower be,  
nor lend,  
Or you will lose both loan  
and friend." Already,  
you've an ample figure

BUNTER :

Oh, really, you're a cheeky  
nigger !

That is a slander on the slender.

Now, who will be my moneylender ?

CHERRY :

There's nothing doing, Bunty dear,  
What cash we have, we'll hold.

ALL :

Hear, hear !

BUNTER (*glaring at the FAMOUS FIVE*) :

The meanest mob I ever met !  
I won't descend to be in debt  
To such a stingy set of beasts !  
I shan't attend *your* birthday feasts !

WHARTON :

Chance is a splendid thing, my son !

BUNTER :

Bah ! I despise you, every one !

(*He takes out his handkerchief and bursts  
into tears.*)

Boo-hoo ! A beastly birthday, this,  
I'm shunned on every side.  
My titled folks have given a miss  
To me, their joy and pride !  
No gifts, no grub, no celebration ;  
Nothing for me but slow starvation !



BUNTER (*bursting into tears*) : No gifts, no grub, no celebration;  
Nothing for me but slow starvation.

ALL (in chorus) : Boo-hoo !

ALL (in chorus) :

Boo-hoo !

BUNTER :

Pip-please don't mock me any more !  
You see, I'm feeling sick and sore.  
Leave me alone to nurse my woes,  
Or else I'll dot you on the nose !

HURREE SINGH :

If Bunter isn't more pacific,  
The dotfulness will be terrific !  
But Bunter's nose will dotted be,  
Not our illustrious beaks, you see !  
(Suddenly a loud noise is heard "off.")

WHARTON :

Hark ! Sounds like Billy Bunter snoring !

NUGENT :

It's only a loudspeaker roaring.

CHERRY :

The "Children's Hour" is going strong.

BULL :

Well, we're not children. Come along !

(The FAMOUS FIVE move towards the exit,  
but stop short as a loud voice is heard  
announcing.)

Gay greetings, jolly birthday joys,

To all the following girls and boys :

Anthony Allen, of Acton,

Cicely Clare, of Clacton.

Dicky Drake, of Dorchester,

Philippa Phillips, of Porchester.

Angus MacNab, of Aberdeen,

Tommy Turner, of Turnham Green.

Patrick O'Connor, of County Clare,

Patricia O'Connor, who's also there—

(Hello, Twins !)

Barbara Blake, of Barmouth,

Yvonne Young, of Yarmouth.

Stanley Stokes, of Stoke-on-Trent,

Marjorie Martin, of Margate, Kent.

Larry Lloyd-Jones, of Pontypool,

And—

BILLY BUNTER of Greyfriars School !

BUNTER (beaming with pleasure) :

I say, you fellows ! Fancy that !  
I thought I was forgotten ;  
My birthday seemed to fall quite flat,  
And really, it was rotten !  
But blessings on the B.B.C.  
Somebody has remembered me !

HURREE SINGH :

And Bunter's wistful tearfulness

Is turned to blissful cheerfulness !

BUNTER :

My name is broadcast near and far,  
From China to Peru ;  
From Kent to distant Kandahar  
They'll pay me tribute due.  
The news electrifies the earth :  
"This day marks Billy Bunter's birth !"

CHERRY :

Bunty, you are an artful rogue !  
Birthdays, with you, are quite a vogue.  
You had a birthday, I remember,  
Last May, and also in September !  
Now you've the nerve to claim another.

NUGENT :

He must be older than his mother !

BUNTER :

Really, you beasts ! If you imply  
That I'm a base deceiver,  
I'll whack each nose, and black each eye—

BULL :

He's caught the fighting fever !

WHARTON :

I therefore vote we cool his ardour ;  
So bump him hard—

CHERRY :

Then bump him harder !

(The FAMOUS FIVE advance grimly on  
BUNTER, who yells and expostulates.  
He is about to be bumped, when the sudden  
entrance of HAROLD SKINNER causes his  
captors to release him.)

SKINNER (to BUNTER) :

I've hunted for you everywhere,

My podgy porpoise, I declare !

Here is a note from Quelch to you ;

A really charming billet-doux.

CHERRY :

Open and read it, Billy do !

WHARTON (sternly) :

Punning will be the death of you !

(BUNTER blinks at the letter, and opens it  
with trembling fingers. He is quivering  
with excitement.)

HURREE SINGH :

Read what the Quelchy sahib has written !

CHERRY :

"Come to my study to be smitten !"

BUNTER :

It's nothing of the sort, you chump ;

Listen ! the news will make you jump !

So green  
with en-  
vy you  
will be  
That you  
will  
want to  
slaughter  
me!  
(Recites  
the letter.)

"Dear  
BUNTER  
—to my  
favourite  
pupil

I write with-  
out the  
 slightest  
 scruple  
To send a  
birthday  
invita-  
tion.

I have arranged a celebration  
In honour of my brightest boy ;  
A bounteous banquet you'll enjoy.  
You'll find it set out, neat and nicely.  
Within my room, at five precisely.  
Bring any friends you may desire  
(Your taste in friends I much admire).  
Make yourself free of all you find,  
And have a glorious evening, mind !  
I much regret I shall be out  
(I've a golf-match on with Mr. Prout),  
So I will leave you on your own,  
Eat everything ; leave not a bone !  
Let not a single crumb survive  
Of that grand feast which starts at five ! "

WHARTON :

Bunter, you are a pig in clover !

BUNTER (*smirking*) :

Something to get excited over !

NUGENT :

Quelch must be softening in the head.

BULL :

Bunter's his favourite boy, he said !

CHERRY :

The queerest thing I ever struck.

SKINNER :

Bunter, old chap, I wish you luck !



Bunter was about to be bumped by the Famous Five when Skinner opened the door.

SKINNER (to Bunter): Here is a note from Quelch to you ; a really charming billet-doux.

(BUNTER slips the note into his pocket, and dances up and down in high glee. Then he turns to the FAMOUS FIVE.)  
You chaps have twitted and teased me,  
You've squashed me and you've squeezed  
me :

You've banged and biffed and bumped me,  
You've whacked and smacked and  
thumped me ;  
You've pelted me with crockery,  
And made my life a mockery.  
You've barred a chap from feeding, too.

WHARTON :

Whatever's all this leading to ?

BUNTER :

With wrath and bitterness I burn,  
But good for evil I'll return :  
Heap coals of fire upon your heads,  
And ask you to this spread of spreads !

CHERRY :

Now, that's what I call charity !

NUGENT :

Such virtues are a rarity.

BULL :

Bunter is most magnanimous.

WHARTON :

Our verdict is unanimous !

HURREE SINGH (*making a low salaam*) :

Accept my humble salutation ;  
We will accept your invitation.

BUNTER :

That's settled, then ; and as for Skinner—

SKINNER :

Ahem ! I'm off elsewhere to dinner.

BUNTER :

Oh ! Won't you come and join the fun ?

SKINNER :

Sorry, old scout; it can't be done.

(*Exit Skinner.*)

BUNTER :

My mouth is watering, I confess,  
My optics blink with eagerness.

My heart is thumping with excitement !

HURREE SINGH : We, too, feel crazy with  
delightment !

CHERRY (*consulting his watch*) :

Hallo, hallo ! It's nearly five !

BUNTER : Come on, you fellows ! Look alive !

(*Aside*)

Now for this grand and glorious spread,  
And blessings on old Quelchy's head !

(*Exit Everybody.*)

END OF ACT I.



Highly elated at being invited by Mr. Quelch to a handsome spread, Bunter danced up and down the room in glee.

## ACT II.

SCENE—MR. QUELCH'S STUDY.

(*The table is laden with good things, including a cold chicken ; a large veal-and-ham pie, a dish of fancy pastries, etc.*)

(*Enter BILLY BUNTER, with the FAMOUS FIVE at his heels.*)

BUNTER (*blinking at the festive board*) :

Oh, what a sight for weary eyes !

A banquet fit for Royalty !

Quelchy no longer I'll despise ;

He has my lifelong loyalty !

My senses thrill, my pulses quicken,  
At sight of such a tender chicken !

WHARTON :

Quelchy's a trump to treat us thus.

NUGENT :

Hear, hear !

BULL :

And so say all of us !

BUNTER :

Sit down, you chaps, for goodness' sake ;  
The place of honour I will take !

(*They seat themselves at the table.*)

CHERRY :

The sight of all this tempting stuff

Surprises me—yes, vastly ;  
I thought the feast was Skinner's bluff—

NUGENT :

My hat, that would be  
ghastly !

CHERRY :

You know what Skinner is,  
the japer !

Methought this was his  
latest caper,  
And that the feast had no  
foundation  
Except in his imagination.

WHARTON :

Well, here's the feast, in solid  
shape,  
So Skinner hasn't worked a  
jape ;  
Though why old Quelch  
should be so pressing  
To Billy Bunter, leaves me  
guessing !

**BUNTER** (*airily*) :

Me and old Quelch are bosom cronies  
(I like the look of those polonies !);  
Quelchy's my pal, as well as teacher  
(This chicken is a handsome creature !).  
He knows how wonderful I am  
(This pie's perfection—veal-and-ham !),  
So when my birthday came along  
(These pastries make me burst with song !)  
He promptly sent, without compunction,  
An invite to this happy function.  
Pour out the good old ginger-wine  
And drink his health—but first drink mine !

*(The glasses are filled, and the FAMOUS FIVE rise to their feet to toast BUNTER.)*

**WHARTON** :

Here's to your fat and famous figure—

**CHERRY** :

And may its shadow ne'er grow bigger !

**HURREE SINGH** :

Your birthday toast we pledgefully sip—

**NUGENT** :

Three cheers for Bunter ! Hip, hip, hip—

**ALL** :

Hurrah !

**BULL** :

Three cheers for good old Quelchy, too !

**ALL**

Hip, hip, hurrah ! Hip, hip, hooroo !

*(They resume their seats.)*

**BUNTER** (*taking up the carvers*) :

Before I carve this king of birds  
I'll speak a few well-chosen words.  
I wish to make it crystal clear  
I'll have no gormandising here.  
I know you're famished, poor and needy,  
But you must not be gross or greedy.  
Just take your cue from me, you men—



Mr. Quelch suddenly entered his study and gazed in blank amazement at the juniors round his table.

**CHERRY** (*aside*) :

Oh, help ! He eats enough for ten !

**BUNTER** :

I don't mind dashing chaps, or doggish ;  
I can't stand fellows who are hoggish !

*(He carves the chicken.)*

A wing between John Bull and Cherry

(Half each is more than necessary) ;

A leg for Hurree Singh and Franky

(Share equally—no hanky-panky !) ;

Wharton, a thin slice off the breast ;

I can accommodate the rest !

**WHARTON** (*aside*) :

He can't stand greed, he does declare,  
Then goes and bags the lion's share !

**BUNTER** :

Tuck in, you fellows, with a will ;

A banquet is a tonic ;

But eat too much, and you'll be ill

With indigestion chronic !

*(The FAMOUS FIVE eat sparingly ; they have no choice in the matter. But BUNTER attacks the chicken with astonishing vigour. They gape at him in amazement.)*

**BUNTER** (*at length, pushing the skeleton of the chicken away from him*) :

Farewell, my worthy Wyandotte !

I have enjoyed you quite a lot !

WHARTON (aside) :

What horrible rapacity !

CHERRY :

What infinite capacity !

NUGENT :

Bunter will be exploding soon—

BULL :

He's swelling like a kite-balloon !

HURREE SINGH :

The burstfulness will be terrific,  
Like an explosion scientific !

BUNTER :

The second course we now will try ;

It looks a poem ! Who says pie ?

ALL :

PIE !

(BUNTER carves the veal-and-ham pie, distributing very small portions to his guests.)

CHERRY (aside) :

This was a very eager meeting,  
But this is very meagre eating !

(Laughter.)

BUNTER :

Although the portions served are biggish  
I trust you fellows won't be piggish !

(He takes the bulk of the pie himself, and



Mr. QUELCH : Be good enough to touch your toes !

SKINNER : Oh, dear ! I'm for it now ! Here goes !

Mr. Quelch administered six severe strokes, and Skinner's

anguished yells awoke the echoes.

attacks it forthwith. Approaching footsteps are heard, "off," but BUNTER pays no heed.)

This is the stuff to give the troops ;  
Better than all your stews and soups !

Old Quelchy's taste I much approve ;  
I wish he catered for the Remove !

Fancy a middle-aged old fogey

To whom all pastry is a bogey,  
A solemn, staid, and sober guy,

Able to choose a perfect pie !

When next I see the Quelchy bird  
I'll slap him on the back—my word !

I'll offer him sincere "congratulations"

And tell him he's the man who matters !  
But if his banquet makes me suffer,

I'll brand him for a mean old buffer !

CHERRY (warningly) :

Shush ! Someone's listening just outside !

BUNTER :

The spying beast ! I'll have his hide !

(Enter MR. QUELCH, in cap and gown. He gazes round the study in blank amazement, then fixes a fierce frown on BUNTER.)

MR. QUELCH :

Bunter, you took my name in vain !

BUNTER :

No, sir !

MR. QUELCH :

I shall correct you with the cane !

BUNTER :

Oh, sir !

You're getting deaf, sir, or mis-heard,

I never breathed a single word !

MR. QUELCH :

Enough ! Such base prevarication

Merits a hearty castigation.

But that's the least of your offences !

Boys ! Are you in your sober

senses ?

How dare you all invade my study

With boots abominably

muddy ?

How dare you sit at my own

table,

Eating as fast as you are able,

Consuming  
this, my  
special  
dinner ?

**BUNTER (aside) :**  
Oh, crumbs !  
We have  
been japed  
by Skinner !

**MR. QUELCH :**  
Explain at  
once this  
rash intru-  
sion !

*Enter Messrs.*  
**P R O U T,**  
**HACKER, and**  
**CAPPER.)**

**MR. PROUT :**  
What is the  
cause of  
this con-  
fusion ?

**MR. HACKER :**  
What are these rascals doing here ?

**MR. CAPPER :**  
Demolishing our feast, I fear !

**MR. QUELCH :**  
Gentlemen ! Great is my surprise !  
I scarcely could believe my eyes !  
To think that these six boys should dare  
To raid my study unaware,  
And help themselves to our supplies,  
Our festal fowl, our savoury pies !

**MR. PROUT :**  
Such conduct has no parallel !

**MR. HACKER :**  
Let us chastise the rascals well !

**CHERRY (aside) :**  
Help ! We are in a fearful fix !  
We shan't escape with less than "six" !

**MR. CAPPER :**  
Well may you quake, for Nemesis  
Arrives upon the premises !

**BUNTER (to Mr. Quelch) :**  
We came, sir, at your invitation—

**MR. QUELCH :**  
Another base prevarication !

**BUNTER :**  
You sent a birthday note to me, sir,  
I have it here, for you to see, sir !



**BUNTER (going down on his hands and knees to Mr. Quelch) :** Oh, let me  
off the execution !  
Think of my feeble constitution !

*(He takes the note from his pocket and hands it to Mr. Quelch. The Remove master peruses it in great astonishment.)*

**MR. QUELCH :**  
Dear me ! I never penned this screed,  
I am amazed—I am, indeed !  
Some rascal, it is clear to see,  
Has copied my calligraphy !  
Who could have been the hardened sinner ?

**BUNTER (eagerly) :**  
Please sir, his name is Harold Skinner !

**MR. QUELCH :**  
Then he's a base deceiver—very !  
Summon him to my study, Cherry !  
*(Exit BOB CHERRY, grinning.)*

**MR. PROUT (calling after him) :**  
Bring also, boy, a supple cane,  
Skinner shall squirm and squeak with  
pain !

**BUNTER (to Mr. Quelch) :**  
Now that we've started on the spread,  
I s'pose, sir, we can go ahead ?

**MR. QUELCH :**  
Put down that knife and fork at once,  
You greedy, good-for-nothing dunce !

BUNTER :

Oh, really, sir ! This lovely pie——

MR. QUELCH :

Be silent, Bunter, and comply !

(Enter BOB CHERRY, dragging SKINNER by the collar, and carrying a cane, which he hands to MR. QUELCH.)

MR. QUELCH :

Skinner, your conduct is outrageous !

More than sufficient to enrage us.

You found (by devious ways, I fear)

That I had planned a supper here.

My writing, then, you imitated,

And Bunter you deceived and baited.

What can you say in condonation ?

SKINNER (wringing his hands) :

I can't invent an explanation !

MR. QUELCH :

Your sense of humour is perverted ;

By caning, it shall be converted !

Be good enough to touch your toes !

SKINNER (aside) :

Oh, dear ! I'm for it now ! Here goes !

(He touches his toes, and MR. QUELCH administers six severe strokes. The other masters look on approvingly. SKINNER's yells of anguish awaken the echoes.)

MR. QUELCH :

There ! You will feel less mirthful now !

Go from my study !

SKINNER (making his painful exit) :

Ow ! Ow ! Ow !

BUNTER :

I hope I'm not malicious,

Or venomous, or vicious ;

But I'm jolly glad the japer

Has suffered for his caper !

The claims of justice have been met——

MR. QUELCH :

No ; there's another victim yet !

BUNTER (quaking with alarm) :

Not meaning me, I s'pose, sir ?

MR. QUELCH :

Bend down and touch your toes, sir !

BUNTER :

Oh, really—I've done nothing——er——

MR. QUELCH :

Over that chair, if you prefer !

BUNTER (going down on his knees to MR. QUELCH) :

Oh, let me off the execution !

Think of my feeble constitution !

Grant me this special birthday plea,

Flog one of these, instead of me !

CHERRY (aside) :

Of all the cheek !

His nose I'll tweak !

MR. QUELCH (smiling) :

Well, Bunter, you shall go scot-free,

I will extend my clemency.

In future, guard your speech with care,

Or Skinner's fate you'll surely share !

BUNTER :

Oh, thanks !

(Glances as the food on the table)

And if you'd be so kind——

MR. QUELCH :

Go, sir ! before I change my mind !

(Exeunt BILLY BUNTER, followed by the FAMOUS FIVE. The masters smilingly sit down to what is left of Mr. Quelch's handsome spread.)

## A REMINDER—

If you have enjoyed reading about the lively adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's; and Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, you will, of course, want to meet them again long before the next edition of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL is published. This you can do, for their adventures, told in fascinating style by the popular authors, Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, and Owen Conquest, are to be found in the following weekly and monthly publications. Make a note of the school-story papers in which all these cheery schoolboy characters appear, and give your newsagent an order for them to-day :

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