# DOWN WITH THE TYRANT!

BY FRANK RICHARDS

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# "DOWN WITH THE TYRANT!"

By FRANK RICHARDS

**When Mr. Brander, the new headmaster, came to Greyfriars, he thought he could rule the school with a rod of iron. But HARRY WHARTON & Co., the cheery chums of the Remove, soon showed the tyrant just where he got off!**

## CHAPTER 1.
### Beastly for Bunter!

"LOOK here——" said Bob Cherry.

"My dear chap, it's all right!"

"But——" said Bob.

"Bosh!"

"But if you fellows would rather ——"

"Rats!"

It was Wednesday, a half-holiday at Greyfriars School, and the Famous Five of the Remove were in the quad.

Bob Cherry had a letter in his hand. That letter announced that his father, Major Cherry, was coming down to the school to see him that afternoon.

Which was the cause of the little argument among the chums of the Remove.

They had arranged to ramble for that afternoon, which was to end at the bunshop in Courtfield, and a spread at the establishment.

So far as Bob was concerned, that programme was off, as it was both his duty and his pleasure to meet his father at the station and accompany him to Greyfriars. Naturally, he would have liked his chums to go with him, but he was not quite sure whether they would regard that duty as a pleasure.

"My dear ass," said Harry Wharton, "we can tea at the bunshop any time. It's all right!"

"And we'll be glad to see your pater," said Johnny Bull.

"The gladfulness will be terrific!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "It is a lengthy time since we have beheld the esteemed and ridiculous countenance of the preposterous major."

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"So that's that!" said Frank Nugent.

"Still," said Bob, "if you fellows would rather——"

"Fathead!" said the four together.

"All serene, then," said Bob. "I'm jolly glad you're coming with me; and the pater will like to see you. He says the three-five train, in his letter, so we'd better get a move on."

And the Famous Five got a move on, walking away cheerily towards the gates.

In the gateway a fat figure was ornamenting the landscape. Billy Bunter was there, supporting his portly person by leaning on a stone buttress, and his little round eyes were very watchful behind his big round spectacles.

As the chums of the Remove came up, William George Bunter detached himself from the buttress.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Blow away, Bunter!"

"But I say——"

"Good-bye!"

The Famous Five walked out. Billy Bunter did not blow away. He rolled after the five juniors.

"I say, you fellows, don't hurry!" said Bunter. "It's too jolly warm for hurrying. Lots of time to get to the bunshop."

"Eh? Who's going to the bunshop?" asked Bob.

"He, he, he!" was Bunter's reply.

The Famous Five stared at Bunter, and then grinned. Evidently William George Bunter was aware of the projected visit to the bunshop at Courtfield. Bunter often became aware of matters that did not concern him.

But what he had not become aware of was the fact that the programme was changed, and that the Famous Five were heading, not for the bunshop, but for the railway station.

Had Bunter been aware of that change in the programme, certainly he would not have watched and waited at the gates for the chums of the Remove. Certainly he would not have bestowed his fascinating company on them in a two-mile walk.

"Sure you want a two-mile walk this afternoon, old fat bean?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather, old chap!" answered Bunter.

"It's a couple of miles, you know!" said Nugent.

"That's nothing to a good walker like me," answered Bunter. "If you fellows get tired, I'll slow down for you."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Still, if you'd rather take a taxi, I'm on," said Bunter. "I'll stand the taxi with pleasure. One of you fellows can lend me the money, and I'll settle out of my postal-order to-morrow. I think I mentioned that I was expecting a postal-order."

"You did," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Many a time and oft, in fact! But to save you the fag of a long walk, Bunty, I may as well tell you that we're not going to the bunshop. So you may roll home."

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you fat image?" demanded Bob.

"Your little joke, old chap. He, he, he!"

"But we're not——" began Wharton.

"He, he, he!"

"Look here, you fat ass——"

"He, he, he!"

Evidently Billy Bunter was not to be convinced.

He knew all about that intended spread in the bunshop in Courtfield. And he was quite accustomed to fellows betraying a disinclination for his charming company when a spread was on.

"You can't pull my leg, you know," he remarked.

"You silly owl——"

"He, he, he!"

Bunter rolled on with the Famous Five. He had not the slightest doubt that the walk was intended to end at the bunshop; and he had no doubt that when the spread started he was going to be present.

The Famous Five chuckled and walked on. If Bunter wanted to walk to Courtfield they had no objection to offer.

"I say, you fellows, have you heard the news?" asked Bunter, as the juniors proceeded by road over Courtfield Common.

"What and which?" asked Nugent.

"There's a new chap coming to Greyfriars."

"Remove man?" asked Bob, with a faint interest.

"No; I hear that he's a senior, and going into the Sixth," said Bunter. "I happened to hear Wingate speaking about him to Gwynne. Foreign chap, name Bump, or Chump, or something."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Well, I'm not sure about the name," said Bunter. "I remember it's a foreign name—Hump, or Bump, or Stamp, or Tramp——"

"It's rather uncommon for a new man to go into the Sixth," said Harry Wharton.

"And still more uncommon for him to be named Stamp or Tramp!" chuckled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it was something of the sort," said Bunter. "Wingate said he was a Dutchman; he had it from the Head. I say, you fellows, let's rest on one of these seats. We've come over a mile."

"Like to sit down for about half an hour, old bean?" asked Bob.

"Yes."

"Right-ho! Sit down as long as you like. We'll keep on."

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter did not sit down.

The fat junior was showing signs of shortness of breath now. Bunter had a lot of weight to carry, and the afternoon was warm.

But he plugged on manfully. Exertion was not in his line, but there was a reward at the end of it—at least, Bunter fancied that there was.

The juniors walked into Courtfield at last.

"Here we are!" gasped Bunter, as they reached the bunshop in the High Street. "I say, you fellows! Stop! What are you going on for?"

Bunter hurried after the five.

They were heading for the railway station, which was near at hand. Bunter rolled into the entrance after them.

"I say——" he gasped.

"Coming on the platform, old bean?" grinned Bob.

"Look here, you ass, you can get a better spread at the bunshop!" urged Bunter. "There's a pretty good buffet here, but the bunshop is ever so much better."

"I told you we weren't going to the bunshop!" chuckled Bob.

"Well, make it the buffet if you like!" grunted Bunter. "But if you take my advice——"

"Bow-wow!"

Harry Wharton took six platform tickets, and the juniors went on the platform. The station clock indicated just three.

"Five minutes before the train comes in!" said Bob.

Bunter blinked at him.

"What train?" he asked.

"My pater's train."

Bunter stared.

"You haven't come here to meet a train!" he howled.

"Ha, ha, ha! Just that, old fat man!"

"Why, you—you—you——" gasped Bunter. "Mean to say that you've come here to meet a train, and that you're not going to have a spread at all?"

"Exactly!"

"The exactfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter gazed at the Famous Five. The expression on his fat face made them yell.

"You—you—you beasts!" gasped Bunter at last. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"But we did tell you!" chuckled Bob.

"Of course, I thought you were gammoning. You—you awful rotters! I've walked two miles!" gasped Bunter.

"It will do you good, old fat man!"

"Beast! Fancy walking two miles for nothing!" groaned Bunter.

"Well, you can hang on and see my pater, if you like," offered Bob.

"You—you ass! Who wants to see an old donkey?"

"What?"

"A silly old donkey! Blow your pater!"

"You cheeky porpoise!" exclaimed Bob. "If you want me to kick you across the line to the other platform ——"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Getting me here for nothing—making a fellow walk two miles on false pretences! Oh, you rotter! Well, I'm not going to stop and see your fatheaded pater!"

"Look here, Bunter——"

"A silly old ass!" snorted Bunter. "No wonder he went into the Army! It must have been that, or a home for idiots for him!"

Bob Cherry was one of the best-tempered fellows at Greyfriars. But he had a temper; and Bunter's remarks touched it.

He reached out and grasped Bunter by the collar.

An automatic chocolate-machine was close at hand. Bunter's bullet head tapped on it, and he roared.

"Yaroooooooh!"

Tap!

"Whoooooooop!"

"Now bunk, you fat chump!" growled Bob. "Bunk, before I kick you!"

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Beast! For two pins I'd give you a jolly good licking! Look here, you rotters, I'm not going to walk back to Greyfriars. Lend me my fare to Friardale, and you can stay here as long as you like, and wait for that old donkey——"

Bob Cherry lifted his boot.

Without stopping to finish—without even stopping for his fare to Friardale, Billy Bunter departed. He departed in haste; and Bob's boot just missed him. Bunter scudded over the bridge to the platform on the other side, where the local train for Friardale was already in.

"The fat idiot!" growled Bob Cherry. "I've a jolly good mind——"

"Here comes the express!" said Harry.

And Bob forgot Bunter, as the express from Lantham came roaring into the station and stopped.

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### CHAPTER 2.
### Something New in New Fellows!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked along the train, as the carriage doors opened, watching for Major Cherry to alight. But the stocky form and bronzed face of the old major did not meet their eyes. Only three passengers alighted from the express, one of whom was Mr. Lazarus, of Courtfield, who gave the juniors a shiny smile and a bow as he passed them on his way to the exit. The other two were a fat man with a foreign-looking face, and a fellow of about seventeen, also foreign-looking, who appeared to be travelling together. Of Major Cherry there was no sign.

Doors slammed along the train, and it moved out of the station again. Bob looked rather blank.

"The pater hasn't come!" he said.

"Looks as if he hasn't!" said Harry. "Must have missed his train."

"But the pater never misses a train," said Bob. "They learn to be punctual in the Army. The pater's never missed a train in his life."

"He's missed this one!" said Nugent.

"The missfulness is certainly terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Otherwisefully, my esteemed Bob, your ridiculous pater would be here."

Bob nodded, very perplexed. Evidently Major Cherry had not arrived by that train. Mr. Lazarus had trotted away; but the fat man and his companion remained on the platform. They were speaking to one another in a foreign tongue, which reached the ears of the Greyfriars juniors, and which they supposed at first to be German. But the younger of the two addressed the other as "Oom Meyer," and "Oom" was Dutch—in German the word would have been "onkel." And that caused the juniors to glance round at the speaker,

as they remembered what Bunter had said of a Dutchman coming to Greyfriars. Dutchmen were, of course, few and far between in that quiet corner of Kent; and it struck Harry Wharton & Co. at once that this big, heavily-built fellow was the new man who was going into the Greyfriars Sixth.

They looked at him, and did not like his looks much.

He was a powerful fellow physically—as powerful as any man in the Greyfriars Sixth. His face was heavy in feature, his eyes small and close together; little piggy eyes that were, however, extremely sharp and observant. They were a light grey in colour, and had a steely look. And the juniors, as they glanced at him, found that his eyes were already on them.

His glance met Wharton's, and he raised his hand and beckoned to the captain of the Remove.

Wharton did not stir.

He was near enough for the fellow to call to him, if he had anything to say; and certainly Wharton did not intend to be beckoned like a porter.

He stood where he was and looked at the fellow.

The big fellow frowned.

Leaving the fat gentleman, he came towards the juniors.

"You belong to Greyfriars?" he asked. He had been speaking in Dutch with the fat man; but he spoke in perfect English now.

"Yes," answered Harry.

"I thought so. What Form are you in?"

"The Remove."

"The Remove. What is that?"

"The Lower Fourth," answered Harry.

"I see. Then if you are in the Lower Fourth you are fags."

The juniors looked at him curiously. He was a foreigner, and he was new to Greyfriars; but it seemed that he was not new to Public schools and their ways.

"I am Otto van Tromp," he said. "I am going to Greyfriars. I am going into the Sixth Form."

"Van Tromp?" repeated Wharton. This, evidently, was the name that Bunter had stated was "Hump, or chump, or something."

"That is my name—a name known in your history," said the Dutch fellow, with an unpleasant grin.

"I believe I've heard it," said Harry.

"If you read history at Greyfriars, you have heard it," said Van Tromp. "It was the name of the Dutch admiral who swept the English from the sea, and carried a broom at his masthead in token of what he had done."

The juniors stared at the fellow.

If this was Otto van Tromp's way of introducing himself into his new school, he was not likely to become popular there.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"No doubt you have read that in your history," said the new Sixth Former.

"That isn't all we've read," retorted Bob. "That jolly old Van Tromp had to take his giddy broom down afterwards, and was glad to save his skin by scooting as fast as he knew how."

Van Tromp's face darkened.

"Admiral van Tromp was an ancestor of mine," he said.

"Then he hasn't a lot of cause to be proud of his descendant?" said Bob.

The little piggy eyes gleamed.

"I am new to Greyfriars," said Van Tromp. "But I am not new to school. I come from Oldwood, where I was a prefect. I shall be a prefect at Greyfriars. You are juniors, and fags; and you had better be civil."

"Hadn't you better set the example?" asked Harry.

"If you're going to be a prefect, you'll be expected to set an example to the Lower School, you know," said Frank Nugent, with a grin. "I don't know what the fellows are like at Oldwood, but they don't seem to learn manners there."

"Otto," called out the fat gentleman, "we lose time—ask the boys about the train."

"Ja, Oom Meyer," answered Van Tromp in his own language, and re-

straining his surly ill-humour, he went on addressing Harry Wharton & Co.: "Where is the local train for Friardale—the train for the school?"

"On the other platform," answered Harry. "You go across the bridge. The train's waiting there—you can see it if you look across the line."

Van Tromp turned to the fat man.

"That is the train, uncle," he said. "It is waiting."

"Let us go, then."

"As for you," said the big fellow, with a scowl at the juniors, "I shall see you again at the school, and perhaps I shall teach you not to be cheeky."

"And perhaps we shall teach you!" suggested Bob.

"The teachfulness will probably be terrific, my esteemed and fatheaded Dutchman!" said Hurree Singh.

Van Tromp stared at him.

"Come, come, Otto!" called out the fat man.

"There is plenty of time for the local train, uncle," answered Van Tromp.

He had a light cane under his arm. He slipped it down into his hand and swished it in the air.

"You!" he said, pointing to Bob with the cane. "Bend over!"

"What?" ejaculated Bob.

"Bend over!" snapped Van Tromp. "I am going to cane you!"

Bob stared at him blankly, and then burst into a laugh.

"Oh, my hat!" he exclaimed. "You haven't even got to the school yet, and you want to begin caning! Hadn't you better wait till you're made a prefect before you tell fellows to bend over?"

"Go to sleep and dream again," suggested Johnny Bull.

"I am in the Sixth," said Van Tromp, "and prefect or not, I shall cane a cheeky fag! Bend over at once!"

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Bob.

"What?" roared Van Tromp.

"Coke!" said Bob. "C-o-k-e—c-o-k-e!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The heavy face of the Dutch fellow reddened with rage. He made a sudden stride at Bob and grasped him by the shoulder, and the cane came down with a swish across Bob's back.

There was a roar from Bob Cherry.

"You cheeky rotter!"

That first swipe of the cane was only the beginning, so far as Otto van Tromp's intentions went. But as it happened, it was the last as well as the first, for the Famous Five, as if moved by the same spring, jumped at the big fellow and grasped him on all sides.

Van Tromp was powerful and muscular, but he was not of much use against five sturdy and indignant juniors.

In a moment he was on his back on the platform, and the cane was jerked from his hand and tossed far away.

Bang!

Otto van Tromp's head smote the platform with a resounding concussion. The yell he uttered rang the length and breadth of Courtfield Station.

"There!" gasped Bob Cherry. "That's one for your nob!"

"Yarooooh!"

"Give him another!" panted Johnny Bull.

The Dutchman wrenched himself loose and sprang to his feet. He stood crimson and panting with rage, and for a moment looked as if he would charge at the juniors like a bull.

They stood ready for him, not at all unwilling to give him further instruction. But Van Tromp apparently realised that it was not good enough, and after shaking his fist at the Famous Five. he turned away.

"Otto! Otto!" the fat gentleman was calling impatiently.

And Van Tromp, rubbing his head—which had struck the platform rather hard—rejoined his uncle.

"Precious specimen for Greyfriars!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Why, Loder and Carne are turtle-doves beside that fellow."

"Let's hope he won't be made a prefect!" said Nugent.

"Not likely," said Wharton. "I don't know anything about Oldwood, but he's not the kind of fellow Dr. Locke would make a prefect. Well, we

may as well get off, you men. Major Cherry hasn't come by this train, and it's an hour to the next."

The uncle and nephew were moving away towards the bridge over the line. But as Wharton spoke they suddenly stopped, and both of them turned round again towards the juniors. Wharton's words had evidently struck them, though why, the surprised juniors could not imagine.

The fat Dutchman made a quick step towards Wharton.

"Did you say—Major Cherry?" he exclaimed.

"Eh? Yes!" answered Harry.

"You are expecting him—here?"

Had Van Tromp asked the question Wharton would not have taken the trouble to reply. But he was not disposed to be uncivil to an elderly man, impertinent as the question seemed from a stranger.

"Yes!" he answered.

"You are his son, perhaps?"

Wharton smiled.

"No! This chap's his son."

The Dutchman looked at Bob. His eyes, like his nephew's were small and piggy, but very keen and searching. They seemed to bore into Bob, with a keen interest that was inexplicable to the juniors.

"Ach! You are Robert Cherry, then?" asked the Dutchman.

"Yes!" answered Bob.

"And your father—he comes to the school to-day?"

"Yes!"

"You expected him by this train?"

"Yes!"

"But, perhaps, if he had lost his train he will not come?"

"Oh, he's sure to come," said Bob. "He's written that he's coming, so he's bound to turn up, though I'm blessed if I know why it should matter to you, sir."

"I have heard of Major Cherry," said the Dutchman smoothly. "He was very distinguished in the War, is it not so? Is he not also a governor of the school to which my nephew goes?"

"That's so," said Bob.

"It would be a pleasure to meet him. It is that of which I was thinking. But he has not come, and it is no matter. Good-afternoon to you."

The fat man turned away and walked to the bridge with his nephew. The Famous Five stared after them and then looked at one another.

"Jolly queer pair!" said Bob. "Let's get out, you fellows. We'll get that spread at the bunshop while we're waiting for the next train."

"Good egg!"

And the Famous Five left the station, while Otto van Tromp and his uncle crossed the bridge over the line to the local platform.

## CHAPTER 3.

### Bunter Makes Discoveries!

BILLY BUNTER snorted.

Bunter was dissatisfied.

On the local platform, hidden by the waiting local train from the other platform. Billy Bunter went through his pockets one after another with great care.

The fare from Courtfield to Friardale was not heavy. A few coppers would have seen Bunter through.

But William George Bunter was in the unpleasant state known as stony.

That was not a new state for Billy Bunter to be in. It was an old familiar state. But it was uncommonly awkward just now.

To walk back to Greyfriars was impossible—to Bunter. To borrow his fare from the Famous Five was impracticable—he did not want to venture within reach of Bob Cherry's boot. So Bunter went desperately through his pockets, in the faint hope of discovering some forgotten coin.

But the search was in vain.

He found a pencil and a pen-nib stuck together by a fragment of toffee. He discovered a long lost aniseed ball, which he promptly transferred to his mouth.

But of current coin of the realm there was no trace.

Any fellow but Bunter would have given it up as a bad job and made up his mind to walk. Not so Bunter.

There was a train ready to carry him, and from Friardale it was only a short walk to the school. So Bunter had to take the train.

Bunter's recourse, in such a case, was not to walk. Bunter's recourse was to "bilk" the railway company.

There are quite a number of unthinking people who regard a railway company as "fair game," and do not realise that it is as dishonest to travel without paying the fare as to pick the pocket of a porter.

Bunter was one of them.

Bunter had a conscience; but his conscience had this uncommon advantage, that it would stretch in any required direction, like elastic.

Having searched his pockets for cash, without result, Bunter's mind was made up. He had to go by that train, and he had to go without a ticket. But it was necessary to be cautious. Bunter's conscience was satisfied; but he was aware that the railway people would not be so easily satisfied.

Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way. Then he rolled along the train and dodged into a first-class carriage. Bunter disliked travelling third; and besides, a fellow might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb. Bunter believed in making himself comfortable.

There were few passengers for the local train; and Bunter easily found an empty carriage. Soft cushions invited him to sit down; but Bunter did not sit down.

So long as he was on the platform, his platform ticket saw him through. Once in the train it was a different matter. A ticket collector or inspector might come along, and it would be useless for a fellow sitting in the train to show up a platform ticket.

Bunter squatted down on the floor of the carriage, and squeezed himself under the seat.

There was, fortunately, room for Bunter to lie under the seat. It was warm, and it was dusty. He did not like it. But what was a fellow to do? Discomforts were inseparable from bilking. To travel at one's ease, one had to pay one's way.

Bunter breathed dust, and hoped that the train would soon start, and that no other passengers would get into the carriage. If it remained empty he would be able to crawl out as soon as the train was outside the station, and sit down comfortable till Friardale was reached.

But the train was long in starting. It was there to meet the Lantham express, and take on passengers for local stations. Bunter had heard the express come in and go out again; but the local train still remained stationary on the rails. Bunter grunted discontentedly, and murmured remarks about a railway company that allowed dust to collect under the seats. Obviously the railway directors had made no arrangements whatever for the comfort of bilks.

He almost groaned aloud as the door of the carriage opened. A voice spoke, and Bunter had a view of a pair of shoes as somebody stepped in.

"Here is an empty carriage, Oom Meyer."

Somebody sat down, with his heels only a few inches from Bunter's fat little nose. Bunter glared at those heels.

"You're coming in, uncle?" went on the voice. "The train will be starting soon."

"Yes. I will come as far as Friardale," said an older voice.

"But you are coming to the school?"

"I think not, Otto, in the circumstances."

"But why——"

"It will be better not."

From the heavy tread, and the grunting breath, Bunter could tell that it was a fat man who entered the carriage and sat in the corner seat opposite the first comer.

"Shut the door, Otto! We want no one else here."

The door slammed, and Otto held the handle. Another passenger coming along tried the door, and then passed on to the next carriage.

"We're starting," said Otto.

The train moved out of the station at last.

Billy Bunter lay, warm and dusty, glaring through his spectacles at the heels of Otto van Tromp's shoes. He did not dare to show himself. Who these passengers were, he had no idea; but he realised that he could not rely on strangers to sympathise with a bilk. Bunter had to keep out of sight till the carriage was empty again, which meant that he had to make the journey to Friardale under the seat.

Bunter had, as a matter of fact, travelled under the seat of a railway carriage before; the life of a bilk was not all roses. He did not like it, but he had made up his mind to do it.

"Why are you not coming to the school, after all, uncle?" asked the younger voice. "Doctor Locke expects to see you, as he was told that you would be bringing me to Greyfriars."

"You must give some explanation—I was called away on sudden business, Otto."

Billy Bunter's eyes snapped behind his spectacles. The fellow whose shoes nearly touched Bunter's nose was evidently going to Greyfriars with his uncle; and Bunter, remembering what he had heard of a new boy who was coming that day, guessed who this fellow was—evidently the fellow whose name was Hump or Chump or something. And the uncle was changing his mind about going to the school; and was instructing the nephew to give a false explanation—which was very remarkable indeed, and very interesting to the inquisitive Owl of the Remove. Inquisitiveness was Bunter's besetting sin; and he was getting interested now.

"But why?" asked Otto.

"It would not do to meet Major Cherry there. You heard what the boy said. The major has, it seems, missed his train; but he may come by the next, or he may get to the school by some other way. I cannot take the risk of meeting him at Greyfriars."

Bunter's eyes opened wide.

"I suppose that's so," said Otto.

"However, I can leave you at Friardale and take a train back," said the fat man. "It is of no great consequence whether I see Dr. Locke or not, though I should have liked to see him and observe the kind of man he is. But you will report to me."

"Of course."

"Major Cherry is a difficulty in our way. It is unfortunate that he should be a member of the governing body, and that he should have a son at the school. With the rest of the governors I can deal. Sir Hilton Popper, on whose recommendation you go to the school, is as wax in my hands. Colonel Wharton is abroad and cannot intervene. Old Mr. Wingate, who also has a son at the school, is in bad health and unable to attend to such business. Sir Reginald Temple is a fool, and I can twist him round my finger. Of all the board of governors, I fear only Major Cherry."

Billy Bunter almost wondered whether he was dreaming.

"The headmaster stands in the way," went on the fat gentleman, "but in that matter I know that I can rely on you, Otto."

There was a chuckle.

"You bet!" said Otto.

"But you will be careful——"

"Leave it to me."

"Except for Major Cherry, I have the governors where I want them," said the fat man. "Once a new headmaster is appointed, the way will be clear. Old boys of Greyfriars seem to have a peculiar reverence for that old gentleman. I dare not give even a hint of dismissing him. But—there are other ways."

"What-ho!" said Otto.

"In the meantime, caution is our motto, my boy. Major Cherry, I believe, already has some vague suspicions

—and if he should see me, and learn that it is my nephew who is entering the school, he might jump to conclusions that would be very awkward for us at the present stage of the affair. So I will leave you at Friardale."

"It will be best, no doubt."

"You will probably have a good time at the school, Otto. Better than you had at Oldwood."

"They were against me there," grunted Otto. "My prefectship was taken away for thrashing a fag. But ——"

"You will be careful at first; but when a new headmaster is appointed your way will be clear," said the fat man.

"And there's no doubt about that?"

"None whatever. I have not the power to get Dr. Locke turned out; but when he goes—for other reasons—there is no doubt about his successor. I have arranged all that, and you may count upon it."

"Good!"

"There is another point, Otto. It may be necessary to telephone to me, and, if so, speak on the telephone in Dutch, as you may very probably be overheard."

Otto grunted.

"Dutch does not come easily to me," he answered. "I have almost forgotten it—I have always lived in England, seen only English people, and I have been trained at an English school. It is a foreign tongue to me, uncle."

"So I have already noticed, since you came back from Oldwood School. But you must contrive—— Ach! Here we are at Friardale!"

The train stopped.

Not till they were quite gone did Billy Bunter venture to roll out from under the seat.

He rolled from the carriage and blinked around him. The fat man and the new Sixth Former of Greyfriars were walking towards the exit, their backs to Bunter.

"Oh, crikey!" murmured the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter was feeling almost dazed from what he had overheard in the carriage.

What it all meant was a mystery to him. But that it meant mischief of some kind was quite clear, even to Bunter. He blinked after the disappearing forms of Otto van Tromp and his uncle, in a state of dizzy astonishment and wonder.

## CHAPTER 4.
### The New Senior!

"HERE!"

Lord Mauleverer glanced round lazily.

Mauly of the Remove could hardly believe that that sharp, imperative call was addressed to his noble self. However, he glanced round.

Mauly was ambling along Friardale Lane towards the school, at his usual gentle pace. The big fellow who called was proceeding with long strides, and he had nearly overtaken the dandy of the Remove when he hailed him.

Mauly looked at him rather curiously.

"Did you call to me?" he asked politely.

"Yes. Stop!"

"My dear fellow——"

"Take this bag!"

The big fellow was carrying a bag in his hand. He held it out to Lord Mauleverer as he spoke.

His lordship gazed at it mildly, as if it were some sort of specimen held out for his inspection. But he made no movement to take it.

Otto van Tromp frowned at him.

"Do you hear me?" he snapped.

"Yaas."

"Well, take the bag, then!"

"Thanks very much, my dear man," drawled Mauly. "But I've no use for the bag. Thanks all the same."

"I mean carry it, you fool!"

"Oh, gad! I see! You mean carry it, you fool?" said Mauly. "Well, I'm not lookin' for a porter's job this afternoon, so I'm sorry I can't carry it, you fool!"

"You've got Greyfriars colours," said

Van Tromp. "You belong to Greyfriars."

"Yaas!"

"Well, take my bag and carry it. I'm Van Tromp of the Sixth!" added the new senior. "I want my bag carried. Carry it."

"I quite understand," assented Mauleverer. "You want your bag carried, and you're too lazy to carry it yourself. I sympathise, really. You see, I'm too lazy, too." And Mauleverer smiled amiably.

"What Form are you in?" demanded Van Tromp.

"I don't see how it concerns you, old bean; but if you're really curious to know, I'm in the Remove."

"Then you're a fag. Take this bag."

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Quite a mistake," he explained. "The Lower Fourth don't fag. Once on a time, I believe, they did. But that was chucked long ago. As you appear to be a new fellow, I don't mind explaining that to you."

"The Lower Fourth don't fag, don't they?" said Van Tromp. "Well, I'll soon change all that before I've been at Greyfriars very long. And I'm beginning with you. Take this bag at once!"

"Rats!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"What?" roared Van Tromp. "What did you say?"

"Rats!"

"I've told you that I'm a Sixth Form man——"

"Awfully good of you to confide your personal affairs to me, my dear boy. But, really, I'm not interested."

"Will you take this bag?"

"Not as a gift," answered Lord Mauleverer, shaking his head. And feeling that he had wasted enough of his valuable time on the new Sixth Former, Lord Mauleverer turned away and ambled on towards Greyfriars.

The next moment his shoulder was grasped by a powerful hand, and he was swung round again. Van Tromp glared at him.

"Take my bag, you young sweep, or take a thrashing!" he snarled.

"Let go my shoulder, please!" said Lord Mauleverer, very quietly.

"Here's the bag."

"Keep it, and let go my shoulder! I'm not carryin' your dashed bag at any price!" said Lord Mauleverer.

Smack!

His lordship gave a yell as Otto van Tromp's heavy hand smote. It was a new experience for the schoolboy earl to have his ears boxed.

"Oh, good gad!" gasped Mauly.

"Now, will you carry the bag?" jeered Van Tromp. "Or—— Oh! Ow! Why, you young villain—— Oooooh!"

Van Tromp spluttered as Lord Mauleverer's fist came crashing on him. In a combat with the hulking, powerful fellow, Mauly had no chance at all. But he did not stop to think of that. His noble ears were not to be boxed with impunity. His knuckles came with a crash on Van Tromp's nose, and there was a spurt of red from that member.

"Why, you—you—you——" gasped Van Tromp.

He dropped the bag and fairly leaped at Lord Mauleverer. The next moment Mauly was struggling in a powerful grasp in which he was almost as helpless as an infant.

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

Blows rained on Mauly. He struggled manfully, and hit back as hard as he could. But he simply had no chance.

"Oh, gad!" gasped Mauleverer. "Ow! Wow! Help! Rescue, rescue!" yelled Mauly, in the hope that other Remove men might be within hearing.

From a footpath into the lane, a tall and rather angular gentleman emerged. He glanced about him, and then hurried to the spot, a flush of anger in his face. It was Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

"Stop!" he exclaimed. "How dare you! Do you hear me? Release that boy at once, you young ruffian!"

And as Van Tromp did not heed, Mr. Quelch grasped him by the collar and fairly hooked him away from Mauleverer.

Mauly staggered against a tree by the roadside, panting for breath.

"Oh, gad!" he gasped. "Thank you, sir! Oh, my hat!"

Van Tromp turned savagely on Mr. Quelch. His hard, coarse face was crimson with rage.

"You old fool!" he bawled. "Mind your own business!"

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "What?"

"Mind your own business! What the thump are you meddling for?" roared Van Tromp. "I've a good mind to knock you spinning!"

"You insolent young ruffian!" gasped the Remove master. "Do you imagine that I will allow you to use a boy of my Form in that brutal manner?"

Van Tromp was moving towards the Remove master with a threatening, aggressive look. But at Mr. Quelch's words he checked himself.

"Your Form?" he repeated. "Are you a Greyfriars master?"

"I am!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Well, if this fag is in your Form, tell him to do as he's told! I've told him to carry my bag, and he had refused. I belong to the Sixth Form."

"You had no right whatever to tell him to carry your bag, and Mauleverer was quite within his right in refusing." Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye scanned the angry face of the new senior. "I have never seen you before! Are you Van Tromp, whom I have heard is to enter the school to-day?"

"Yes; and——"

"I warn you that if you act in this manner you are not likely to remain at Greyfriars long," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall report your brutal conduct to your headmaster."

"I suppose I can fag a Lower boy if I like?" sneered Van Tromp. "I fagged them at Oldwood, my last school."

"You are insolent," said Mr. Quelch. "I warn you to be careful of your words, Van Tromp. I know nothing of Oldwood; but at Greyfriars you certainly will not be allowed to act like a bully. You will apologise for the expressions you have used to me."

Van Tromp set his lips.

"I'll lick that cheeky fag another time," he said, and, picking up his bag, he strode on towards the school.

Mr. Quelch stared after him blankly.

"Upon my word!" he ejaculated. "Van Tromp! Do you hear me, boy? I have told you that you must apologise!"

Van Tromp did not even turn his head. He tramped on towards the school, leaving the Remove master in a state of angry astonishment.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch; and he walked away, very much perturbed.

Lord Mauleverer whistled softly.

"Oh, gad!" he murmured. "That's a new sort of merchant for Greyfriars! My hat! There will be ructions if he goes on as he's started!"

Van Tromp, with a scowling brow, reached the gates and passed in. The new senior had had two encounters with the Remove so far, and in neither of them had he had much benefit. Several fellows stared at his scowling face as he came in, and smiled to one another, as if amused. Van Tromp stared round him and went on towards the house, bag in hand. Skinner of the Remove was lounging in the quad, and he stared curiously at the new senior's scowling face, and grinned. But his grin died away as Van Tromp made a quick stride towards him.

"Take this bag for me!" said the new senior.

"Blow your bag!" answered Skinner. "Who are you, I'd like to know?"

"Van Tromp of the Sixth."

"Oh, you're the giddy Dutchman, are you?" said Skinner. "Well, I'm not fagging for a Dutchman, that I know of!"

Van Tromp reached suddenly at Skinner and took his ear between finger and thumb. Skinner squealed.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Are you taking the bag?"

"Ow! Yes! Leggo!" howled Skinner. Skinner was not made of the same stuff as Lord Mauleverer, and he

did not venture to hit out at the big fellow. He took the bag.

From a little distance Wingate of the Sixth had observed that scene, with surprise in his face. He came over to the spot immediately. There was a frown on the Greyfriars captain's face.

"What does this mean?" he asked. "Who may you happen to be?"

"My name's Van Tromp——"

"Oh, the new fellow!" said Wingate. "Well, you mustn't pull fellows' ears here, Van Tromp."

"I shall do as I please."

"Will you, by gad!" said Wingate, staring at him. "I rather think not!"

"He's making me carry this bag, Wingate," said Skinner. "The Remove don't fag, and he's not a prefect——"

"Drop the bag and clear off," said Wingate.

Skinner grinned, dropped the bag, and cleared off. Van Tromp made a stride after him, and Wingate interposed immediately.

"Chuck it!" said Wingate tersely. "You're rather making a fool of yourself, Van Tromp."

"Who are you?" demanded Van Tromp, glaring at him.

"My name's Wingate, and I happen to be captain of the school. And I warn you that manners of this sort won't do at Greyfriars."

With that, Wingate turned and walked away.. And Van Tromp, scowling, picked up the bag and carried it into the house himself.

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### CHAPTER 5.
### Trouble Ahead!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! There's the dad!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were waiting on the platform at Courtfield when the four o'clock express came in from Lantham.

Major Cherry descended from the train.

Bob Cherry rushed across the platform to greet the bronzed, soldierly-looking old gentleman. His comrades followed him.

The major shook hands with his son, and then with the Co.

"I'm glad to see you here, Bob," he said, "and your friends, too. I suppose you waited for this train——"

"We came here for the three-five, dad," answered Bob. "Did you lose your train?"

"Not exactly! I had a reason for missing the connection at Lantham," said the major. He broke off. "But now I am here, let us go—— Are you boys equal to a walk to the school?"

"Yes, rather, sir," said Harry Wharton, with a smile.

"The ratherfulness is terrific, honoured sahib."

"Then we will walk," said the major.

Major Cherry and the juniors left Courtfield Station together.

The Co. could not help noticing the thoughtful, rather sombre shade on the major's face as they went down Courtfield High Street. They wondered whether it had anything to do with his unknown reason for missing the connection at Lantham, and coming on an hour late. It was quite unlike the major to miss a train; generally he was as punctual as a clock.

Bob's father was evidently in a very thoughtful mood. He did not speak again till the town was left behind, and they were following the tree-shaded road across the common towards the school.

"Penny for 'em, dad!" Bob ventured at last.

The major started a little. Then he smiled.

"I was thinking," he said. "I am sorry I kept you waiting at the station, Bob, but I met Sir Hilton Popper in Lantham, and I took the opportunity of discussing with him some matters connected with the school—some rather pressing matters."

The major's face grew sombre again.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances.

"Nothing wrong with Greyfriars, is there, father?" asked Bob.

"At present—no!" said Major Cherry. "But I am not easy about the future. How is your headmaster?" he added abruptly.

"Much the same as usual," said Bob in surprise. "We saw him at prayers this morning, and he was the same as usual."

"Nothing wrong with his health?"

"I don't think so."

"That is good," said the major. "But it makes the whole matter more puzzling."

He spoke rather to himself than to the juniors, and checked himself abruptly.

The major changed the subject immediately, and began to speak on the perhaps more interesting subject of the Remove cricket.

That was a subject the Famous Five were always ready to discuss. At the same time, they were feeling rather perplexed, and could not help wondering.

Something, it was clear, was on the major's mind, and it was not only to see his son that he was visiting Greyfriars.

Apparently there were clouds on the horizon, and the major was concerned about the school. Only that could explain his having seized an opportunity for a discussion with Sir Hilton Popper, for the major was not exactly friendly with that gentlemen, and they never met except as governors of Greyfriars on business connected with the school.

Sir Hilton, moreover, was a portentous bore, and certainly not a man whose company Major Cherry would have sought except for good reasons. The juniors remembered having heard that Sir Hilton had recently become chairman of the governing board; so he was, of course, a very important gentleman in Greyfriars affairs. But what sort of trouble could be threatening the old school was a mystery to them.

However, the major had evidently dismissed the matter from his mind now, and he chatted cheerily with the juniors on their way to Greyfriars.

They reached the school, and as they walked towards the house, Bob Cherry uttered an exclamation:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the new chap!"

"The jolly old Dutchman!" said Johnny Bull.

Otto van Tromp came out of the house as they approached it. He was in company with Loder of the Sixth.

Apparently the new senior had made a friend already.

From what they had seen of Van Tromp in Courtfield, the Famous Five were not surprised to see that he had made friends with the blackest sheep at Greyfriars.

Van Tromp glanced at them, and seemed about to come towards them, but, seeing that they were in company with Bob's father, he turned abruptly away.

The major's glance followed him curiously.

"Who is that, Bob?" he asked.

"A new man in the Sixth Form, dad. He came by the train we expected you by this afternoon," answered Bob. "His name's Van Tromp."

"He is new here?"

"Yes."

"It's odd—his face seemed familiar to me," said the major. He paused, looking after Van Tromp, who was walking away with Loder of the Sixth. The major had had only a glimpse of his face, and now he could see only his back. He shook his head in a puzzled way, and went on to the house with the juniors.

"You're going to tea in the study with us, father?" asked Bob.

The major smiled.

"Certainly, my boy. I am going to see the Head now, and then I shall call on your Form-master; then you may expect me in the study."

"Good! We'll kill the fatted calf all ready."

Major Cherry laughed and left them, and the juniors went up to the Remove passage. In Study No. 1 there was a pooling of resources, and Bob departed for the school shop with a bag and the necessary cash. The other fellows proceeded to tidy and adorn the study a little for the reception of the distinguished visitor.

Bob Cherry made his purchases at the tuckshop, and emerged therefrom with a well-filled bag and a cheery face. He almost ran into Loder of the Sixth and Otto van Tromp, who were coming in.

"Mind where you're going, you young ass!" grunted Loder.

"Sorry!" said Bob politely.

"Oh, it's you!" exclaimed Van Tromp, his little piggy eyes gleaming at Bob. "I told you I would deal with you at the school, you cheeky young rascal!"

And the new senior, reaching out suddenly, grasped Cherry's ear and twisted it severely.

Bob gave a yell.

But if Van Tromp supposed that Bob Cherry's ear was to be pulled as easily as Skinner's, he was making a mistake.

Up came the well-filled bag. There was a crash as it landed on Van Tromp's waistcoat. The new senior staggered back.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Ow! Oh! Why, I—I—I'll——"

"You young sweep!" exclaimed Loder. "Look here——"

Van Tromp recovered himself and sprang towards the Removite, his face red with rage. Bob Cherry jumped back.

"Hands off, you bully!" he exclaimed.

Van Tromp did not heed. He fairly leaped at Bob and grasped hold of him. Up came the bag again, catching the new senior under the chin. Van Tromp spluttered and sat down suddenly.

Bob did not wait for him to get on his feet again. The big senior, at close quarters, was rather too tough a handful even for the sturdiest fellow in the Remove. Bob sprinted away towards the house, while Van Tromp sat and spluttered.

He was rather breathless when he arrived in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

"Hallo! Anything up?" asked Wharton.

"That new cad!" gasped Bob, rubbing his reddened ear.

"The jolly old Dutchman?" asked Nugent.

"Yes. He had the cheek to pull my ear. I biffed him with the bag, and he sat down. I left him sitting!" added Bob, with a grin.

"Good man!"

"We're going to have trouble with that brute," said Bob. "He seems to be a born bully. And he's down on us already."

"We'll give him as good as he hands out, if he bothers us," said Harry. "Thank goodness he's not a prefect."

"He seems to have made friends with a prefect—and the worst at Greyfriars."

"Well, we've had trouble with Loder before, and he didn't get the best of it," said the captain of the Remove. "This Co. can always keep its end up."

"Hear, hear!" agreed the Co.

On that point the Famous Five were unanimously agreed. And they dismissed Otto van Tromp from their minds, and gave all their attention to preparing the spread for the distinguished visitor.

## CHAPTER 6.
### Major Cherry Wants to Know!

"BLESS my soul!" said Dr. Locke. He gazed at Major Cherry in mild surprise.

"Really!" he said.

"Then there is nothing in it?" asked the major.

"Nothing whatever."

Major Cherry looked very much relieved.

"I am glad to hear it, sir," he said. "Both as a governor of the school and as an old boy of Greyfriars, I am glad to hear that there is no question of your resigning your post."

"I cannot imagine how such a suggestion came to be made," said Dr. Locke. "So long as I am able to fulfil my duties, I certainly have no intention of resigning, and that is a matter for the governors to decide."

He coloured faintly.

"If I have failed to satisfy the governing board——"

"Not in the least," said Major Cherry. "You may be quite certain that to most of the board your resignation would be a blow. I myself should regard it as nothing short of a disaster."

"You are very kind," said the Head, smiling.

"Perhaps I should not have mentioned the matter," said Major Cherry. "But knowing how I feel on the subject, you will understand that this rumour that you might leave Greyfriars made me uneasy. Sir Hilton Popper——"

He paused.

The Head's lips compressed a little.

"I'm sorry to say that Sir Hilton Popper and I do not always take the same view," he said. "He is the only member of the governing board who has ever disagreed materially with my views."

"I understand that," said the major. "I cannot help thinking that Sir Hilton Popper is a gentleman with whom few can agree. On the other hand, he is a man of very determined character, and has great influence on the board. I saw him to-day, and had a talk with him. His views totally disagree with mine. However, you have relieved my mind very much, sir, and I will say nothing further on this disagreeable subject. I am only too glad to be assured that there is no danger of Greyfriars losing you."

"Rest assured of that," said the Head, with a smile. "Unless the board should request me to resign—which is improbable."

"Impossible, you mean," answered the major.

And the talk in the Head's study turned to other subjects.

But when Major Cherry left his old headmaster, and the study door closed on him, there was a sombre and thoughtful frown on his brow.

A few minutes later he was in Mr. Quelch's study, and Mr. Quelch's manner was very urbane to the father of the junior whom, perhaps, he liked best of all the fellows in his Form.

But the Remove master soon perceived that his caller had another matter on his mind, apart from his son's progress at the school.

"I have seen the Head," said the major rather abruptly. "Mr. Quelch, I am about to refer to a somewhat delicate matter. I speak to you, not merely as a member of Dr. Locke's staff, but as a tried, personal friend of the Head."

"Certainly," said Mr. Quelch, though he raised his eyebrows slightly in surprise.

"The fact is," said the major, "that although Dr. Locke is quite unaware of it, there appears to be a desire on the part of some members of the governing board to appoint a successor in his place here."

"Surely not!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"No actual proposition to that effect has been put up," said the major, "but the chairman of the board—Sir Hilton Popper—has certainly been sounding other members in an informal way."

"Indeed."

"It appears to be Sir Hilton's view that the Head may resign his position here," said Major Cherry. "I have asked Dr. Locke the plain question, and he has assured me that he has no such intention."

"I am sure of it, sir."

"Yet it is clear that such an idea is very strongly in Popper's mind. He has his eye on Dr. Locke's successor already."

"Indeed!" repeated the Remove master.

"A man with whom he seems very much taken," said the major. "A man of foreign extraction, whose name is Brander. I believe the man is suited to the position as far as attainments go, but I had a far from favourable personal impression of him."

"You have seen him, then?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, I have seen him. A couple of weeks ago Sir Hilton Popper called on me, with this gentleman in his company, and introduced him. It was his desire to obtain my support for Mr. Brander in the event of the Head leaving Greyfriars."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch for the third time.

"I understand that similar calls were made on other members of the governing body," continued Major Cherry, "and this Mr. Brander has been introduced to all of them, or nearly all. On some of them he seems to have made a good impression. As the governors had received no official hint whatever that the Head might be leaving, this is very singular."

"Very singular indeed," said Mr. Quelch.

"Between ourselves, sir," said the major, "Sir Hilton Popper does not like the Head, does not agree with him, and would not be sorry if Dr. Locke left the school."

"I am already aware of that, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "Sir Hilton Popper is not an easy man for anyone to agree with."

"I have given the matter a great deal of thought," continued Major Cherry. "I was perplexed and uneasy. I made up my mind finally to see Dr. Locke and ask him plainly. I have done so, and his answer is a relief to me. But ——"

"Yes?" said Mr. Quelch.

"But I saw Sir Hilton Popper today, at Lantham, and he still seems to have the impression that the present headmaster may be leaving. I cannot help thinking that this implies that he may make some motion to that effect at the next official meeting of the board."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Such a motion would be defeated, I am sure of that," said Major Cherry. "I have some influence, and it would be used to the utmost of my power in support of Dr. Locke. In fact, the motion is so assured of defeat that it would seem unlikely that Popper would make it, and yet"—the major tugged at his moustache—"yet he not only seems to think that the Head may leave, but has practically appointed his successor—so far as it rests with him. It is a very perplexing state of affairs, and very disagreeable."

"Very," said Mr. Quelch.

"There is no doubt whatever that Sir Hilton desires this Mr. Brander to take Dr. Locke's place, and has introduced him to members of the board in the hope of gaining their support. If Dr. Locke should leave, Sir Hilton certainly has influence enough to carry the election in favour of his candidate."

"No doubt. But——"

"But the Head does not intend to leave. So, apparently, it comes to nothing. And yet——"

The major paused, and looked at Mr. Quelch, as if for help in his perplexity. The Remove master frowned thoughtfully.

"I have not entered into particulars with Dr. Locke," added the major. "He would be deeply wounded if he knew of Sir Hilton's campaign—I can only call it a campaign—and especially if he knew that the chairman of the board had actually selected a successor for him."

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Quelch.

"Between ourselves, Mr. Quelch, Sir Hilton is a very dictatorial man," said Major Cherry.

"I have observed it," said Mr. Quelch, with a faint smile.

"It occurs to me that he might make some effort, personally, to obtain the Head's resignation," said the major. "His opinion, as chairman of the board, would have weight with a sensitive gentleman like Dr. Locke."

"No doubt," said Mr. Quelch. "But I am sure that Dr. Locke would not yield to any such dictation without a reference to the whole governing board in full meeting."

"If he is firm on that point the whole thing falls to the ground, and we shall hear no more of Mr. Brander," said Major Cherry, "and, as a friend of the Head, and one whom he will probably consult in such a matter, Mr. Quelch, I am sure you would advise him to be firm."

"You may be absolutely assured of that, sir," said Mr. Quelch, with emphasis, "all the more because I am convinced that any headmaster selected by Sir Hilton Popper would probably be most unsuitable for a school like Greyfriars."

"I fully agree," said Major Cherry.

And after a little more talk the major left Mr. Quelch and proceeded to the Remove passage, where the spread was now ready, and the major was warmly welcomed into Study No. 1.

It is doubtful, perhaps, whether plum cake and currant cake, and three kinds of jam appealed very strongly to a gentleman of Major Cherry's years, but the hospitality of the juniors, and their obvious pleasure in his company, certainly appealed to him.

And the major made a good tea, though he passed lightly over the cake, and his inroad upon the jam was not deep.

The major seemed to have thrown aside the thoughtful and sombre mood in which he had arrived at Greyfriars. Apparently his interviews with Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch had relieved him very considerably.

It was a bright and cheery party in Study No. 1; but that cheery tea-party was destined to be interrupted—and in a very startling manner.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Asking for It!

"THAT'S the cad!" whispered Skinner.

Skinner was lounging in the Remove passage with Snoop and Stott. He had been telling them of his encounter with the new Sixth Former that afternoon, and he was still on the subject when Otto van Tromp came in sight on the Remove staircase.

Snoop and Stott had not seen the new fellow yet, and they glanced at him curiously.

"Looks a hefty brute!" commented Snoop.

"What the thump does he want here?" asked Stott. "I suppose he doesn't think this is the Sixth Form quarters, does he?"

Van Tromp glanced round, then came towards the three juniors, who happened to be the only fellows in sight in the passage. Most of the Remove were at tea.

Skinner gave him a malevolent look and backed away a little. He had not forgotten the twisting of his ear, and Wingate was not at hand now to interfere. Van Tromp stared at him, and, recognising him, grinned sourly.

"This is the Remove passage, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Skinner.

"There is a boy named Cherry in the Remove?"

"That's so."

"Which is his study?"

"No. 13," answered Skinner.

Van Tromp walked along the passage, without troubling to thank Harold Skinner for his information. Skinner followed him with his eyes, and then looked at his companions. There was a cane under Van Tromp's arm, which he had apparently borrowed from a prefect's study. That, and the expression on his face, indicated fairly clearly what he wanted with the "boy named Cherry."

"My hat!" murmured Skinner. "That fellow's been only a few hours

in the school, and he's got a cane and is looking for a chap to lick! Jevver hear anything like it?"

"Well, he's not a prefect," said Snoop. "He can't lick a Remove man."

"Looks as if he thinks he can," grinned Skinner. "I suppose Cherry has been treading on his corns already. He's the sort of chap this bully would be down on, of course. My hat! He's gone into Cherry's study!"

Van Tromp, along the Remove passage, had disappeared into Study No. 13.

"Cherry's not there," said Stott. "He's feeding in Study No. 1 with Wharton and his set."

"I know. And Cherry's pater's there, too," said Skinner, with a grin. "My only hat! Old Major Cherry is a school governor. I wonder what would happen if that Dutchman butted in to lick Bob, with the old bean there? it ought to be rather entertaining."

Snoop and Stott chuckled.

"Of course, he wouldn't know about the old bean having tea in a junior study," continued Skinner. "You can see he doesn't know anything about that jolly old warrior being on the spot, or he wouldn't have come up here with that cane! Hallo! He's coming back."

Van Tromp came out of Study No. 13 again.

There was a scowl on his face as he retraced his footsteps along the Remove passage. Skinner stepped to meet him.

"Are you looking for Cherry?" he asked.

"Yes," snapped Van Tromp.

"Well, I can tell you where he is, if you like."

"Where is he, then?"

"Study No. 1. He's having tea there with his friends."

"Oh, good!"

And Van Tromp strode at once to Study No. 1. If Bob Cherry was having tea there with his friends, Van Tromp could guess that his friends were probably the juniors who had been with him at Courtfield Station. Certainly he did not guess that one of the friends was Major Cherry.

There was a buzz of cheery voices and a clinking of crockery from Study No. 1 as the new senior arrived at the door.

"Pass the cake, old bean!"

It was Bob Cherry's voice.

Van Tromp set his thick lips, grasped the door-handle and turned it, and hurled the door wide open

There was a startled exclamation in the study.

The burly senior strode in. The cane was gripped in his hand now. He did not, for the moment, observe Major Cherry, who was seated in the armchair, the high back of which was towards Van Tromp. But he observed at a glance the five juniors whom he had encountered on the platform at Courtfield, and his piggy eyes glittered at them.

"Oh, my hat! You again!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, jumping to his feet. "What the thump do you want here?"

Van Tromp did not answer the question. He had come there for actions, not for words.

The cane swished in the air and came down across Bob's shoulders, with a heavy lash.

There was a roar from Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Why, you cheeky cad! Oh, my hat!"

"Collar him!" yelled Johnny Bull.

Up jumped the major from the armchair. The juniors, for a second, had forgotten his august presence.

"Stop!" exclaimed the major.

The Famous Five, about to hurl themselves on Van Tromp, stopped. And the new senior, startled by the sudden apparition of the major, lowered the cane and stared at the old soldier blankly.

Major Cherry made a stride forward and faced him with glinting eyes.

"What does this mean?" he demanded.

"I—I——" stammered Van Tromp.

"You are a new boy here," said

Major Cherry. "I presume that the headmaster has not made you a prefect on your first day in the school?"

"No—no-o!" stammered Van Tromp.

"Then by what right do you carry a cane?"

"I—I—I——" Van Tromp babbled.

"You are speaking to a governor of the school!" snapped Major Cherry. "I command you to explain yourself at once."

"I—I—I——"

"By what right do you carry a cane, if you are not a prefect?" demanded the major. "Answer me!"

"I—I borrowed the cane——"

"You admit that you have no right to carry it?"

"Ye-e-es!" gasped Van Tromp.

"You have struck a Lower boy with a cane you have no right to use. The fact that he is my son makes no difference at all. You came here to bully a Lower boy."

"I—I—I—— He was cheeky."

"In that case you should report him to a master or a prefect."

"I—I—I——"

"Give me that cane!"

Van Tromp hesitated. He was utterly taken aback by finding the major in Study No. 1. He had not dreamed for a moment of encountering a governor of the school in a junior study. He backed towards the door.

"Do you hear me?" roared the major.

Van Tromp handed over the cane.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on breathlessly, wondering how this strange scene was going to end.

Major Cherry swished the cane in the air. Van Tromp made another backward step, evidently apprehensive that the cane was about to be used on him.

"Now, sir," said the major, "you will apologise for your conduct. You will tell Robert Cherry you are sorry."

Van Tromp's eyes blazed.

"Never!" he gasped.

"Never?" repeated the major. "You refuse?"

"Yes!" hissed Van Tromp.

"Very well. Then I shall thrash you as you deserve," said Major Cherry grimly; and he made a stride at the new senior and grasped him by the collar.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

"Release me!" yelled Van Tromp. "Take your hands off me, Major Cherry! I will go to the Head——"

"You will certainly go to the Head; for I will take you to him, and draw his attention to your conduct!" snorted the major. "But first you will apologise for your lawless brutality, or else you will be thrashed. Now, then!"

Van Tromp made an effort to tear himself away.

But muscular as he was he had no chance in the steely grip of the old soldier. Major Cherry, with his left hand on the bully's collar, twisted him round, and the cane rose and fell with a sharp lash.

Van Tromp gave a fearful yell.

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Wharton.

"The crumbfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Now, sir!" hooted the major. "I am waiting to hear that apology!"

"I—I—never——" hissed the new senior between his teeth.

Whack!

"Oh! Ow! Oooop!"

"I am waiting!" said the major grimly.

"Oh, I—I—I apologise!" howled Van Tromp. Two stinging lashes were enough for the bully. "I—I am sorry."

"Very good!" said Major Cherry; and he released the new senior. "That will do." He threw the cane aside. "Now we will go to the Head."

Van Tromp panted.

"I—I do not wish to go to the Head. I—I beg you to overlook the matter," he gasped. "I—I have said that I am sorry."

"Very well," said the major. "I will allow the matter to end here. But let it be a warning to you. Leave the study!"

Van Tromp, choking with rage and humiliation, almost tottered from Study

No. 1. Skinner & Co., in the passage, grinned gleefully as they watched him go.

Van Tromp tramped away to his study in the Sixth. His harsh face was red with rage, and many fellows stared after him curiously as he went. Every study in the Sixth echoed the slam of the door as he closed it.

A little later, looking from his window, the senior saw Major Cherry crossing the quad to the gates with the Famous Five in company. Harry Wharton & Co. were seeing the distinguished visitor off. They did not see the eyes that glittered at them from Van Tromp's window, or the fist that was shaken savagely, and probably would have cared very little if they had.

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### CHAPTER 8.
#### Tribulations of a Bilk!

"HALLO! Hallo! Hallo!"

"Bunter!"

A taxi had borne Major Cherry away for Courtfield Station. Harry Wharton & Co. had said good-bye at the gates, and they stood looking after the taxi as it disappeared. And then a fat and forlorn figure came in sight from the direction of Courtfield.

William George Bunter was limping along the road to the school. He was dusty and tired and perspiring. His fat face was lugubrious. He seemed hardly able to draw one podgy leg after the other.

The Famous Five regarded him with smiling curiosity.

They had, as a matter of fact, forgotten Billy Bunter's existence after he had parted with them at Courtfield. Now they were reminded of it, they wondered what had happened to Bunter. Apparently he had missed tea. And obviously he had been exerting himself.

He blinked at them dismally through his big spectacles as he came limping up.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! Enjoying life?" bawled Bob.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter.

"Had your tea?" chuckled Nugent.

"No. I'm famished."

Bunter leaned on the wall and groaned.

"I say, you fellows, I've had an awful time!" he said pathetically. "I say, I've had to walk all the way from Courtfield."

"Didn't you go on to Friardale in the local train, then?" asked Harry.

"Ow! Yes!"

"Then how the thump have you walked from Courtfield?"

"Ow! I had to go back," groaned Bunter.

"You went back from Friardale to Courtfield by train?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove in astonishment.

"Ow! Yes!"

"You must be fond of railway travelling," said Johnny Bull. "What on earth did you do that for?"

"Ow! I had to."

"But why?"

The Famous Five stared at Bunter. His proceedings that afternoon seemed to them very mysterious.

Bunter groaned dismally.

"You see, I hadn't a ticket," he moaned. "Not having a ticket, I couldn't get out of the station at Friardale."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Of course, I thought I should be able to dodge out of the station," groaned Bunter. "I did last time. But this time that beastly ticket-collector fairly pounced on me. He asked me for my ticket. I told him I'd accidentally dropped it in the train. He—he didn't believe me."

"Go hon!"

"Low cad, you know, doubting a fellow's word," said Bunter.

"But you were telling him crams!" exclaimed Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"You fat villain! If you hadn't a ticket from Courtfield, you couldn't

have dropped it accidentally in the train," said Nugent.

"Well, the man didn't know that, did he?" demanded Bunter. "He ought to have taken my word—the word of a Public school man."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"But he wouldn't," said Bunter sorrowfully. "Instead of taking a gentleman's word, you know, he just grinned like a hyena, and told me that I'd better go back and look for the fare. Of course, I couldn't pay the fare without any money; and I hadn't any money. He wouldn't let me out of the station without giving up a ticket."

"Hard cheese!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "But if you keep on like this, Bunter, you'll get landed in a place that's still harder to get out of. They call it chokey."

"Beast! Well, there I was, stuck in Friardale Station," groaned Bunter. "Every time I came near the exit there was that beast of a man grinning like a—a fiend, you know. He seemed amused all the time."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

They seemed to share the amusement of the ticket-collector at Friardale.

"So there I was," mumbled Bunter. "All I had was the Courtfield platform ticket, and that was no use at Friardale. I—I began to think I should be kept in that beastly station till after call-over."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" snapped Bunter. "I can tell you it wasn't funny for me, mooching about that putrid station, unable to get out."

The Famous Five chortled. They seemed to think it funny, if Bunter did not.

"My esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "you should remember that honesty is the cracked pitcher that is better than a bird in the bush."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! So, at last, I got the train for Courtfield," groaned Bunter. "At Courtfield, of course, I was able to get out with my platform ticket."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I had to walk from Courtfield. I'm fagged out. Hungry, too! I haven't had any tea. Oh, dear!"

Bunter gave a deep groan.

His adventures of the afternoon seemed to have had a very dispiriting effect on him. Many a time and oft had William George Bunter bilked on the railway. Now, evidently, he had bilked once too often!

"It was lucky I'd kept that platform ticket," he went on. "But for that I could never have got out without paying. And I couldn't pay anything, owing to being disappointed about a postal order."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stick to honesty next time, old fat bean!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "It pays in the long run."

"Beast! I say, you fellows, have you had tea?"

"Yes, fathead, long ago!"

"Can you lend me——"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

The Famous Five walked in at the gates, laughing. Billy Bunter was looking as if all the woes of the universe had descended at one fell swoop on his fat shoulders. But the opinion of the Famous Five was that he deserved what had come to him. The deep tribulations of an unhappy bilk did not touch their hearts.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter rolled in after the chums of the Remove. "I say, has that new man come?"

"The Dutchman? Yes."

"His uncle didn't come with him, I bet!" said Bunter.

"Blessed if I know. We weren't in when he blew in," said Bob. "But I suppose he did. Why shouldn't he?"

"He, he, he! I could tell you fellows something if I liked."

"Bow-wow!"

"You see, I heard them talking," said Bunter. "I was in the same carriage with them, and they didn't see me."

"You're fat enough to be seen."

"Beast! I was under the seat. Not aving a ticket——"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. "Did ou travel to Friardale under a railway eat? Ha, ha, ha! I think I'd rather ry honesty for a change!"

"Well, I was under the seat, and they ot into the carriage," said Bunter. "I eard them talking all the way to Friardale."

"You fat, eavesdropping bounder!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! You'd be jolly nterested if you knew what they were talking about!" sneered Bunter.

"Rats!"

"I'll tell you, if you like," said Bunter. "Look here, the tuckshop ain't closed yet. Come in with me, and I'll tell you——"

"You fat villain!" said Harry Wharton. "If you tell us a word that you heard when you were hidden under the seat we'll scrag you!"

"The eavesdropfulness does not appeal to our honourable and absurd selves, my esteemed, sneaking Bunter!" said Hurree Singh.

"I say, you fellows, it would make you jump if you knew——"

"We'll make you jump if you tell us!" said Harry. "Shut up!"

"Beast! I won't tell you now," roared Bunter. "But, I say, you fellows, what am I going to do for tea?"

"You mean, whom are you going to do?" chuckled Bob. "Anybody you like, old man, except us. Good-bye!"

And the Famous Five vanished.

"Beasts!" howled Bunter.

And he plodded on wearily to the house.

There was no tea for Bunter. He had to wait, with a yearning, fat heart, for supper. He had had quite a horrid afternoon. He was tired, and he was morose. He was even beginning to doubt the wisdom of bilking. For once, it was certain, the railway had had the best of it. Billy Bunter could not help thinking that perhaps, after all, honesty was the best policy.

## CHAPTER 9.

### What Bunter Knew!

"SCAT!"

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"Bunk!"

"Look here, Nugent——"

"Mizzle!"

"I didn't know you fellows were having supper," said Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I just called in to see Bob——"

"Take a good look and go!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, old fellow——"

"Shut the door after you!" said Mark Linley.

Bunter shut the door. But he remained on the inner side of it. Wild horses could not have dragged Billy Bunter out of Study No. 13 just then.

Prep was over, and supper was on in No. 13. Mark Linley had been frying sausages over a spirit stove in the fender. Bob Cherry had been making a huge jug of cocoa. Hurree Singh had been cutting bread-and-butter. Likewise, there was a cake left over from tea with the major—a special cake, which the juniors had hoped would tempt that distinguised guest, but which somehow had not tempted him. The aspect of the study table was very attractive to Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, you know I missed tea," said the Owl of the Remove. "I've been frightfully hungry——"

"There's supper in Hall," said Wharton.

"That's right. I've had supper in Hall," said Bunter. Apparently one supper had failed to satisfy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, those sosses smell good! Lucky you've got plenty!"

"My esteemed Bunter——"

"It's all right, Inky, I'll stay," said Bunter, pulling a chair to the table. "I'll tell you the news, if you like. Did you fellows know the Head was going to be sacked?"

"What?"

It was a shout from all the six juniors in the study.

Billy Bunter grinned.

He had succeeded in making a sensation.

"Sacked?" repeated Wharton.

"Well, either that or he's resigning," said Bunter. "He's going, anyhow. The governors are fed-up with him. I can't say I'm surprised. Rather a doddering old ass, if you ask me."

"You fat chump!"

"Oh, really, Linley! Pass the sosses!" said Bunter. "I say, Bob, did your pater tell you the Head was going to be bunked? I suppose he'd know, being a governor."

"No, you ass!"

"Perhaps they haven't told him," said Bunter, with his mouth full. "After all, old Popper is chairman of the governors now, and I dare say he doesn't think much of your pater. A bit of a noodle—what?"

"Do you want me to burst you all over the Remove passage, Bunter?" asked Bob.

"Eh? No!"

"Then you'd better shut up!"

"Well, it's queer your pater not knowing, as it's a cert," said Bunter. "The Head's going all right. I shan't be sorry. He caned me the other day for bagging a pie from the kitchen, though I told him I hadn't."

"You fat foozler!" said Harry Wharton. "What on earth has put it into your head that the Beak is leaving?"

Bunter chuckled.

"You see, I get to know things," he remarked. "I can tell you it's a cert. There's going to be a new headmaster. I don't know his name, but I fancy that new man in the Sixth could tell you. He, he, he!"

The juniors stared blankly at Bunter.

"What would Van Tromp know about it?" asked Nugent.

"Lots, I fancy, as it's his uncle who's going to work to shift the Head out," said Bunter. "That's why he didn't come on to the school to-day with the young Dutchman. He was afraid of meeting your pater, Bob."

"What the thump——"

"You see, he found out that your pater was coming, somehow, and he decided not to turn up himself."

Harry Wharton & Co. stared. They remembered the interest the fat man at Courtfield had shown in learning that Major Cherry was coming to Greyfriars that afternoon. Bunter evidently was well informed so far as that went.

"But didn't Van Tromp's uncle come to the school with him?" asked Nugent. "He went to the Friardale platform with him at Courtfield."

"Nobody was with Van Tromp when he arrived," said Mark Linley. "I saw him come in; he was alone."

"I could have told you that," said Bunter. "He changed his mind, after he found out that Bob's pater was coming."

"But why should he?" asked Bob.

"I suppose your pater knows something about him," said Bunter. "He said he couldn't risk meeting him here, as the major would smell a rat or something if he knew that his nephew was coming to the school."

"Great pip!"

"You see, being under the seat in the carriage, I heard all they said," grinned Bunter. "The Dutchman—I don't know his name, unless it's the same as his nephew's; perhaps it isn't. Anyhow, whatever his name is, he's twisted all the Board of Governors round his finger, and knows who's going to take old Locke's place when he goes."

"Is the fat chump dreaming?" asked Mark Linley in astonishment.

"Oh, really, Linley——"

"I dare say he went to sleep under that seat and dreamed it," said Nugent.

But Bob Cherry was looking very hard at Bunter. From the words his father had let fall, Bob was aware that something was going on behind the scenes in connection with the governing board. What the Dutch senior and his uncle could have to do with it was a mystery. But it certainly looked as if Bunter had found out something.

"Are you making this up, you fat dummy?" asked Bob at last.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, pass the sosses! Well, if there aren't any more, I must say you might have a few more when you ask a fellow to supper. Still, I can fill up on cake."

Bunter proceeded to fill up on cake.

"It's all rot," said Harry Wharton. "The governors would never ask the Beak to resign! Utter rot!"

"That's what the Dutchman said," agreed Bunter. "He said they'd never dismiss old Locke; but there were other ways."

"Other ways?" repeated Wharton.

"That's what he said."

"Other ways of getting rid of the Beak to make room for a new headmaster?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Yes. I say, this is good cake!" said Bunter. "That new man, Van Tromp, has a hand in it somehow."

"How could a Sixth Form man have anything to do with getting the headmaster to leave, fathead?"

Bunter shook his head.

"I can't make that out," he confessed. "But that's what his uncle said. And they've got a new man all ready to take old Locke's place. They didn't mention any names, but—well, if it was Van Tromp's uncle, I shouldn't be surprised. That's what it sounded like to me from the way they talked."

"Van Tromp's uncle!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "That fat merchant we saw at Courtfield! My hat!"

"They didn't say so; but that was how it struck me," said Bunter. "But how they're going to work it, I can't say—for the old bean said distinctly that the governors wouldn't dismiss Locke. And he ain't likely to resign if he can help it, I fancy. Look at the salary he gets! It's jolly well known that the Head of Greyfriars is awfully well paid—better than any other headmaster in the country. I've heard that he gets over two thousand a year—and that's a lot for a schoolmaster. Blessed if I see how he earns it. I don't think much of him myself. And I dare say he makes a lot on the bills, too."

"Wha-a-t?"

"Well, he could easily in his position," argued Bunter. "He could make a lot that way; and I know I jolly well should if I were a headmaster of a big school. Of course, he ain't much of a business man, but a keen, sharp man like that Dutchman, for instance, could make a fortune in a few years if he had Locke's job."

Bunter blinked round the table.

"Any more cake?" he asked.

"No, you cormorant!"

"Is that the lot, then?" asked Bunter disparagingly. "My hat! Is that what you call a feed? I'll stand you fellows a better spread than that in my study when my postal order comes. Well, I'd better be getting along. I've got to see Mauly before bed-time. He had a hamper to-day—I mean I've heard he had a row with that fellow Van Tromp, and I want to ask him about it."

And the tuck having come to a conclusion, Billy Bunter came to a conclusion and rolled out of Study No. 13.

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at one another when the Owl of the Remove had gone.

"Now, what the thump does all that mean?" asked Bob.

"Goodness knows."

"Bunter's gas," said Johnny Bull. "He heard something or other, and got it all mixed, and dreamed the rest."

"Very likely," agreed Wharton. "But——"

"But——" said Bob slowly.

"The butfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"There was something on the pater's mind," said Bob. "Something's up between the governors and the Beak, I believe. But——"

"If we knew the name of Van Tromp's uncle you could ask your pater whether he's ever heard of him," remarked Nugent.

"Yes, but we don't know his name, unless it's the same as Van Tromp's. And the pater heard Van Tromp's name, and never made any remark on it."

"Maternal uncles have different names from their nephews, of course," said Harry. "Might be quite a different name. But——" He paused. "There's something in it, you men, though I'm blessed if I can make out what. You remember Major Cherry saw Van Tromp in the quad, and he said the fellow's face seemed familiar to him. I noticed at Courtfield that he's like his uncle."

"That's so," said Bob, with a nod. "But——"

"It doesn't seem much use trying to sort it out," said Harry. "We're not quite friendly enough with Van Tromp to ask him his uncle's name."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But there's something up," said Harry, with conviction. "Something's going on behind the scenes—though I can't make out what."

And his chums concurred. Something, whatever it was, was going on behind the scenes; but making out what it was was quite another matter. And the chums of the Remove had to give it up.

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### CHAPTER 10.
#### Trapped!

"YOU see!" murmured Loder.

Loder of the Sixth sat in an armchair, in Van Tromp's study. Outside, in the quad, the summer sun was shining; and from the cricket ground came the cheery sound of bat and ball.

It was a couple of days since Van Tromp's arrival at Greyfriars.

In those two days the new senior had not made progress in the good opinion of his Form, or of other Forms.

He had made friends; he was very chummy with Loder, the black sheep of the Sixth, and with Loder's pal Carne. Other fellows in the Sixth did not seem to think much of him; and Wingate hardly concealed his opinion that the new man was not a credit to the Form.

His ways, however, were a good deal like Loder's ways. For instance, on this golden afternoon he preferred sitting in his study and smoking cigarettes to joining in games practice; Loder agreed with him there.

But there were not many of the Greyfriars Sixth who had the same tastes as Loder. Wingate's friends made it clear that the less they saw of Van Tromp the better they liked it.

In the Lower School he was intensely disliked.

As he was not a prefect, and, therefore, had no power of inflicting punishment, the Lower School would have been indifferent to him, in ordinary circumstances. But the new senior went out of his way to make himself unpleasant.

He seemed to be a born bully, and to find a peculiar sort of pleasure in bullying. He liked cuffing fags, or pulling their ears, he liked to see fellows afraid of him. Any opposition was enough to rouse his bitter animosity. Loder was a bully, but compared with his new friend he was almost agreeable.

Towards the Famous Five, Van Tromp's feelings were especially bitter. And Bob Cherry was the fellow he disliked most of all. It was Bob Cherry that he was speaking of now, as he sat smoking a cigarette in his study with Loder.

"You see!" repeated Loder.

"I fancy you don't like that set of cheeky fags in the Remove any more than I do!" grunted Van Tromp.

"No. But—well, a fellow has to keep up appearances, you know," said Loder, with a laugh. "I'm a prefect; but I can't pitch into a fellow simply because I don't like him. When they kick over the traces I drop on them fast enough, but——"

Van Tromp grunted.

"Well, I can deal with Cherry myself," he said. "You are a prefect, and you can send him to this study. Leave the rest to me."

"But you can't lick him for nothing, you know," urged Loder. "As I said,

a man must keep up appearances. Wingate's down on what he calls bullying, and——"

"I don't care a rap for Wingate."

"Well, he's captain of the school, and though he's an easy-going man, he isn't to be trifled with," said Loder.

"He may not be captain of the school long!" grunted Van Tromp.

"You've hinted at that more than once, old bean," he said. "I must say I can't make it out. The Head thinks no end of Wingate, and he's the most popular senior in the school. I've had a try at shifting him, but there was nothing in it. You can't touch Wingate."

"That's all you know."

Loder shrugged his shoulders.

"Anyhow, I'm not afraid of Wingate," said the new senior disdainfully. "I tell you I am going to deal with Cherry! His father struck me with my own cane——"

"Well, his father's a governor of the school, and from what you've told me, you really asked for it——"

"That makes no difference! If you are afraid of trouble with Wingate, I do not ask you to take a hand. Find an excuse for sending Cherry to this study, and leave the rest to me."

"I'll do that, of course. The cheeky little beggar would be all the better for a hiding. But you may be hunting trouble."

"I don't mind that."

"All right, then."

Gerald Loder rose and threw away the stump of his cigarette. With a nod to Van Tromp, he left the study.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in the quad when Loder strolled out of the house. Loder passed the group of juniors, and then, as if he had suddenly remembered something, he stopped and glanced round.

"Here, Cherry, run into the house for me, will you?" he said.

"Yes, Loder!" answered Bob.

The Remove did not fag; nevertheless, a request from a Sixth-Form prefect was difficult to refuse. Moreover, as Loder spoke civilly, Bob had no desire to be disobliging.

"I've left my Horace in a study," said Loder. "I left it on the table in Walker's study—no, in Van Tromp's. Cut in and get it for me, will you, and bring it to me on the Sixth Form green."

"Right-ho," answered Bob.

Loder strolled away towards the Sixth Form green, where he sat on the old bench under the beech tree. Bob Cherry left his comrades, and went into the house, quite unsuspicious. It was common enough for Sixth Form men to take their books out on the green in fine weather, and if Loder had forgotten his Horace, it was natural enough for him to ask a junior to fetch it. Bob had no misgivings as he approached Van Tromp's study.

He did not know whether the new senior was there, but he tapped at the door before opening it. Then he went in and looked for the book on the table. As he did so Van Tromp rose from his chair with a peculiar smile on his face, and a glitter in his piggy eyes.

"Loder sent me here for a book, Van Tromp," said Bob in explanation.

"Did he?" grinned Van Tromp.

He stepped to the door and closed it. Then he turned round to Bob, and the latter observed that he had a cane in his hand.

Bob eyed him warily.

"I say, I came for a book for Loder," he said. "He said he left it on your table, Van Tromp."

"He must have been mistaken, I think," said Van Tromp smoothly. "There is no book here. That is, if you are telling the truth. I think it more likely that you came here to play some trick, not expecting to find me here."

"You can ask Loder, if you like," said Bob shortly. "The book doesn't seem to be here, and I'll cut. Let me pass, Van Tromp——"

"Not yet!" grinned Van Tromp. "I have been anxious to see you in private for some time, my boy. Do you see

that chair?" He pointed with the cane. "Bend over it."

"Rats!" answered Bob.

"I am waiting," said Van Tromp, swishing the cane.

"Oh, don't be a fool!" answered Bob unceremoniously. "Do you think you can tell a fellow to bend over like a prefect? You tried that on the day you came, and you didn't have much luck."

"Will you bend over that chair?"

"No, I won't!"

"Perhaps you will if I help you," suggested Van Tromp.

He made a stride towards the junior, and Bob jumped back. Van Tromp followed him up, and Bob retreated round the study table.

His eyes gleamed across the table at Van Tromp.

"Hands off, you rotten bully!" he said, between his teeth.

The new senior followed him round the table. Bob circled the table again, and made a sudden dive for the door.

In an instant Van Tromp rushed on him, grabbed him by the shoulder, and swung him back, so forcibly that Bob staggered against the table and set it rocking. The new senior turned the key in the door, took it out, and dropped it into his pocket.

He turned to Bob again with an unpleasant grin.

"Now I think I will deal with you," he remarked. "Will you bend over the chair now, Cherry?"

"No fear!"

"I will make you!"

Bob dodged round the table again as the bully advanced on him. There was no escape from the study now, and in a struggle with the powerful senior Bob had no chance, sturdy as he was. But he had not the remotest intention of allowing Otto van Tromp to thrash him.

Twice they circled round the table, Van Tromp's face growing blacker and blacker. But Bob was the quicker and more active of the two, and he kept out of reach. The new senior grasped the table, dragged it away, and jammed it against the wall.

"Now!" he snarled.

Bob Cherry backed away from him, his fists clenched and his eyes blazing. There was no more dodging now.

Swish!

The cane swished through the air and landed on Bob's shoulder. Van Tromp did not seem to care where it landed, so long as it landed with force. Bob gave a yelp of pain as he caught the slash.

He had retreated as far as the fireplace, and there was no farther retreat for him. But he groped round for a weapon, and grasped the clock that stood on the mantelpiece. It was a small, handsome marble clock which belonged to Van Tromp; his study was well-furnished with many expensive things. Bob swung the clock into the air.

"Now, keep off, you rotter!" he snapped. "Come a step nearer, and I'll bung this clock at you!"

"Put that clock down!" roared Van Tromp.

"Rats!"

The new senior rushed at him.

Bob kept his word at once. The clock flew through the air, landed on Van Tromp's waistcoat, and rolled to the floor.

Crash!

The concussion was too much for the clock. It was in several pieces as it rolled at Van Tromp's feet.

The Dutch senior gave a roar of rage. He leaped on Bob like a tiger, grasped him, and twisted him over with a powerful grip. Bob struggled manfully, but he went down on the rug, and Van Tromp's powerful hand pinned him there, and then the cane rose and fell with savage force.

Lash, lash, lash!

Bob Cherry roared.

"Yow! Ow! Whooop! You rotten bully! Yaroooooogt! Help! Rescue! Rescue, Remove!"

## CHAPTER 11.

### The Co. to the Rescue!

HARRY WHARTON started.

"What the thump——" he ejaculated.

"Bob——" began Nugent.

The four members of the Co. stared round. They were waiting for Bob Cherry to rejoin them when his voice fell on their ears—in the stentorian tones. The juniors were not very near the windows of the Sixth Form studies, but Bob's voice had great carrying powers.

"Rescue, Remove!" came Bob's voice on its top note.

"He's in Van Tromp's study!" exclaimed Johnny Bully. "Is that bully pitching into him?"

"Sounds like it," said Harry.

He ran towards the window of Van Tromp's study. The Sixth Form studies at Greyfriars were on the ground floor, but the windows were rather high. Harry Wharton jumped, caught the sill, and dragged himself up. His comrades were at his heels.

Wharton pressed his face to the glass and stared into the study. What he saw brought a flush of indignation and rage to his face.

Bob Cherry was stretched face down on the rug, Otto van Tromp pinning him there, and thrashing him with the cane with all the vigour of his arm.

Wharton panted.

"That bully's got him!" he gasped.

"Rescue!" came in a yell from Bob. "Yaroooh! Oh, you rotten bully! Help! Rescue, Remove!"

The window was closed and fastened. But Wharton, as he saw his chum writhing and yelling under the savage punishment, was not disposed to stand on ceremony. He drew himself on the sill, and kicked his boot through a lower pane of the window.

Broken glass fell within the study in a shower.

Van Tromp gave a start and stared round.

His eyes bulged in amazement as he saw the broken window and the Removite on the sill, and two other juniors clambering up beside him.

"Go back!" yelled Van Tromp furiously. "Get down! How dare you break my window! I—I—I——"

Wharton did not heed him.

He kicked jagged glass out of his way without the slightest ceremony, and reached in and dragged back the window catch.

The next moment he was dragging up the lower sash.

Otto van Tromp left his victim and made a jump towards the window, brandishing the cane. Bob Cherry staggered to his feet.

"Keep back!" roared Van Tromp, as he reached the window and slashed at the captain of the Remove with the cane.

Wharton threw up his left arm to ward off the blow, for it was aimed at his head. His arm was almost numbed by the force of it as it fell.

But he plunged in headlong at the window.

Van Tromp struck at him, and struck again, panting with rage. Twice the cane struck Wharton before he could close in and grasp the senior. Then he was too close for the cane to be used; but Van Tromp's arms closed on him in a bear-like hug, and he was swept off his feet.

It would have fared hard with Wharton then had he been unaided. But his comrades were scrambling headlong in at the window.

Bob Cherry jumped at Van Tromp, and grasped his collar from behind and dragged. At the same moment Frank Nugent attacked him in front, bringing his clenched fist recklessly into the bully's face. A few moments more and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh were joining in.

The tables were turned now.

The big senior could handle one junior with ease, two without much difficulty. But five of them were too many for him. The odds were overwhelming now.

Van Tromp went down with a crash, the Famous Five sprawling over him. He struggled and fought and roared.

"Give him jip!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Punch him!" howled Nugent. "Wallop him!"

"Rag him!"

"Give the cad toco!"

Van Tromp struggled furiously.

But he had no chance now. Every one of the juniors received hard knocks, but they did not heed them.

Thump, thump, thump, thump! came on Van Tromp, as he struggled and fought. Every one of the five were punching, and punching his hardest.

Knock!

It was a loud knock at the door, and the door-handle turned and rattled.

The juniors did not heed; they were too busy.

Wingate's voice came from the passage outside:

"Open this door! Let me in! What's all this row? Do you hear? Let me in at once."

Thump, thump, thump!

"Ow, ow! Help!" shrieked Van Tromp.

"Give him toco!" yelled Johnny Bull. "Here, give me room to bang his napper on the floor!"

"Go it, old bean!"

Johnny Bull grasped Van Tromp by the ears, which were rather unusually large, and gave a good hold. With a firm grip on the bully's ears Johnny banged his head on the floor.

There was a loud concussion, and a louder yell from Van Tromp.

"Whoooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Give him some more!"

Bang!

"Yaroooooh!"

Knock, knock, knock! came at the door. Wingate of the Sixth seemed to be getting excited. There was a buzz of amazed voices in the Sixth Form passage. Never in all the history of Greyfriars had there been such a terrific shindy in a Sixth Form study.

"Open this door!" roared Wingate.

Bang, bang! went Otto van Tromp's head on the floor. The yells of the new senior rang the length of the Sixth Form passage.

"Will you let me in?" roared Wingate.

But he was not heeded.

As a matter of fact, the juniors could not have let him in, as the key of the study was in Van Tromp's pocket. But they were not thinking of it, anyhow. They were giving the bully a lesson, and had no desire to be interrupted.

"My hat!" gasped Wingate. "My only hat! The door's locked! What the thump is going on? What——"

He banged at the door again.

"Let me in, you young rascals! Van Tromp, let me in!"

"Help!" raved Van Tromp.

Wingate shook the door-handle furiously.

"Try the window!" suggested Gwynne of the Sixth.

"I suppose I'd better," said Wingate, and he hurried out of the house.

A minute later the captain of Greyfriars was staring in at the broken window of Van Tromp's study. Outside that window a crowd of amazed fellows had gathered, listening to the uproar within.

Wingate clambered actively in at the window. He dropped into the study.

"Now, you young sweeps!" he roared.

And the Famous Five desisted at last in the presence of the captain of the school. They released Van Tromp and jumped up.

But Van Tromp did not jump up. He lay on the floor, breathless, dusty, dishevelled, spluttering and gasping.

## CHAPTER 12.
### Plain English!

WINGATE stared at the sprawling Sixth Former, and then at the breathless juniors. Harry Wharton & Co. backed away a little.

"What does this mean?" demanded

Wingate. "You've come to a Sixth Form study and—and—— Who broke that window?"

"I did!" said Harry.

"You—you dared to break in the window of a Sixth Form study?" gasped Wingate.

"Yes."

"What do you mean? How dare you! Are you mad?" exclaimed Wingate.

"That brute had Bob here, thrashing him," answered Harry. "We had to get in and help him."

"Yes, rather!" panted Johnny Bull. "And we'd jolly well have broken any window in the school, Wingate!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

Wingate's face set grimly.

"So Cherry was in the study?" he he said.

"Yes," said Bob.

"What were you doing here?"

"Loder sent me here to fetch a book, and then that brute collared me and pitched into me."

"What for?"

Bob grinned breathlessly.

"Nothing—except that he has the bad taste not to like me, Wingate. I don't know any other reason."

Otto van Tromp, gasping, staggered to his feet. The look he gave the Famous Five was almost demoniac.

But he did not approach them. He had had enough of handling the cheery Co. Wingate fixed his eyes on the new senior.

"I've got to know the rights of this, Van Tromp," he said. "Matters are pretty serious when Lower Fourth fags break in a study window."

Van Tromp ground his teeth.

"Those young scoundrels——"

"Tell me what's happened!" snapped Wingate. "You've heard what Cherry has said. Why did you pitch into him?"

"He came into my study to play some trick, not knowing that I was here," said Van Tromp. "I caught him ——"

"He says that Loder sent him for a book."

"That was a lie!"

"You rotter!" shouted Wharton. "We all heard Loder ask Bob to fetch the book from this study, Wingate."

"Did you ask Loder, Van Tromp?"

"I did not! He was not here for me to ask him!" snarled Van Tromp. "I caned the young rascal, and then those hooligans smashed in my window and attacked me."

"You have no right to cane a junior, Van Tromp. I've told you that already. And who locked the door?"

"One of the young rascals, I suppose, to keep out interference," snarled Van Tromp.

"Oh, you rotter!" exclaimed Bob. "You locked the door yourself when I tried to dodge out of the study."

"Is that the case, Van Tromp? You took it on yourself to cane this junior, because you supposed that he had come to the study to play a trick, and you locked the door first?" asked Wingate, very quietly.

"I have told you that some of these young rascals locked the door."

"Liar!" said Bob.

"Silence, Cherry!" Wingate crossed to the door and looked for the key. "The key is not here," he said. "Where is it?"

Van Tromp started a little. He had forgotten for the moment, in his excitement, that the key was in his own pocket.

"Where is the key?" repeated Wingate.

"It's in Van Tromp's pocket," said Bob. "He put it there after locking the door, Wingate."

"Is the key in your pocket, Van Tromp?"

"If it is, one of these juniors slipped it there while I was struggling with them," said Van Tromp sullenly.

"The whopperfulness is terrific, my esteemed lying Van Tromp!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Wingate regarded the senior and the juniors very doubtfully.

"Well, let's have the key, anyhow," he said at last.

Van Tromp fumbled in his pocket and found the key. He handed it to Wingate, who unlocked the door.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged rather uneasy glances. The Co. had rushed to Bob's rescue without giving a thought to the consequences; and, in the same circumstances, they certainly would have done the same again. Nevertheless, it was a serious matter to have smashed in the window of a Sixth Form study and to have handled a member of the Sixth Form.

Wingate seemed to be at a loss.

The captain of Greyfriars was strong on discipline. But he had a pretty clear idea how matters stood in this case.

"You fags can clear off, for the present," he said. "I'll speak to you later about this."

Van Tromp broke out savagely.

"You are head prefect! You are going to punish those young rascals for attacking me——"

"You've heard what I said," answered Wingate coldly. He opened the study door. "Clear off, the lot of you!"

Harry Wharton & Co. left the study. They passed through a crowd of staring Sixth Form men as they departed.

Wingate closed the door after them and turned to Van Tromp. The new senior was eyeing him malevolently.

"Now those kids are gone, I'll speak," said Wingate quietly. "You locked this door, Van Tromp, and put the key in your pocket. That's clear. Cherry was sent to the study—that's clear, too. You set on him while he was here, and locked the door to keep him from getting away."

"You can think as you please!" snarled Van Tromp.

"Those juniors have acted in an outrageous way," went on Wingate. "But how can I deal with them when the fact is that they saw their friend being ill-used by a cowardly bully?"

Van Tromp flushed with rage.

"You had better be careful of your words!" he gasped.

"You'll get plain English from me, Van Tromp," answered the captain of Greyfriars contemptuously. "That isn't all yet. You say you thought that Cherry came here to play some trick. You may have thought so. But you started on him without inquiring. His friends, naturally, came to his help. You have no right to cane a Lower boy, as you know jolly well. The fact is that you've taken a dislike to Cherry, and you were bullying and ill-using him."

Van Tromp panted.

"If you take that cheeky fag's part ——"

"You are to blame all through," interrupted Wingate. "You've placed me in a rotten position. These juniors have acted outrageously, but it is impossible to punish them, or even to blame them, because they happen to be in the right. Fags have to be made to respect the Sixth Form. There's an end of all order if they are allowed to lay hands on a Sixth Form man. Yet in this case they have done it, and I am forced to pass the matter over. The whole fault is yours, because you are a rotten brute and bully!"

Wingate did not measure his words.

"You've got what you asked for," he continued. "They seem to have handled you pretty roughly, and you asked for it all, and I wish you'd got more while they were about it."

"You — you——" stuttered Van Tromp.

"You've been only two days at Greyfriars," went on Wingate, "and already I've had to warn you about bullying. You've got to stop it. There will most likely be a row about that broken window. If the matter comes before the Head, I'm bound to tell him how the thing happened, and exonerate the juniors. I warn you that if you keep up this sort of thing, you're in danger of being told to get out of Greyfriars."

Van Tromp sneered.

"It would not be so easy to turn me out of Greyfriars," he snarled, "and you had better not put on too many

airs. You may not be captain of the school much longer. In a short time ——"

Van Tromp broke off abruptly. In his rage he was saying too much, and he realised it.

"Well, what's going to happen in a short time?" said Wingate contemptuously.

"You will find out when the time comes!" scowled Van Tromp. "And now, get out of my study!"

Wingate made a step towards him, his eyes glinting.

"I've a few more words to say before I go," he answered. "You've got to stop this, Van Tromp. You've got to stop it at once. If a Lower boy acted as you've done, he would be thrashed ——"

"A Sixth Form man will not be thrashed, I think!" sneered Van Tromp.

"Don't be so sure of that! Next time you are found causing disorder by bullying, you will be taken up before the prefects," said Wingate, "and you will get a prefects' beating! If that's the only way to deal with you, that's the way you will be dealt with. You'd better remember that, Van Tromp, and let it be a warning to you."

And, without waiting for a reply, Wingate walked out of the study and shut the door after him.

Van Tromp was left alone.

He shook his fist at the door that had closed after Wingate, his sullen, savage face black with rage.

"Wait!" he muttered, between his teeth. "Wait! In a short time—in a very short time—I'll make you sorry for yourself. You carry your head high now. I will bring it low enough soon! Wait!"

In the Remove there was intense excitement over the row in Van Tromp's study. Harry Wharton & Co. waited to hear from Wingate, from their Form-master, or from the Head. But they heard nothing more of it.

Only when they came across Van Tromp again he gave them a black and bitter look of hatred. Which, however, did not affect the equanimity of the cheery Co. in the very least.

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## CHAPTER 13.

### Coker Takes a Hand!

"OW!"

Billy Bunter roared.

He roared with wrath, with indignation, and with considerable surprise.

It was the impact of a heavy boot on his tight trousers that caused William George Bunter to emulate the celebrated Bull of Bashan.

It was quite an unexpected attack.

Billy Bunter had rolled down to the school letter-box, to drop in a letter. He had just dropped the letter into the box when the boot smote him, and Bunter roared and rolled.

Someone had come up behind him; and Bunter, as he rolled over and sat up and roared, discerned that it was Van Tromp of the Sixth.

Van Tromp had a letter in his hand, and was apparently approaching the box to post it. Finding Bunter in the way, he had helped him out of the way with that sudden and unexpected kick.

"Ow!" roared Bunter.

The bully of Greyfriars grinned down at him. He seemed to find something amusing in the incident.

"Wow! Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Do you want another?" asked Van Tromp.

"Ow! Wharrer you kick me for, you beast?" demanded Bunter.

"You were in my way."

"Why, you—you—you cheeky foreign rotter," yelled Bunter, "do you think you can kick a man because he happens to be in your way?"

"What did you call me?" asked Van Tromp, coming a step nearer to Bunter, his eyes glittering down at the fat Owl of the Remove.

"I—I say, keep off!" gasped Bunter,

in alarm. "D-d-don't you kick me again, you beast! Yaroooh!"

Bunter scrambled hurriedly away, but, quick as he was, the new senior's foot was quicker. It crashed on Bunter, and he rolled over again, roaring. Van Tromp was about to follow up the kick with one more, when a heavy grasp was laid on his shoulder, and he was spun round.

He found himself staring at Horace Coker of the Fifth Form.

"Stop that!" said Coker.

"What?"

"Let that kid alone!"

"You—you fool! How dare you interfere with me?" roared Van Tromp, shaking his shoulder free from Coker's grasp.

"I'll interfere with you fast enough if you kick that fag again!" said Coker truculently. "Let him alone, you bully!"

"I say, Coker, old man——" murmured Potter of the Fifth. Potter and Greene had been walking with Coker when he suddenly detached himself from them to interfere on Bunter's behalf.

"Don't get into a row with the Sixth, old man," said Greene.

Coker snorted.

"Don't be an ass, Potter! Don't be a silly chump, Greene!" he snapped. "I believe in licking fags, and I've often said so, but this fellow isn't going to kick a kid about the quad, and I'm not going to let him."

"Do you think you can stop me?" hissed Van Tromp.

"I'll stop you fast enough if you kick Bunter again!" said Coker.

"I will kick him as much as I like!"

"Yarooogh!" roared Bunter, in anticipation.

"Better not," advised Coker. "I don't care whether you're in the Sixth or not. I don't think much of the Sixth, anyhow. You touch Bunter again, and I'll knock you spinning!"

And Coker glared at the new senior in a very warlike way.

It was quite a new thing for Horace Coker to be taking up the cause of a fag. Coker had, as he often said, a short way with fags, and it had often landed him into trouble. But there was a limit, in Coker's opinion, and this new fellow was over-stepping the limit. Coker intervened, partly from a sense of fair play, partly, perhaps, to show a Sixth Form man how little he, Coker of the Fifth, cared for the Sixth.

"Coker, old bean——" murmured Potter.

"Shut up, Potter!"

"I say——" urged Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"

Coker answered his friends over his shoulder. His eyes were fixed on Van Tromp.

Van Tromp, not to be deterred by Coker's threats, reached out with his boot, and landed it on Bunter as the Owl of the Remove squirmed away. There was another roar from Bunter.

The next moment there was a roar from the bully of the Sixth. Coker was a man of his word.

He made a jump at Van Tromp, hitting out.

Van Tromp caught a hefty fist with the side of his head, and went over sideways, landing on the ground with a crash.

His hat flew off in one direction, the letter in his hand flew in another. Van Tromp rolled on the earth.

Coker glared down at him, ready for further trouble.

"I warned you!" he said. "Now get up and put up your fists, you rotter! I'm ready for you!"

Van Tromp was not long in accepting that invitation. He sprang up and rushed at Coker like a tiger.

Coker was, as he said, ready for him. He met Van Tromp with right and left.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Potter.

"Coker, old man——" spluttered Greene.

Coker did not heed. He had his hands full with Van Tromp.

Big and powerful as Horace Coker was, he was not so big or muscular as the new senior. And what Coker did

not know about boxing would have filled books.

Van Tromp, on the other hand, knew a good deal about it. He had the advantage of Coker in every way.

Coker was a terrific fighting man—in his own way. He was burly and strong, had unlimited pluck, and cared nothing for punishment. His only idea of scrapping was to hit out, and to keep on hitting out. But against a good boxer, who was as powerful as himself, that was not good enough.

Coker roared as a fist crashed in his nose; he gurgled as a fist hammered on his jaw.

He staggered back.

Van Tromp followed him up hard and fast, his little eyes glittering, his jaw set, savage animosity in his face.

Fellows were crowding up from all sides. A fight between two seniors was very uncommon, and for a Sixth Form man to be mixed up in a scrap was almost unheard-of. There was a buzz of excitement.

"Go it, Coker!" shouted a dozen voices.

"Stop that!" shouted Loder of the Sixth.

Neither of the combatants heeded. Coker was driven back, step after step, under the fierce attack of the new senior. But Coker rallied, and came on again, and, by sheer force and recklessness, burst through Van Tromp's guard and got home on the bully's savage face. Van Tromp reeled back, for a drive from Coker's shoulder, with Coker's weight behind it, was almost enough to fell an ox.

"Man down!" gasped Price of the Fifth, as Van Tromp collapsed.

Coker panted.

"Come on, you rotter! Come on!"

Van Tromp staggered to his feet. But he did not seem in such a hurry to come on now. The blow had staggered him, and probably his pluck was not quite so unlimited as Coker's.

"Come on!" bawled Coker.

And he hurled himself at Van Tromp, hitting out. The bully of the Sixth gritted his teeth and attacked in his turn.

Hammer and tongs they went, while the ring of fellows round them grew in numbers. There was a shout from Hobson of the Shell.

"Cave! Here comes Prout!"

"Look out, Coker!"

"Chuck it!"

But Coker did not heed. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, came striding up, his fat face almost purple with anger and excitement. The crowd made way for him as the portly Form-master bustled on the scene.

"Coker! What—what—— Cease this instantly! Van Tromp, cease this unseemly disturbance! Follow me to the Head, both of you!

Mr. Prout thrust himself fairly between them, and the struggle ceased at last. Coker and Van Tromp drew back, both breathless, both bruised, panting, and glaring at one another.

Mr. Prout glared also.

"Two seniors fighting like two unruly Lower boys!" he boomed. "You should be ashamed of yourselves! Follow me to the Head! I shall take you both to Dr. Locke! Follow me, I command you!"

"Very well, sir!" gasped Coker.

Van Tromp did not stir.

"I'm not in your Form, sir!" he growled.

"What? What? Follow me at once, Van Tromp!" boomed Mr. Prout.

And the bully of the Sixth, after a brief hesitation, obeyed. Mr. Prout marched off to the house, followed by Coker and Van Tromp, and by the whole crowd of fellows who had gathered to watch the fight.

Only one fellow remained on the scene of action—Billy Bunter. Bunter was still gasping for breath. The fat junior staggered to his feet at last, and, as he did so, an envelope lying on the ground caught his eyes. It was the letter Otto van Tromp had dropped when Coker knocked him down.

Bunter blinked at it.

It was addressed to "Meyer Brander, Esq., 1, Eccleston Square, London."

"That's the beast's letter!" murmured the Owl of the Remove. "He was going to post it when he kicked me, the beast!"

Bunter picked up the letter. He gave a curious blink round. No eye was upon him; all the fellows had followed Mr. Prout and the two combatants towards the house. Billy Bunter slipped the letter into his pocket and rolled away.

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### CHAPTER 14.

#### No Luck for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"How the thump did Bunter know we had a cake for tea?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Roll away, barrel!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, old chap——"

"The rollfulness away is the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Famous Five were at tea in Study No. 1 when Bunter arrived. Bunter did not roll away. He was used to such greetings at tea-time, and they rolled off Bunter like water from a duck.

"I say, you fellows, you've missed the scrap!" said Bunter, helping himself to the cake.

"Who's been scrapping?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Coker, and that new beast, Van Tromp."

"Good old Coker!" said Nugent. "I hope he got the best of it."

"Well, I fancy he was getting the worst of it, when old Prout butted in," said Bunter. "Prout's taken them both to the Head. I say, you fellows, that beast kicked me!"

"Which beast?"

"That beast Van Tromp. Kicked me for nothing," said Bunter, breathing hard. "Just because I was standing in front of the letter-box when he came along to post a letter. Coker chipped in and stopped him."

"My hat! That was jolly decent of Coker," said Harry Wharton.

"He's a beast, but he's not such a beast as that Dutch beast," said Bunter. "I'd have given Van Tromp a jolly good licking myself, if Coker hadn't butted in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. But I say, you fellows—— Here, let a fellow have a chance at that cake! I say, Van Tromp dropped his letter while he was scrapping with Coker, and I picked it up."

"And put it in the box?" asked Wharton.

Bunter grinned.

"No fear! Look!"

The Owl of the Remove drew a letter from his pocket and held it up. The Famous Five stared at it.

"Is that Van Tromp's letter?" asked Bob.

"That's it."

"You fat ass! You'll get into a row for bagging his letter."

"Well, he kicked me," said Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to be kicked for nothing. I say, you fellows, that must be his uncle it's addressed to, you know. That's his uncle's name."

"Meyer Brander," said Bob.

The juniors exchanged glances. They remembered that afternoon at Courtfield Station, when they had heard Van Tromp address the fat man as Uncle Meyer.

Evidently "Uncle Meyer's" surname was Brander.

"Brander!" said Bob. "Never heard the name before; but I suppose it's Dutch. That must be the jolly old uncle."

"I say, you fellows, we know that Van Tromp and his uncle are up to some game," said Bunter. "So if you read this letter——"

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! The question is, do you know any Dutch?" asked Bunter. "Is there any Remove man

who knows any Dutch. The letter's written in Dutch."

"You've opened it?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"N-n-not exactly opened it," said Bunter cautiously. "It happened to come open by accident——"

"You fat rascal!

"Only I can't read the silly lingo it's written in," said Bunter. "I thought one of you fellows might be able——"

"Do you think we would read the rotter's letter, you sweep?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove angrily. "Fasten it up again at once, and put it in the letter-box."

"Well, some fellow might be able to make it out!" urged Bunter. "You see——"

Harry Wharton rose from the table. On such matters as these the Owl of the Remove had no scruples; but the views of the Famous Five were quite different.

"Give me that letter, you fat rogue!" snapped Wharton.

"Here you are, old chap! Perhaps you can get hold of a Dutch dictionary, and make it out!" suggested Bunter eagerly. "Why, you silly ass, you're sticking the envelope again! What are you sticking it for?"

Wharton made no reply to that. The flap of the envelope was intact. Bunter had apparently used steam to open it. With the aid of a bottle of gum Wharton carefully fastened it again.

"Now put it in your pocket," he said.

"All right, old chap! But what——"

"And now come with me."

"But I haven't finished the cake ——"

"Come along, I tell you!"

Wharton dropped his hand on Bunter's fat shoulder, and twirled him to the door.

"I say, you fathead, where are we going?" hooted Bunter.

"To the letter-box."

"Shan't!" roared Bunter.

"Well, I'll take your ear to the letter-box," said the captain of the Remove. "You can come along with it if you like."

And taking a fat ear in finger and thumb, he led the Owl of the Remove from the study.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter's ear went, and Bunter decided to go with it. Indeed, he had no choice in the matter. A parting would have been too painful.

Wharton led Bunter's ear along the passage, and down the Remove staircase; and Bunter, with a series of squeaks, accompanied the ear.

"Ow! Beast! Leggo!" howled Bunter. "I'm going, ain't I? Wow! Leggo my ear, you beast! Wow! Yow-ow! I'll jolly well lick you! Leggo! I'm going, you beast! I—I wanted to post this letter! That's what I wanted to do all the time! Ow! Wow! Leggo!"

"Well, come on," said Wharton, releasing the fat ear. "I'll race you to the letter-box and lick you so long as you're in reach."

"Beast!"

It was a swift race to the letter-box, in the school wall. Bunter put on remarkable speed. The conditions of that race urged William George Bunter to his greatest efforts.

He was gasping for breath when the letter-box was reached. Van Tromp's letter was duly dropped in.

Having seen it safely posted, Harry Wharton walked back to the house.

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## CHAPTER 15.

### Nothing Doing!

SIR HILTON POPPER coughed. Dr. Locke coughed also.

There was a frigid expression on the face of the headmaster of Greyfriars School. A trace of hardness, very unusual there, could be discerned in Dr. Locke's benign countenance.

Sir Hilton coughed again.

He was a dictatorial old gentleman; he was chairman of the governing

board; he was little accustomed to hesitate. But he hesitated now.

The fact was, that he was at the school on a distinctly unpleasant errand, and he realised it.

Still, he was there to get his errand done, and he made the plunge after two or three preliminary coughs.

"I am sure, Dr. Locke, that you will realise," said Sir Hilton slowly, "that in making the suggestion I am about to make——"

He coughed again.

"Pray proceed, sir!" said the Head icily.

But for his interview with Major Cherry a week ago, Dr. Locke would have been only surprised by the baronet's hesitation and embarrassment. But that talk with the major, and some subsequent discussion with Mr. Quelch, had prepared Dr. Locke for what might come. And now he knew that it was coming, and he was on his guard.

"There has never been a headmaster of Greyfriars, sir, more respected than yourself—by all the board," said Sir Hilton. "This feeling is fully shared by me."

"Thank you, sir."

"Nevertheless——" said Sir Hilton.

The Head waited.

"Nevertheless," repeated Sir Hilton, colouring a little, "it certainly appears to me, sir. that the time has come when you may justly claim a well-earned rest."

"Indeed."

"For years," said Sir Hilton, "you have filled this high post, sir, with credit in every possible way. You have given many, many years of your life to the school. You are entitled to repose."

"You are very kind," said the Head, with a faint touch of sarcasm; "and when I feel the need of repose I shall not fail to convey as much to the board."

Another cough from Sir Hilton.

There was a pause.

"Greatly as I respect you, sir," resumed Sir Hilton, after a long pause, "I have often differed from you in certain matters. It has often appeared to me that new blood is wanted. Change is the order of the day, sir, in these times. A younger man——"

He hesitated.

The Head was grimly silent. He had no intention whatever of helping out the baronet in the difficult task he had set himself.

"New times require new methods, sir," said Sir Hilton, making another start. "In many respects, I think, Greyfriars is hardly on a level with the times. A young and vigorous man——"

He paused again.

Grim silence from the Head.

"I will be frank, sir," said Sir Hilton, realising that he had to come out into the open. "In my opinion, sir, the time has arrived for you to request the board to allow you to retire to an honourable repose, and leave the reins in the hands of—of some worthy successor——"

"That is your opinion, sir?" said the Head.

"I acknowledge it!" said Sir Hilton.

"In that case, sir, such an opinion should surely be expressed at a meeting of the governors, and not to me personally."

"No doubt, no doubt," said Sir Hilton hastily. "But I should prefer the matter to be arranged amicably—quietly—without fuss. No member of the board is unaware of your great services, sir, or ungrateful for them. Yet the fact remains——"

"May I ask whether your opinion is shared generally by the board?"

"H'm!" said Sir Hilton.

"You have been frank, sir," said Dr. Locke. "I will be equally frank. I have no intention of resigning the headmastership of Greyfriars. In the event of the board requesting my resignation, that resignation will be immediately tendered. That is all I can say."

"Such a request is not likely to be made!" grunted Sir Hilton.

"If you, sir," pursued the Head,

"hold the opinion you have described, nothing debars you from raising the question at the next meeting, and putting it to the vote."

Sir Hilton Popper frowned.

"It is not my desire to take such a step," he answered. "Neither do I think that a majority of the board would support it."

Dr. Locke smiled faintly. He was of the same opinion.

"Then, sir, there appears to be nothing further to be said," he remarked.

"My view was that, in a quiet discussion between ourselves, you might see the matter from my point of view," said Sir Hilton. "Honourable retirement and repose—a generous pension ——"

"The matter is in the hands of the governors of the school, sir, and to them I leave it."

Sir Hilton rose.

"In that case, I have nothing further to say," he remarked stiffly. "My opinion is that Greyfriars would benefit by a change of method—by the administration of a young man; but if you decline to meet my views——"

"Precisely!" said the Head.

"Then I will take my leave, sir!" grunted Sir Hilton.

And he took it.

It was a frowning baronet who walked down to the gates, after leaving the Head.

Sir Hilton Popper was accustomed to having his own way; and he'd had little doubt that by the sheer force of his personality he would overcome the reluctance or opposition on the part of Dr. Locke.

He was disappointed and irritated.

He walked out at the gates, and strode along the road to Courtfield. At a little distance from the school a senior of Greyfriars met him on the road, raising his hat with almost obsequious respect.

"Ah! Van Tromp!" said Sir Hilton, his frowning brow clearing. "I am glad to see you!"

Van Tromp's keen eyes read his face—and read there the disappointment and annoyance Sir Hilton was feeling.

His eyes gleamed.

"I hope, sir, that you have some news for my uncle," he said.

"I am sorry, no!" said Sir Hilton. "As you are aware, Van Tromp, I have the highest—the very highest—opinion of Mr. Brander. Not only as a schoolmaster, but in every way. You know, perhaps, that Mr. Brander had helped me in some matters of business connected with my estate; and he has proved himself a man of business of no common order—exactly the man, in my opinion, who is required to take control of my old school."

"My uncle is very proud, sir, of having gained your good opinion," said Van Tromp. "He has told me that his chief reason for desiring to become headmaster of Greyfriars is that he may be able to carry out your views there—views which the present headmaster hardly appears to understand or appreciate."

A Greyfriars man would hardly have recognised the bullying, truculent Van Tromp in the fawning fellow who was speaking so obsequiously to Sir Hilton Popper.

"Exactly," said Sir Hilton. "I am disappointed—extremely disappointed. But Dr Locke declines to see matters from my point of view. I find in him a rather unexpected strain of obstinacy."

Sir Hilton grunted.

"For the present the matter must end," he said. "I deeply regret it, and you may tell Mr. Brander so, Van Tromp. It is useless for me to raise the matter with the governors—I should receive no support in pressing for the present headmaster's resignation. However——"

He paused.

"Yes, sir," murmured Van Tromp.

"Possibly Dr. Locke may reflect and see reason," said Hilton. "In the event of his retirement, there is no doubt whatever that Mr. Brander will succeed him as headmaster of Greyfriars.

No doubt whatever. That is an absolute certainty."

And Sir Hilton, with a nod, strode on.

Otto Van Tromp watched him till he was out of sight, with a faint, peculiar grin on his face.

"So that's that!" murmured the new senior of Greyfriars.

He walked slowly to the school.

"That's that!" he repeated. "I expected nothing else—and my uncle really expected nothing else—though it was worth trying! But there are other ways—other ways!"

And as he muttered those words a glitter came into the eyes of Otto van Tromp, which would have have startled anyone who had observed it.

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### CHAPTER 16.
#### By Whose Hand!

"IT is—is—is unprecedented!" said Dr. Locke.

"It is scandalous!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master spoke warmly.

Dr. Locke's face was clouded and troubled.

He was slowly pacing a secluded walk in his private garden. The Remove master paced by his side.

"I am greatly surprised," went on the Head. "It is true that I have never seen eye to eye with Sir Hilton Popper, and since that gentleman became chairman of the governing board I have looked for—well, perhaps criticism. But this——"

He paused.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye gleamed in a way that his Form well knew.

"Sir Hilton's conduct is scandalous!" he repeated.

"That is, perhaps, too strong a word," said the Head mildly. "But I am bound to say that it is unprecedented. I told you, Quelch, that Sir Hilton called on me a few days ago and suggested the propriety of my sending in my resignation to the board."

"Impudence on his part, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

"Doubtless his motives are good," said the Head. "His opinion is that a younger man is required here—a man with new methods—methods of which Sir Hilton approves——"

"And of which no one else would be likely to approve!" grunted the Remove master.

"But assuredly," went on the Head, "assuredly I had no idea until I heard recently from a member of the board that Sir Hilton had actually gone to the length of selecting a successor for me."

His face clouded deeply.

"That is really an insult," he said. "But it appears that Sir Hilton has selected a Mr. Brander as a suitable successor for me here, and has introduced this gentleman to various members of the board in the hope of obtaining their support."

Grunt from Mr. Quelch.

"Sir Hilton appears to have taken it for granted that a hint from him would be sufficient to bring about my resignation," said the Head, colouring a little. "He seemed both surprised and angry when I told him that I had no intention whatever of resigning."

"No doubt."

"But I did not suspect at that time the measures he had been taking or I should certainly have spoken to him very plainly," said the Head. "It is very awkward to be placed in opposition to the chairman of the board in this way."

"But it is necessary to be firm, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

"Quite so; I shall be very firm," said the Head. "Certainly I shall not resign my post. This Mr. Brander appears to be ready to step into my shoes as soon as they they are vacant. That gives me a far from favourable impression of the man. A self-respecting man would never take up such an attitude."

"I have heard of this Mr. Brander, sir," said the Remove master, "and nothing to his credit, in my opinion, though doubtless Sir Hilton Popper's opinion is otherwise. He is certainly a capable schoolmaster, but I have learned that he resigned a headmastership some time ago under pressure. His methods were those of excessive severity——"

"Probably Sir Hilton Popper would not think less of him on that account."

"Very probably."

"His name was quite unknown to me till to-day," said the Head, "so far as this matter was concerned. It was familiar to me on another account."

"Indeed?"

"He is related to Van Tromp, the new boy in the Sixth Form," said the Head.

"Indeed," repeated Mr. Quelch, raising his eyebrows.

"I have no doubt that it is the same man," said Dr. Locke. "Van Tromp's uncle, Mr. Brander, is, I understand, a schoolmaster."

"I was not aware of this," said Mr. Quelch. "In the circumstances, it is extremely bad taste for Mr. Brander to send his nephew to Greyfriars."

"I agree with you. I have not met the gentleman," said Dr. Locke. "It was Sir Hilton Popper who arranged for the boy to come here, and, of course, in such a matter the word of the chairman of the board is final. I understood that Mr. Brander was to bring the boy to the school, but for some reason he changed his intention and did not come with him."

The Head paced in silence for a few minutes.

Mr. Quelch paced at his side with a frowning brow.

Henry Samuel Quelch was not only a member of the staff, but he was an old and attached friend of the headmaster; and he felt deeply the slight that was put upon his chief by Sir Hilton Popper's proceedings.

"I gather from what I have now heard," went on the Head, "that Sir Hilton has secured the support of a majority of the board for his candidate in case of my resignation or retirement."

"I do not think that Major Cherry will support him, sir, or Colonel Wharton, though the latter gentleman is unfortunately abroad at the present time."

"The case will not arise," said the Head, "for I certainly shall not resign unless requested to do so by the board. Mr. Brander must look elsewhere for an appointment."

"The board may be agreed on the subject of your successor, sir, but it is absolutely certain that they will not dispense with your services," said Mr. Quelch. "Only voluntary resignation can leave the way open for this Mr. Brander—a pushing and unscrupulous man, I should judge by his conduct."

"But the whole circumstances are very painful," said the Head. "It is very distressing to me."

"Nevertheless, sir, firmness is required," said Mr. Quelch. "I am convinced that it would be an ill day for this school, sir, if the person selected by Sir Hilton Popper should assume authority here."

"I have little doubt of that," said Dr. Locke, "and, distressing as the situation is, nothing will induce me to tender my resignation."

"I am glad to hear it, sir."

And after a little further talk Mr. Quelch took his leave of the Head and left the garden. He walked back into the quad, and returned to the house with a grim frown on his brow. Henry Samuel Quelch would have been very glad to tell Sir Hilton Popper what he thought of him and his proceedings had that been practicable.

The Head, left alone, resumed his pacing on the shady walk between the thick shrubberies.

His kind old face was clouded.

He could look back on many years of faithful service to the old school, and it wounded him deeply to learn that a movement was on foot against him among the governing board.

It was true that there was no chance whatever of his resignation being re-

quested; but it was clear that, in case of his retirement, his successor was already selected. Sir Hilton Popper's influence on the board was strong, and to that extent the dictatorial old baronet was successful.

It was not pleasant to the Head to think of a pushing man waiting expectantly to step into his shoes; neither was Sir Hilton's plainly-expressed wish that he should retire agreeable to him.

But kind and gentle as he was, the Head could be as firm, as adamant. So far as he was concerned, Sir Hilton Popper would be disappointed; and the pushing Mr. Brander had long to wait.

That the unknown Mr. Brander was anything but a pushing and ambitious man did not occur to the Head; and he did not dream that other methods might be employed now that Sir Hilton's intervention had failed to clear the way.

So far as Sir Hilton was concerned, the matter was at an end for the present. Dr. Locke's refusal to resign had finished it.

But Meyer Brander, if the Head had only known it, was a man of a very different stamp, and it was not merely bad taste, but much more cogent reasons, that had caused him to send his nephew Van Tromp to Greyfriars.

No such suspicion was likely to occur to the mind of Dr. Locke.

He paced the garden walk in the shadow of the high shrubberies, and his face gradually cleared. It was a painful matter, but, after all, he needed only to be firm and there was an end.

In his preoccupation the Head did not hear or heed a faint rustle in the thick shrubbery. He did not dream that eyes were watching him keenly, intently. The thought of danger never occurred to him. The sudden whiz of a heavy missile in the air caused him to start.

Crash!

A heavy oaken cudgel whizzed through the air, and as the Head half turned it struck him on the forehead.

One faint cry came from the stricken man as he fell.

He fell heavily and lay where he had fallen, without sense of motion. The crashing blow had stunned him.

There was a faint rustle in the shrubberies; the sound of his assailant in hasty retreat. But the Head did not hear it. He lay still, his eyes closed, a trickle of crimson on the white, upturned face.

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## CHAPTER 17.
### Startling News!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter fairly yelled. He burst into the Rag, his fat face crimson with excitement, his eyes almost bulging through his big spectacles.

"I—I say——" he stuttered.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the jolly old news?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I—I say——" Bunter seemed too excited to get it out. "Oh, dear! I—I say, you fellows——"

"House on fire?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Nunno! Worse than that!" gasped Bunter.

"My hat! What on earth's happened?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Has your postal order come?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Well, get it out, fatty!" said the Bounder.

The juniors gathered round Bunter. Billy Bunter's news was not always worth hearing; but it was evident that something unusual had happened now.

"The — the — Head——" gasped Bunter.

"Anything happened to the Beak?" asked Skinner.

"Yes! He's killed——"

"What?" yelled the Rag.

"Well, not exactly killed!" gasped Bunter.

"You fat chump!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"What's happened, you fathead?" roared Johnny Bull. "Has the Head had an accident?"

"Worse than that!" stuttered Bunter.

"You frabjous chump, get it out!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "What's happened to Dr. Locke—if anything has?"

"He's been knocked on the head——"

"Rot!" said Squiff.

"Stunned——"

"Rubbish!"

"It's true!" yelled Bunter. "I've just seen them carrying him into his house. He was found in the garden lying in his gore——"

"Cheese it!"

"I tell you he's been banged on the head and—and fearfully injured," howled Bunter. "He was insensible when they found him."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Let's go and see!" said Nugent.

"The seefulness is the proper caper," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Rather!"

And there was a rush from the Rag.

Other fellows had the news already. It was spreading far and wide, thrilling the school with excitement.

An attack had been made on Dr. Locke, that was certain. Details were not yet known.

The Head, it appeared, was in his house now, and the doctor had been sent for. Coker of the Fifth was telling what he knew in a loud voice.

"I saw him," said Coker. "He looked awful. White as a sheet. He'd had a fearful knock on the head."

"But who——" exclaimed Potter of the Fifth.

"Some awful brute," said Coker. "I jolly well wish I knew who! I'd smash him!" Coker brandished his big fist. "I'd smash him into little pieces!"

"Here's Wingate!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Let's ask Wingate." The captain of Greyfriars came into the house with a set face.

"Is it true, Wingate?"

"What's happened to the Head?"

"Is he hurt?"

Wingate nodded.

"Mimble, the gardener, found him lying in his garden," he said. "Goodness knows what awful brute can have done it. He was lying stunned, and there was a cudgel lying beside him—the sort of cudgel that a tramp might carry. Somebody had struck him on the head with it and stunned him."

"Did Mimble see anybody——"

"Nothing's known so far," said Wingate. "The doctor's coming, and the police have been telephoned for. That's all."

"The police!" exclaimed Bob.

"Then—then they don't think it could have been a Greyfriars man?" asked Potter of the Fifth.

Wingate stared at him.

"How could it have been a Greyfriars man, fathead? We haven't a murderous hooligan in the school, I suppose?"

"But who——"

"It looked like a tramp's cudgel that was found lying beside him. Some brute may have tried to rob him—goodness knows. I dare say he will be able to tell when he comes to."

"This is terrible news." It was Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth. "This is—is terrible—unnerving! No one should suggest that a Greyfriars boy has been capable of this dreadful outrage. Some lawless ruffian—or perhaps an escaped lunatic."

"It couldn't be a Greyfriars man, of course," said Coker, as Mr. Prout passed on. "You're an ass, Potter!"

"Well," said Potter, "we heard that somebody chucked a big stone at the Head the other day, only it missed. This looks like the same game——"

"Well, that wasn't a Greyfriars man either," said Coker.

"Blessed if it doesn't look——" said Bob Cheery.

"Don't you be a young ass, Cherry!" snapped Coker. "There will be a row enough about this, without suggesting that a Greyfriars man could have bunged his own headmaster on the napper with a club——"

"It's impossible!" said Harry Wharton. "But it's jolly queer all the same."

"The queerfulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Here comes the doctor!" called out Greene of the Fifth, as there was a sound of a car on the drive.

There was a rush to see Dr. Pillbury go into the Head's house. The school doctor had not been long in arriving.

Many fellows waited to see the medical gentleman leave. It was long before he emerged; and his face was very grave as he drove away in his car.

There was little attention given to prep that evening in any study at Greyfriars.

The mysterious attack on the Head was the one absorbing topic.

It was learned that Inspector Grimes, of Courtfield, had called at the school, and that he had seen several of the masters, though the Head was not yet sufficiently recovered to see him.

What Mr. Grimes' view of the outrage might be nobody knew; but it was probable that he was very puzzled.

The matter was not only mysterious, it was inexplicable.

That the brutal assault could have been carried out by anyone belonging to the school seemed incredible. Yet that some intruder or trespasser had struck down the Head so cruelly was amazing, if true.

Every fellow at Greyfriars discussed the matter, and the surmises were endless.

Before bed-time Mr. Quelch made an announcement that was heard with eagerness. Dr. Locke had recovered consciousness at last; his injury was serious, but probably not permanent; and he had been able to give no information whatever with regard to his assailant. He was in the doctor's hands, and would remain in them for a very considerable time. In the meantime, Mr. Prout, the Fifth Form master, would act as headmaster pro tem.

After lights out it was long before the Greyfriars fellows slept. In every dormitory the talk ran on to a late hour.

In a Sixth Form room was one fellow who remained awake latest of all. Otto van Tromp found it very difficult to sleep that night.

## CHAPTER 18.

### Mr. Prout Sees a Silver Lining!

MR. PROUT smiled.

He walked in the quadrangle in the morning sunshine, and smiled.

Mr. Prout was sorry for the Head. He was inexpressibly shocked by the outrage, but——

Long, long had Mr. Prout believed that he possessed the qualities requisite to the headmaster of such a school as Greyfriars. Long, long had he compared himself with Dr. Locke, to the latter's disadvantage.

He respected his chief. Now he compassionated him with all his heart. But he could not help feeling that there was a silver lining to the cloud.

He had visited the stricken old gentleman that morning. He had seen the doctor. It was no secret that Dr. Locke was booked for a long and serious illness; and that as soon as he could be moved he would have to be taken away from Greyfriars. Not that term, probably not the next, would he be able to resume his duties as headmaster.

Surely, in the circumstances, the governing board would see fit to confirm Mr. Prout, a master of long and tried service, as temporary headmaster—probably with a permanency in view.

It seemed probable to Mr. Prout.

Hence his smile.

If Greyfriars remained under his commands for a term, Mr. Prout had no doubt that the governors would see how very suitable he was for the post, and would agree that the best interests of the school required that he should be continued in it.

Mr. Prout would have been shocked had anyone supposed him capable of what is vulgarly known as bagging another man's job. But it did seem to Mr. Prout that the Head's temporary retirement might well become permanent, with so efficient a gentleman as Mr. Prout all ready on the spot to take his place.

Headmaster of Greyfriars!

The words were very pleasant in the

plump ears of Mr. Prout. He felt an inch taller as he thought of it.

He walked and smiled.

It really was not a time for smiling. Most faces at Greyfriars were grave. Even fags of the Third and Second looked unusually serious. But Mr. Prout smiled unconsciously at his gratifying thoughts.

"What's that old guy grinning at?" asked Coker, as he passed at a distance from his Form-master with Potter and Greene.

Potter shrugged his shoulders.

"Fancying himself as Beak, pro tem," he answered. "Prout's in the saddle till the Head's up again."

Coker looked thoughtful.

"Of course, he's an old ass!" he remarked. "But he's senior master. If the Beak goes, it would be rather decent to have our Form-master Head. I'm frightfully sorry for Locke, of course; and I'd give a term's pocket-money to smash the villain who biffed him. But if Prout were headmaster—well, he might make a fellow a prefect. Locke never could see that I was cut cut to be a prefect. Prout might."

"Oh, my hat!" said Potter.

"The governors would never make an old ass like Prout headmaster," said Greene.

"Well, if he made me a prefect it would show that he wasn't such an ass after all," urged Coker. "What do you fellows think?"

"Um!" said Potter and Greene.

They did not state what they thought on that subject. It would only have led to a row with Coker.

Mr. Quelch, who had been to the Head's house after morning classes, came away with a frowning and troubled brow.

Prout bore down on him.

"How is the Head, my dear Quelch?" he asked.

"Very weak and in pain," answered the Remove master. "Dr. Pillbury feared concussion at first, but fortunately it is not so bad as that. But——"

Mr. Quelch shook his head sadly.

"I understand that there can be no question of the Head resuming his duties this term," said Mr. Prout.

"None, I am sorry to say."

"I am sorry, too, of course," said Mr. Prout. "But it is a consolation to know that the school will not suffer, my dear Quelch."

The Remove master looked at him.

"I do not understand you," he answered coldly. "The school certainly will suffer."

"Dr. Locke was a good headmaster—a great headmaster," said Mr. Prout. "He is fully entitled to rank with Arnold and other great headmasters. But, after all, there are men worthy to take his place."

"I know of none!" said Mr. Quelch briefly.

"Really, my dear Quelch——"

"It is extremely unfortunate," said the Remove master. "Apart from the infamy of this unspeakable outrage, it is a blow to the school. Dr. Locke certainly cannot resume his duties for a very long time. A temporary headmaster must be appointed."

"A temporary headmaster has been appointed, by the special request of Dr. Locke to me," reminded Mr. Prout.

"Oh, quite so! But the matter, of course, will be referred to the Board of Governors."

"Surely you do not think they are likely to disagree with the Head's selection?" said Mr. Prout anxiously. "I am prepared to carry on. Without conceit, I think I may say that Greyfriars will not suffer under my guidance."

Mr. Quelch looked at him again.

He read Mr. Prout's thoughts, and stiffened. If there was any master at Greyfriars who was worthy of stepping into the Head's shoes, he did not think his name was Prout. Mere regard for facts would have forced him to admit that the name was Henry Samuel Quelch.

But Mr. Quelch, who knew more of what had been going on behind the scenes than the Fifth Form master knew, was well aware that no member of the present staff would be selected to take Dr. Locke's place.

This miserable happening, this inexplicable crime, cleared the way for Sir Hilton Popper's candidate.

No sooner would Sir Hilton have heard of the outrage than he would be taking action. Mr. Quelch was sure of that. No doubt Sir Hilton would deplore the outrage as sincerely as anyone; but it was certain that he would lose no time in bringing forward the claims of Mr. Brander.

Mr. Prout blinked anxiously at the Remove master.

"Do you not think, my dear Quelch, that the board will be likely to confirm Dr. Locke's choice in the matter?" he asked.

"I fear not, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "But most assuredly I hope that such may be the case."

Mr. Quelch spoke with sincerity. He would have preferred Mr. Prout, or a dozen Mr. Prouts, to the unknown man Brander.

"You are very good, my dear Quelch!" said Prout, greatly pleased.

Mr. Quelch smiled a dry, sarcastic smile, and passed on. Mr. Prout was left to his daydreams, from which he was destined to have a rude awakening before long.

Many observed that day an added pomposity in the bearing of Mr. Prout. His colleagues were not slow to observe it; and the murmured comments in Masters' Common-room would have made Mr. Prout's ears burn had he heard them.

Outwardly, however, most of the staff were very respectful to Prout. It was on the cards, at least, that he might get the headmastership, and in that case nobody wanted to offend him.

Apart from Mr. Prout, who was comforted by agreeable thoughts, that was a dismal day for Greyfriars.

The fellows liked and respected the Head, and they felt for him deeply; and still more deep was their indignation against the unknown wretch who had struck him down.

Of that wretch, nothing was known, discovered or even suspected.

The whole affair was a mystery.

Inspector Grimes had examined the spot where the attack had taken place —and after him, most of the Greyfriars fellows had done so. Traces had been found where someone had crouched in the shrubbery; and in a spot where the garden wall abutted on a narrow lane, torn ivy had been discovered, which looked as if the assailant had entered or escaped that way. No other clue was found excepting the heavy oaken cudgel that had struck the headmaster; but the cudgel afforded no clue. It was such a cudgel as might have been carried by a tramp, but that was all.

Mr. Grimes was driven to believe that some ruffianly footpad had entered the place for purposes of robbery; that he had struck down the Head, and then taken the alarm and fled without carrying out his purpose—for the headmaster had not been robbed.

That theory was not a wholly satisfactory one; but it was difficult to imagine any other explanation, unless it was to be supposed that some Greyfriars fellow was the guilty party.

That was hardly imaginable; and certainly Inspector Grimes did not imagine it.

In the meantime, Sir Hilton Popper, the governor who lived nearest to Greyfriars, had been apprised of the occurrence; and he came over in his car, looking, as no doubt he felt, extremely shocked and grieved. He saw the Head, and he had a conversation with Mr. Prout. Mr. Prout, lofty and pompous gentleman as he was, hovered round Sir Hilton, and hung on his words as if they were pearls of wisdom falling from the baronet's lips. Mr. Prout certainly did not suppose that his manner was fawning; but that was how it struck the other masters. The fact was, that Sir Hilton, as chairman of the board, had the power in his hands to make or to mar Mr. Prout; and the Fifth Form master was exceedingly anxious to make a good impression upon him.

Many fellows saw Mr. Prout attend

Sir Hilton to his car when he left, and heard his honeyed voice, and noted his deep bows, and smiled to one another.

"Sucking up to old Popper!" said Coker to Potter. "I wonder if he will pull it off?"

Gwynne of the Sixth came into the prefects' room with a snort.

"See that fat old ass greasing up to Popper?" he asked. "Even old Popper couldn't be ass enough to stick him in the Head's place."

"Not likely!" said Wingate.

Gwynne looked from the window.

"Hallo, there's that tick Van Tromp talking to Popper," he said. "I didn't know he knew the old bean."

Several of the prefects looked out; Van Tromp of the Sixth was standing by the baronet's car, talking to Sir Hilton. Mr. Prout, with a rather dashed expression on his face, had drawn back. Sir Hilton's manner to Mr. Prout was not very promising; indeed, it was quite off hand.

But he was speaking to Van Tromp quite cordially. From his manner, it might be inferred that he had a good opinion of the new senior. Which, in the opinion of the fellows looking from the window, showed that he couldn't know Otto van Tromp very well.

Sir Hilton shook hands with Van Tromp before getting into his car, and then, apparently forgetful of Mr. Prout, drove away. Van Tromp watched the car out of sight along the drive and turned back to the house with a smile on his face. And it was so strange a smile that the Sixth Formers staring from the window, could not help noticing it, and wondering what it meant.

## CHAPTER 19.
### Bunter Knows!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"I've got it!"

"Eh?"

"I've got it!" repeated Bunter, blinking at the juniors through his big spectacles in a very impressive way.

"Well, what have you got, you fat chump?" asked Frank Nugent. "That cake that disappeared from our study the other day?"

"Oh, really, Nugent! This isn't a time to be thinking about cakes!" said Bunter severely. "And I never touched that cake, as I've told you several times already. I hope I'm not the sort of chap to bag another fellow's cake when he's not looking. Besides, after I'd taken the trouble to come up to the study to tell you about your minor, it's rather mean to grudge a fellow a slice or two of cake. I never meant to finish it, either—that is, I mean, I never touched it. In fact, I never noticed that there was a cake in the study at all——"

"Kick him!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Just like you fellows to be worrying about a cake, when the Head's lying——"

"And you're lying!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Beast! You fellows have been jawing and jawing, and you haven't got any nearer it," said Bunter. "Well, I've got it!"

"The cake?"

"No!" roared Bunter. "Blow the cake. Bother the cake! Bless the cake! I've found out who biffed the Head!"

"What?"

It was an exclamation from all parts of the room. Fellows gathered eagerly around Bunter.

The fat junior grinned complacently.

Bunter liked the limelight; and he liked an audience. He had both now, in ample measure.

"You've found out who biffed the Head?" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"Yes, old chap!"

"My hat! Who——"

"Gammon!" said Hobson of the Shell. "How could he have found out?"

"The gammonfulness is terrific!"

"Let's hear the fat foozler," said

Temple of the Fourth. "Bunter is always finding out things; and always will so long as they make keyholes to doors."

"Why, you cheeky rotter!" hooted Bunter.

"Well, if you've found out anythin', what is it?" demanded Cecil Reginald Temple.

"Out with it, fathead!" said the Bounder.

"Cough it up, ass!" said Squiff.

"Get it off your chest, you fat dummy!" said Tom Brown.

Billy Bunter blinked round at the eager, excited faces. He smiled the smile of superior wisdom.

"Most fellows think it was some tramp who butted into the Head's garden," he said. "Well, it wasn't."

"How do you know, fathead?"

"I jolly well do know," said Bunter. "It wasn't anybody from outside Greyfriars, and you can take that from me."

"Mean to say it was a Greyfriars chap who knocked the Beak out?" exclaimed Skinner.

Bunter shook his head mysteriously. "No."

"Then what are you driving at?" demanded Harry Wharton impatiently. "Are you potty enough to imagine that one of the servants biffed the Head?"

"No fear."

"Then who, you benighted chump?" asked Peter Todd. "There's nobody else in the school, is there, you fatuous fish?"

"Isn't there?" grinned Bunter.

"Only the masters, fathead!"

"Got there at last?" asked Bunter.

"You—you—you prize idiot!" gasped Wharton. "Are you going to make out that one of the beaks biffed the chief beak?"

"You born idiot!" said Peter Todd, in measured tones.

"I guess I always knew that Bunter was the world's prize boob," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "But I want to know what he's doing outside a home for idiots?"

"Oh, really, Fishy——"

"Get on with it, Bunter," said the Bounder. "Let's know what's put this particular piece of idiocy into your fat head."

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"Cough it up, you chump!" roared Bob Cherry.

"If you fellows had half my brains, or a quarter, you'd have seen it for yourselves," said Bunter complacently. "If you'd read as many detective stories as I have, you'd know that when a crime is committed you have to look for the man with the motive."

"Well, who could possibly have a motive for banging the Beak on the napper with a club?" demanded Hazeldene.

"Prout!"

"Prout!" gasped the juniors.

Bunter nodded cheerily.

"Prout!" he answered. "You see, I've worked it out just like Sherlock Holmes. Now the Head's laid up, Prout is carrying on in his place. Lots of fellows know that he's hoping to bag the job—lots of fellows saw him greasing up to Popper. Prout's after the job."

"Oh, my hat!" said Harry Wharton blankly.

"You—you—you——" gasped Peter Todd.

"Prout's the man," said Bunter, with conviction. "Look for the man with the motive—that's the maxim. Prout bags the job—so there's the motive! Prout biffed the Head——"

"You benighted chump——"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"You unmitigated idiot——"

"Look here——"

"You—you—you frabjous, foozling frump!"

"You can call a fellow names," said Bunter disdainfully, "but I've got it, all the same. Prout stands to gain by the Head being knocked out. Nobody else does. Prout did it."

"Shut up, you piffling idiot!" gasped Bob Cherry, as the door of the Rag opened, and Wingate of the Sixth

By the time Bob Cherry and Vernon-Smith had finished with Van Tromp's study the room presented a scene of havoc never before seen at Greyfriars. "I fancy Van Tromp will get a bit excited when he comes in," said Smithy. "Ha, ha!" laughed Bob. "More than a bit, I think!" But it was certain that the bullying senior would not want the two Removites to fag for him again!

looked in. It was half-past nine, bed-time for the Remove.

"Shan't!" said Bunter. He had his back to the door, and did not see the captain of Greyfriars. "I've thought this out, and worked it out just like a detective in a book. You fellows couldn't do it—you haven't the intellect. I've found the villain out."

"Shut up!"

"Shan't! I've found the villain out!"

"Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove spun round. He gave Wingate a startled blink through his big spectacles.

"Oh! I—I didn't see you, Wingate! I—I wasn't saying anything about Prout!" he stuttered.

"You young idiot!" said Wingate. "I heard what you said as I opened the door. Are you mad?"

"Nunno! You see——"

"Bend over that chair!"

"Oh crikey! I—I say, Wingate, I—I——"

"Bend over!" roared the prefect.

"Oh dear!"

Billy Bunter reluctantly bent over the chair. He had reason to be reluctant. Wingate's brow was clothed with thunder. He swished his ash-plant, and it came down with a terrific swipe.

"Yaroooogh!" roared Bunter.

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

"There," said Wingate, tucking the cane under his arm, "if that doesn't teach you sense, Bunter, there's plenty more where it came from."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Now get off to your dorm."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter groaned his way to the Remove dormitory. The other fellows went grinning. Bunter had received the reward to which, in their opinion, he was entitled, for his uncommon perspicacity in finding out the guilty man.

When Wingate had turned out the lights, and left the dormitory, Billy Bunter was still groaning.

"Shut up that row, Bunter!" said Peter Todd. "You've got what you asked for. You can't help being a born idiot, but there's a limit."

"I say, you fellows, it was Prout——"

"Shut up!" roared a dozen voices.

"And I can't help thinking that Wingate was his accomplice."

"What?" shrieked the Removites.

"Well, look at it!" argued Bunter. "Wingate's trying to hush it up. He's pitched into me because he wants to keep it dark."

"Oh, ye gods!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"It's clear enough to me," said Bunter. "You've got to look for the motive, you know.. Well, what could be Wingate's motive for wanting to keep it dark and hush it up? I say, you fellows, ain't it shocking. Fancy a Greyfriars prefect and a Greyfriars master conspiring to knock the Head out."

"I can't quite fancy that," chuckled Bob Cherry. "But I fancy I'm going to biff you with my pillow till you shut up."

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"Same here," said Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows—— Yaroooogh! Leave off! Oh crikey! Whooop!" roared Billy Bunter, as a pillow swiped on him from either side of his bed. "Ow! Oh! Beasts! Stoppit! Whooooooop!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Ow, ow! Yow! Wow! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now shut up, you frabjous chump!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Another wor——"

"Beast! I say——"

Swipe!

"Yaroooooogh!"

And Billy Bunter shut up at last. H remarkable theory found no takers i the Remove. The attack on the He remained a mystery; and it did n seem probable that Billy Bunte

efforts as a detective would shed much light upon it.

. . . . . .

And yet, as wisdom is said to proceed sometimes from the mouths of babes and sucklings, so it was with Billy Bunter. His theory, remarkable as it was, was nearer the truth than the Remove fellows dreamed; though certainly no one but the fat and fatuous Owl would have thought of regarding the plump and podgy Prout with suspicion.

Bunter's theory had started a train of thought in at least one mind in the Remove.

Long after the other fellows had gone to sleep, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh lay awake thinking. And strange thoughts were working in the keen mind of the Nabob of Bhanipur.

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### CHAPTER 20.
### Dark Suspicions!

"LOOKS pleased as Punch!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Johnny made that remark in break the next morning, as the Famous Five passed Mr. Prout in the quad.

The juniors glanced at the Fifth Form master.

Mr. Prout did not look, exactly, as pleased as Punch. But there was undoubtedly a new loftiness in his manner; a new pompousness in the carriage of his head, a complacent smile on his fat features.

More and more it had been borne in on Mr. Prout's mind that the sad and regrettable late occurrence had opened a path for him, in which he was destined to exhibit his true greatness of character.

All Mr. Prout ever needed, in order to show what a great man he was, was opportunity.

Now it seemed that the opportunity had come.

In the list of great headmasters, the name of Paul Prout was going to shine like a bright, particular star; at least, Mr. Prout hoped so.

The headmastership of Greyfriars was a much sought-after post. The emoluments were very generous; it was one of the richest "plums" in the scholastic profession.

But Mr. Prout, to do him justice, was not thinking of that aspect of the case, though that aspect, of course, was gratifying.

He was thinking of the wider stage on which he would be able to display his powers and gifts. He had been, he felt, an unusually strong Form-master. But a Form-master had only a limited scope. As a headmaster—and Head of such a school as Greyfriars—Prout would be in his proper element. His career, he was sure, would be a remarkable one.

There had been great headmasters before Prout; just as there had been great generals before Agamemnon. But the greatest of them was going to fade into insignificance in comparison with Prout.

So it was no wonder that, deeply as he sympathised with the Head, Mr. Prout smiled an ineffable smile.

"Well, it's a leg up for Prout, if he bags it," said Frank Nugent tolerantly, as the chums of the Remove walked on.

"Anyhow, it will only be temporary," said Harry. "The Head will be back next term, I suppose."

"Prout doesn't look as if he hopes so," grunted Johnny Bull.

"I've heard that there's a special meeting of the governors to-day, to jaw it over," said Bob. "They're meeting in London; but I suppose we shall hear the result pretty soon."

"My esteemed chums——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's bothering your old black noddle, Inky?" asked Bob Cherry. "You haven't spoken a word."

"The thinkfulness has been terrific, my esteemed Bob," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "There is a suspicion in my ridiculous mind, and I think I can

name the absurd person who will take Dr. Locke's place."

"Trot it out!" said Bob.

"The ridiculous name is Brander," said Hurree Singh quietly.

The Co. came to a sudden halt, and stared at the dusky junior.

"My hat!" said Harry.

"I'd forgotten about that," said Frank Nugent slowly. "But now you come to think of it, you fellows, you remember that fat idiot Bunter found out about Van Tromp's uncle?"

"But——" said Wharton.

Bob Cherry whistled.

The Co. had almost forgotten the story of what Bunter had heard, or, at least, said that he had heard, of the talk between Van Tromp of the Sixth and his schoolmaster uncle, Meyer Brander.

But it came back into their minds now.

There was a dark and thoughtful expression on the nabob's face.

"But——" repeated Wharton.

He gave the nabob a startled look, catching a vague inkling of what was in Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's mind.

"My esteemed chums," said the nabob quietly. "The absurd and fat-headed Bunter suggested that the ridiculous Prout might have knocked the excellent Head on the napper."

"The born idiot!"

"But that put an idea into my absurd brain," said Hurree Singh, "and I have been thinking over it terrifically."

"What idea?" asked Bob uneasily.

"Some absurd person knocked the esteemed Head out," said Hurree Singh, "and we knew already that there was a certain person who was after his post here, and who——"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Wharton. "You can't imagine——"

"I can, my worthy chum."

"But it's impossible!" Wharton looked almost aghast. "Inky, old man, you're as big an ass as Bunter!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled.

"I think not. According to what the absurd Bunter told us he heard the ridiculous Brander say to his nephew in the railway carriage, the worthy Brander was certain that Dr. Locke would leave Greyfriars."

"Yes; but——"

"He said that if the Head did not resign, there were other ways. That is what Bunter heard, my esteemed chum."

"Other ways," repeated Bob. "Oh, my hat! But——"

"And now the 'other way' has happened," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Inky!"

The chums of the Remove stared at the nabob and at one another. Their faces were very grave now.

"It's impossible!" repeated Wharton.

"It looks——" muttered Bob.

"But—but that man Brander's nowhere near Greyfriars," said Nugent. "I don't know where he is, but he's nowhere near the school. He couldn't have——"

"The esteemed Van Tromp is here."

"Van Tromp! But——"

"Oh crumbs!" said Bob.

"Impossible!" said Harry.

The nabob shrugged his shoulders.

"You—you—you think it was Van Tromp who—who——" stuttered Nugent.

"To open the way for his uncle to come here as headmaster," muttered Wharton. "It's impossible!"

"I do not say I think so, my esteemed friends," said the nabob. "But I shall think so when we hear the name of the new headmaster, if that esteemed name is Meyer Brander."

"I can't believe it!" said Harry, shaking his head. "Bunter may have got it all wrong about what he heard them saying the day Van Tromp came to the school. He's a born ass!"

"Still——" said Bob slowly.

"Van Tromp's brute enough for anything," said Wharton hastily. "Even if there's anything in it, there's no proof of any kind; and we're on fighting terms with Van Tromp—and it would look——"

"I am aware, my worthy friend, that a still tongue saves the cracked pitcher from going longest to the well," said the nabob. "Not a word outside our own select and ridiculous circle."

"For goodness' sake, no!" said Bob. "A chap might be sacked for suggesting such a thing. But——"

"But it looks——" muttered Johnny Bull.

"If Brander becomes headmaster it will look——" said Wharton slowly. "But—but probably he won't. Prout's counting on it, anyhow."

"The esteemed Prout is counting his chickens before the absurd hatchfulness!" said Hurree Singh.

The Famous Five walked on in silence. Their thoughts were busy.

Such a suspicion seemed too terrible to be entertained. And yet, if Meyer Brander became headmaster of Greyfriars in Dr. Locke's place, certainly that would give colour to it.

"There's Van Tromp!" said Bob Cherry suddenly in a low voice.

The new senior passed at a little distance.

He was walking with his hands in his pockets and a lurking smile on his face. He caught sight of the Famous Five, and changed his direction and came towards them. There was a sneering grin on his face now.

The juniors looked at him in silence. The bare possibility that it was his dastard hand that had struck down the headmaster made them feel something like horror in his presence.

Van Tromp eyed them. There was something almost gloating in his look; it was the look of one who fancied that he would soon have the fellows he detested at his mercy.

"You young sweeps!" he said. "You'll be paying for your cheek pretty soon. I'll make you sorry that you ever laid hands on me!"

The words struck strangely on the ears of the juniors, in view of what was in their thoughts.

"We've kept our end up pretty well, so far," retorted Bob Cherry, "and we're ready for more trouble, if you like!"

"You'll change your tune pretty soon, I fancy!" said Van Tromp grimly.

"And why?" asked Wharton, looking steadily at the bully of the Sixth.

"You'll see soon enough!"

Van Tromp walked on, checking the words on his lips. It was as if he longed to enjoy his triumph, and yet felt that it was imprudent to say too much.

Bob Cherry whistled softly.

"Well, it looks——" he said.

"It does!" said Harry. "But——"

"Wait till we hear the name of the new Beak!" said Nugent.

"And if the new Beak's name is not Brander, my esteemed chums, you may use my head for a ridiculous football!" said Hurree Singh.

The bell called the juniors in to third lesson, and the subject was dismissed. But it remained in the thoughts of the Famous Five; and they were very anxious indeed to hear the name, when it should be announced, of Dr. Locke's successor.

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### CHAPTER 21.
### The New Head!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were on Little Side, at cricket practice after tea, when Billy Bunter rolled into view.

"I say, you fellows——" squeaked Bunter.

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"I say, old Popper's come!"

"Oh!"

Cricket practice was dropped at once. The arrival of the Chairman of the Governors at Greyfriars, in all probability, meant the announcement that the Famous Five were so anxiously awaiting.

"He's just come in his car," said Bunter. "I say, he's got a man with him. You fellows remember that fat Dutchman—Van Tromp's uncle——"

"Is he with the Popper bird?" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes; you fellows remember I found out his name—Brander——"

"He's with Popper?" said Harry.

"He came in the car with him; they're just going into the house," said Bunter. "Old Prout's met them—all smiles and grease."

"Come on!" said Bob.

The juniors walked away quickly towards the house. The arrival of Mr. Brander with the baronet could scarcely mean other than one thing. It was the new headmaster of Greyfriars who had come with Sir Hilton Popper.

On the subject of the headmastership there had been much speculation at Greyfriars that day.

Dr. Locke was gone now; he had been removed in an ambulance car, and a sorrowful crowd had watched his departure.

Mrs. Locke and Rosie Locke had gone with him. It was likely to be long before Greyfriars saw the headmaster and his family again.

All the fellows, and all the masters, were speculating on the outcome of the emergency meeting held by the governors in London.

Some had expected that Mr. Prout might be summoned from the school to attend that meeting. Probably Prout himself expected it.

But no summons had come for Prout.

This, in the general opinion, rather weighed against his chances. Price of the Fifth had been offering two to one, in quids, on Prout; but later in the day the odds fell to evens.

The Famous Five found a crowd of fellows gathered about the house, all excited by the arrival of Sir Hilton Popper, and debating who might be the fat, rather foreign-looking gentleman who had arrived with him.

"Where are they, you men?" asked Bob.

"Gone into the Head's study," answered Vernon-Smith. "Prout's bagged that study now, you know."

"Popper had a man with him," said Skinner. "A fat blighter! Fat as an oyster, but jolly keen, I think. Van Tromp knows him."

"Van Tromp?"

"Yes; the fat man shook hands with him. Van Tromp was waiting on the steps when he came; he seemed to know."

"Can't be a new Beak, can it?" asked Russell.

"My hat! Poor old Prout—if it is!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Anyhow, we shall know soon," said Peter Todd. "Old Popper must have brought news."

"I'd like to see Prout's face!" murmured Skinner. "I'd give something to see his face, if it's a new Beak that old Popper is planting on him!"

Some of the fellows laughed.

Mr. Prout's face at that moment was not, however, a laughing matter, if the thoughtless juniors could have seen it.

In the Head's study, something like a thunderbolt had fallen upon Mr. Prout.

The Fifth Form master had greeted and welcomed Sir Hilton Popper, on his arrival, with the effusive respect of an ambitious gentleman who had much to expect—or, at least, hope for.

He had ushered him and his unknown companion into the study lately tenanted by Dr. Locke, and his aspect had been rather correctly described by Bunter as "all smiles and grease."

Under the smiles and grease, however, the plump heart of Paul Prout was beating rather anxiously.

That emergency meeting of the governors must have decided his fate, he knew, and he almost trembled with eagerness to hear the news from the rather grim-faced old baronet. Who the baronet's companion was, and why he had come, Mr. Prout did not yet know.

He was soon to know.

In the study, Sir Hilton Popper presented Mr. Brander to Mr. Prout, and Mr. Prout to Mr. Brander.

The two gentlemen shook hands perfunctorily.

"This is the master of the Fifth Form, Mr. Brander," Sir Hilton added

by way of explanation. "Mr. Prout this gentleman, Mr. Brander, is Dr. Locke's successor in the headmastership of Greyfriars."

Mr. Prout did not speak.

He couldn't!

The thunderbolt was too sudden, too overwhelming.

Mr. Prout stood stockstill, his mouth open, like a fish out of water, gasping.

Mr. Brander's keen, searching eyes were on him, and a slight, sarcastic smile played over the hard, fat face. Probably Mr. Meyer Brander deduced much from the overwhelmed expression on poor Mr. Prout's speaking countenance.

Sir Hilton, however, stared at him impatiently. Possibly he was unaware of the vaulting ambition which he had so ruthlessly and cruelly knocked on the head.

"You hear me, Mr. Prout? This gentleman is the new headmaster of Greyfriars!" snapped Sir Hilton. "He has been chosen unanimously—h'm—almost unanimously—to fill the place of the late headmaster by the governing board. A better selection could not, in my opinion, have been made. Mr. Brander is now Head of Greyfriars."

Mr. Prout found his voice.

He emerged, as it were, from the wreck of his shattered dreams, and tried to realise how matters stood.

"Oh! Ah! Hum!" gasped Mr. Prout. "But I understand—the decision of the board, of course. Oh! Ah! Hum! But—but, no doubt, you mean that the present appointment is of a—a temporary nature, until Dr. Locke is restored to health——"

"No doubt—no doubt," said Sir Hilton, rather hastily. "But it is likely to be a long time before Dr. Locke is able to resume his duties here, sir—a very long time; and probably—very probably—he may regard this as a favourable opportunity to retire permanently. At all events, we are not now concerned with the future."

"Ah! Um! Quite so!" gasped Mr. Prout.

It was a heavy blow to Prout. But facts were facts; and, having bidden a reluctant farewell to his hopes of shining as a bright, particular star in the list of great headmasters, Mr. Prout realised that it was only prudent to conciliate the new man.

A headmaster was a headmaster, with boundless power in his hands, and the new man did not look like a headmaster to be trifled with.

Mr. Prout stammered out some words of welcome—some stammering reference to the loyalty of the staff, especially of himself, Paul Prout.

This thrusting scoundrel—for that was the term in Mr. Prout's mind—had somehow got in as headmaster, leaving Prout on the shelf; but he was in, and it behoved a Form-master to get on the right side of him.

"Well, well!" Sir Hilton Popper ruthlessly interrupted Mr. Prout's stammerings. "The school had better be assembled and the announcement made, Mr. Prout, and without delay."

"Oh! Quite!" gasped Prout.

"If you will see to it——"

"Oh, yes! Quite!"

Prout almost staggered from the study.

When he came into public view a myriad eyes were fixed on Prout's agitated face. Its expression told the Greyfriars men all they wanted to know about Prout.

"Prout's shelved!" said Vernon-Smith, after one glance.

"The poor old bean has fairly got it in the neck," remarked Potter of the Fifth. "Poor old Prout!"

"I say, you fellows, he looks jolly sick, doesn't he? He, he, he!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

A few minutes later the prefects were shepherding the school into Big Hall. The fellows crowded in eagerly to hear the announcement that was to be made by the Chairman of the Governors. All eyes were fixed on Mr. Brander when he entered the Hall by the upper door, in company with Sir Hilton Popper.

The masters eyed him as keenly as the boys.

Among the masters, Mr. Prout stood with a determined smile on his face, hiding as well as he could his inward feelings. But his usually rosy cheeks were a little pale, and his plump hands trembled. Sir Hilton Popper's announcement was brief, and made amid a dead silence. After a few perfunctory words of respect and regret in reference to Dr. Locke, Sir Hilton presented the new headmaster to the school. It was clear, from Sir Hilton's words and manner, that he had a very high opinion of the new headmaster. Possibly he would have been surprised to learn that that was not the best recommendation Mr. Brander might have had, in the eyes of the Greyfriars fellows.

"What do you fellows think of the new Beak? asked Vernon-Smith, as the fellows streamed out of Hall.

"Looks like a tough old bird!" said Skinner. "I know I'm jolly well not going to catch his eye if I can help it."

The Famous Five walked away by themselves, with serious faces.

"It's Brander!" said Bob Cherry. "It's Van Tromp's uncle! Inky, old man, do you still think——"

"The thinkfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh quietly.

Wharton shook his head.

"I know it looks suspicious," he said. "But it can't be possible! It can't, old man! Anyhow, one thing's certain, you men."

"What's that?" asked Nugent.

"We shall have plenty of trouble with Van Tromp, now that his uncle's headmaster! He will let himself go now, I fancy."

"Not much doubt about that," said Bob.

And the Famous Five agreed on that. Whether the nabob's dark suspicion of Van Tromp was well-founded or not they could not make up their minds. But they could not doubt that the bully of the Sixth would feel now that his time had come, and that he would be in haste to pay off old grudges. There was trouble ahead for the chums of the Remove.

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## CHAPTER 22.
### Chucked Out!

"VAN TROMP'S uncle!"

It was all over the school in a very short time.

"His uncle," said Coker of the Fifth. "Well, whether the new Beak's his uncle or not, I'm not standing for any of his airs and graces, for one."

"There won't be any holding that cad now!" said Hobson of the Shell to his friends gloomily.

"Rotten luck for Greyfriars, you men!" Temple of the Fourth confided to his cronies. "Rotten luck all round! If the Beak's anythin' like his nephew, an' I suppose he is, he's no good."

Even the prefects of the Sixth were rather intrigued to discover that the new headmaster was related to a Sixth Form man, and that that man was Van Tromp.

Van Tromp, merely as a new fellow, a fellow of no account whatever, had been cheeky, insolent, truculent; bullying to small boys, disagreeable to seniors. He had always acted as if he considered himself a fellow of unusual consequence, who could do as he liked—just, as if, in fact, he had foreseen that his relative would become headmaster of the school.

Now his uncle was headmaster—and if Van Tromp had been insolent before, it was fairly certain that he would be more so now.

"We shall have trouble with that beauty!" said Gwynne of the Sixth.

"Think so?" said Wingate. "We've no right to suppose that Mr. Brander will go in for favouritism."

"Um!" said Gwynne.

"As a matter of fact, I've known cases of a schoolmaster being extra tough on a son or nephew in the school just to make it clear that there wasn't any favouritism," said Wingate.

"I hope it will be like that here, then!" said Gwynne. "But I've had my eye on the old bird, and I don't like his looks."

"Oh, I dare say he's all right!" said Wingate carelessly.

"Um!" said Gwynne.

A change in the headmastership was, of course, a matter of considerable moment to the school. Fellows were so accustomed to Dr. Locke that they had looked on him as a fixture, almost as much a part of Greyfriars as the grey old tower, or the ivied gateway. Now he was gone, and there was a new man, of untried ways, in his place.

There was a masters' meeting in the library, presided over by the new Head. Fellows who saw the masters going to the meeting commented on their looks. Prout was reported to be looking sick, Hacker grim, Quelch to be looking savage, Capper nervous, Twigg nervous, Monsieur Charpentier exceedingly nervous, Lascelles perfectly at his ease, as an exception, but very serious. Vernon-Smith described them as a lot of Daniels going into the lion's den.

Van Tromp was a good deal in evidence.

He was seen walking on the Sixth Form green with his friends, Loder and Carne.

It was easy to guess, from Loder and Carne's treatment of their friend, that they regarded him as invested with a new importance. Which indicated that their opinion on the subject of favouritism was rather different from George Wingate's.

Van Tromp himself looked as if he fully realised how important he had become.

His manner never had been modest or retiring. Now it was unmistakably "swanky"; he was putting on "side" to an extent that made fellows who observed him smile and shrug their shoulders. Side was not popular at Greyfriars, and a fellow who was sidy generally had his attention called to the failing in the most unceremonious manner. But the new senior was now displaying an amount of side that had never been seen before at Greyfriars.

When he came into the House he strolled to the prefects'-room with Loder and Carne. They would have passed on, but Van Tromp stopped.

"Come in here," he said.

His friends hesitated.

The prefects'-room was sacred to the prefects. It was true that a prefect could take a friend in, if the friend belonged to the Sixth. But Van Tromp was so unpopular in his Form that neither Loder nor Carne wanted to walk into the prefects'-room with him, well knowing that he would be unwelcome to every other fellow present. And on one occasion, when Van Tromp had walked into the room as if he had a right there, Wingate had told him curtly to cut—and he had had to cut.

Van Tromp glanced at his hesitating friends sarcastically.

"Come on!" he said.

He threw open the door as if the room belonged to him, and walked in. Half a dozen prefects were in the room, and they looked round. Wingate gave him a frowning glance.

"What do you want, Van Tromp?" he asked.

"Nothing in particular," yawned the new senior, and he strolled across to the window and sat down.

"You'd better cut," said Wingate.

"Thanks; I'll stay!"

Wingate rose to his feet.

"You'll cut!" he said.

Loder and Carne exchanged a glance, and followed their friend into the room. They did not like the idea of trouble with Wingate, but they felt that they had to back the new senior up. They did not want to lose a friendship that seemed likely to prove valuable.

"Hold on, Wingate," said Loder pacifically. "Van Tromp's come in with us. It's all right."

"Van Tromp is not wanted here," answered the Greyfriars captain quietly. "He's been told so before. If

he wants telling again, I've just mentioned it."

"Look here, a prefect can bring a friend into this room if he likes," said Loder blusteringly.

"I should jolly well think so," said Carne. "Van Tromp's come in here as our friend, Wingate."

"Perfectly true, as a rule," said Wingate. "But a fellow who is notorious for bullying is not wanted here. You know perfectly well that you ought not to bring him here, Loder." Wingate paused. "You're not welcome here, Van Tromp. There's the door."

Van Tromp sat where he was.

"I'm staying," he answered coolly.

Wingate flushed.

"I've told you to cut," he said.

"You can tell me till you're black in the face and it won't make any difference," said Van Tromp, with the same coolness.

"I—I say, let's get out, old chap," said Loder uneasily. "After all, this is the prefects'-room, you know; fellows aren't supposed to come here unless they're prefects. Come on, old fellow."

"I'm quite comfortable here, thanks," said Van Tromp.

Wingate made a step towards him. There was a glint in his eyes that told that trouble was coming.

"I'll explain the matter to you, Van Tromp," he said quietly, "as you don't seem to understand. Only prefects use this room. It's not a Common-room for the Sixth. A man can bring a friend in if nobody objects, that is all. Is that clear to you?"

"Quite!" yawned Van Tromp.

"Well, now get out!"

"Not in the least!"

Wingate breathed hard and deep. It was not only Van Tromp's side in forcing himself into the room that annoyed him, and not only the fact that he disliked the fellow and his company. It was easy to see that the new senior had taken up an attitude of deliberate defiance of the head prefect and captain of the school, and it was not hard to guess upon what he grounded it. This was the first fruit of his uncle's appointment as headmaster.

"I've asked you to go, Van Tromp!" said Wingate, at last.

"Well, I won't!"

"Then you'll be put."

"Van Tromp, old chap——" urged Loder. Loder had no liking for the captain of Greyfriars, but he was uneasy as to the result of a quarrel in which the new senior placed himself palpably in the wrong. The new headmaster could not support him in such an attitude, unless, indeed, his methods were very unusual for a headmaster.

"Come on, old bean!" said Carne.

Van Tromp did not stir.

"You needn't worry, Wingate," he said, with a sneer. "I know this is the prefects'-room, but it won't be long before I am a prefect."

Wingate stared at him.

"I don't see any reason to suppose that you will be made a prefect," he answered.

"You will soon, then."

"If you mean that you will be made a prefect because your uncle is headmaster of Greyfriars, you're accusing Mr. Brander of rotten favouritism," said Wingate. "I prefer not to take your word about that."

"Please yourself."

"Anyhow, whatever may happen in the future, you're not a prefect now. Get out of this room!"

"Rats to you!"

"Very well, if you won't walk out, you'll be chucked!" said the captain of Greyfriars, and he advanced on Van Tromp.

The new senior rose hastily to his feet.

"Hands off, you fool! Lay a finger on me, and you'll find yourself in Queer Street fast enough!" he snarled.

"Are you going?"

"No!" roared Van Tromp.

Wingate said no more. His powerful grasp closed on Van Tromp, and he was whirled towards the door.

"Open the door, Gwynne, old man,"

said Wingate. Van Tromp was struggling fiercely enough. Gwynne grinned and threw open the door. Wingate, with a swing of his sinewy arms, sent Van Tromp spinning through the doorway.

He landed with a yell and a crash—at the feet of Mr. Brander, the new headmaster of Greyfriars!

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### CHAPTER 23.
#### The High Hand!

MR. BRANDER started back.

The flying figure of Otto van Tromp had very nearly landed on the portly form of the new headmaster.

Mr. Brander stared at the senior sprawling and gasping at his feet, and then at the startled faces in the doorway of the prefects'-room.

His lips closed hard, and a glint came into his narrow, sharp eyes.

Wingate stood dumbfounded, staring at the new Head across the sprawling Van Tromp.

Certainly the new senior had asked for it. But Wingate had had no idea that the new Head was anywhere at hand. He would not willingly have landed Mr. Brander's nephew with a crash at Mr. Brander's feet had he known.

But it was done now.

"Ach!" ejaculated Mr. Brander.

The new Head, though of foreign extraction, spoke English like a native, and had been headmaster of an English school. Only when he was deeply excited did his native language come back unwittingly to his tongue.

"I am sorry, sir," said Wingate respectfully. "I had no idea that you were there, sir. I did not hear you coming."

Mr. Brander's anger did not seem soothed by that remark. Wingate was to learn, later, that the new Head had a custom of walking very softly and silently; "creeping about" as the Greyfriars fellows called it. Possibly he thought that Wingate had noticed it already, and was making an allusion to it.

"What does this mean?" asked Mr. Brander harshly.

Wingate did not reply immediately. It was not agreeable to have to tell Mr. Brander that his nephew had been ejected from the prefects'-room for side.

"Otto!" rapped out Mr. Brander. "Get up!"

Van Tromp scrambled to his feet.

He was breathless, and crimson with rage. He stood panting, his eyes fixed malevolently on the Greyfriars captain.

The new Head looked sharply at Wingate.

"I have seen you already, I think," he said. "You are Wingate, captain of the school?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are a prefect, I think?"

"I am head prefect."

"I have been given to understand," said Mr. Brander, "that matters have been allowed to become very slack in this school under the administration of my predecessor. I did not expect, however, to find the head prefect of Greyfriars engaged in a vulgar shindy."

Wingate crimsoned.

The disrespectful allusion to Dr. Locke drew dark looks from all the seniors in the room. Even Loder and Carne felt it jar on them.

A hot reply rose to Wingate's lips. But he remembered, in time, that it was his headmaster who was speaking, and he checked himself.

"Explain yourself!" snapped Mr. Brander. "I find you in the very act of assaulting my nephew. Explain yourself."

Again the new Head's words jarred on the Greyfriars men. He should have spoken of Van Tromp, not of his nephew. In his eyes the new senior should have been simply a member of the Sixth Form. But that, evidently, was not the way Mr. Brander looked at it.

"Van Tromp can explain best, I think, sir," said Wingate dryly.

"I have ordered you to explain. Am I to understand that you refuse to obey your headmaster?"

"Certainly not," said Wingate. "I will explain if you wish. I threw Van Tromp out of this room because he refused to go."

"And why should he go?"

"This is the prefects'-room, and Van Tromp is not a prefect."

"And for such a trifling reason as that you have assaulted my nephew violently?"

"It is not a trifling reason, sir," said Wingate quietly. "If Van Tromp is allowed to defy the prefects——"

"You take too much on yourself, sir!" said Mr. Brander, interrupting him. "It is my intention to make my nephew a prefect! Certainly he is more fitted to be head prefect of the school than a boy who indulges in vulgar rows and cannot answer his headmaster respectfully."

Wingate set his lips.

"Am I to understand from that, sir, that you intend to make Van Tromp head prefect?" he asked.

"You are to understand precisely that!" snapped Mr. Brander. "It was, in fact, for the purpose of telling you, and the other prefects so, that I came here."

"Then I am no longer head prefect?"

"You are not."

"Mr. Brander——" began Gwynne.

"Silence!" said Mr. Brander.

"But Wingate——"

"That is enough—silence!"

Gwynne stood silent, his eyes glinting.

"Very well, sir!" said Wingate quietly. "As I am no longer head prefect, probably you will have no use for my services as a prefect at all. I resign my prefectship, sir."

"I accept your resignation," answered Mr. Brander at once. "I am far—very far—from satisfied with the state of the school, so far as I have yet observed it, and from what my nephew has reported to me, I attribute the general slackness and other failings, in a large measure, to the slackness of the prefects, and I cannot regard your services as being of any value to the school. I, therefore, accept your resignation with pleasure."

"Very well, sir!"

Mr. Brander glanced round at the other Sixth-Formers, who stood silent with dark and grim faces.

"My nephew, Otto van Tromp, is appointed head prefect of Greyfriars," he said. "You will all take note of it, and act accordingly."

"Yes, sir!" said Loder, the only fellow to reply.

"I shall have further instructions to give you," added Mr. Brander. "All the prefects will meet in my study at eight o'clock. You will see to that, Otto."

"Yes, uncle."

Mr. Brander walked on.

Wingate stood quite still. His rugged face was crimson, and he was breathing hard. His friends looked angry and indignant; but Loder and Carne exchanged a covert look. They had never liked the frank, cheery captain of Greyfriars, and now that he was down they rejoiced accordingly.

"Faith, its a rotten shame," said Gwynne hotly.

"It's a putrid shame!" growled North.

"My hat!" said Walker. "So that's how the new Head's beginning! This is a change after Locke, you men."

"That is not the way to speak of your headmaster!" interrupted Van Tromp. "You will kindly be a little more respectful in speaking of Mr. Brander."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Gwynne.

Van Tromp, with a vaunting look, came back into the room. He was a prefect now and head prefect, so there was no one to say him nay. He fixed

his eyes on the Greyfriars captain with a gloating gleam in them.

"Wingate!" he rapped out.

The Greyfriars captain looked at him.

"Get out!" said Van Tromp.

Wingate started.

"What?"

"Get out! This is the prefects'-room!" grinned Van Tromp. "Only prefects are allowed here, Wingate! You're not a prefect! Get out!"

Wingate stood quite still for a moment, breathing deeply. His hands were clenched hard.

"Are you going, or are you waiting to be put?" asked Van Tromp, jeeringly. "There's the door, Wingate."

"Knock the cur across the room, old man," said Gwynne savagely.

Wingate did not heed.

He turned to the door and walked out of the prefects'-room. He went without a word or a look at Van Tromp.

The latter followed him to the door.

"Don't come in here again!" he called out. "I shan't trouble to speak to you again. The next time I see you here you'll be kicked out."

Wingate paused a moment. But he repressed his feelings, and went quietly on his way to his study.

Gwynne and North and his other friends followed him from the room. They made it clear that they did not desire the company of Otto van Tromp, whether he was a prefect or not.

Loder and Carne remained with the new prefect. Walker, after going as far as the door, changed his mind, came back into the room, and remained also. Van Tromp kicked the door shut.

"Smoke?" he said genially.

He took a cigarette-case from his pocket, and passed it round to his friends. For the first time in history the prefects'-room at Greyfriars was the scene of a smoking party.

Evidently new ways were coming in with the new Head.

## CHAPTER 24.

### Bend Over!

GREYFRIARS had wondered what it would be like under the new Head. The school was not long in learning that change was the order of the day.

Mr. Brander was a new broom, and bent on sweeping clean—according to his own ideas.

In Masters' Common-room the comments on Mr. Brander were not loud, but deep.

Prout, who regarded him as an interloper, could not be expected to like him. But the other masters shared Prout's feelings.

"The man is no gentleman!" Mr. Prout declared in Common-room; and the whole staff agreed with Prout.

No member of the staff could deny that, so far as scholastic attainments went, the new headmaster was up to the mark. But in other respects he was far from suited to his position, in the opinion of the staff.

Any new headmaster would have incurred keen criticism in Common-room. But the criticism of Mr. Brander was very bitter.

Mild Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth, said that his manners were abrupt; Mr. Wiggins, of the Third, averred that he had no manners at all; Mr. Twigg, of the Second, remarked that he treated the staff as if they were a sort of upper servants in the house; Mr. Quelch, who was a man of few words, expressed no opinion aloud, but his looks said much.

But although they already disliked Mr. Brander, the staff realised very clearly that he was not a man to be trifled with, and that they had to toe the line very carefully.

Mr. Brander had declared at masters' meeting, sharply and definitely, that he was disappointed and dissatisfied with the state in which he found the school. He made slighting references to his predecessor, which all the masters regarded as being in the very worst of taste. He hinted that unless his views

were carefully studied and carefully carried out there must be changes in the staff in the near future.

No member of the staff wished to be the victim of those changes. Posts at Greyfriars were well paid and comfortable, and the scholastic profession was overcrowded. Mr. Brander had them on the hip, as it were. Dr. Locke would never have dreamed of making a member of his staff feel how dependent he was on his chief's despotic will. Mr. Brander made every member of the staff feel it keenly in a single interview.

The fact was that, as Prout declared in deep tones—after carefully glancing round to make sure that the door was shut—the man was no gentleman.

Prout—still with a wary eye on the door—declared that the new Head would find trouble at Greyfriars if he proceeded as he had begun.

"He interrupted me," said Prout, "several times. He interrupted me without the slightest ceremony. No doubt you observed it."

If that had been the new Head's only offence the other masters could have forgiven him. A master who wanted to speak at masters' meetings simply had to interrupt Prout.

But Mr. Brander had succeeded in wounding the feelings of every man present in a cold, dry, sarcastic way that was very irritating.

The Sixth Form prefects were as annoyed as the masters. Two or three, like Loder and Carne, were pleased to see Wingate "given a fall," as they expressed it. But most of them resented it keenly.

There was even talk of the whole of the prefects resigning in a body as a protest. The talk came to nothing, however, because of a general feeling that Mr. Brander was just the man to accept the resignation if offered, and to let it go at that.

In the Lower School there was irritation and apprehension combined. Van Tromp was head prefect now; and if he had been a bully and a brute when he had no power in his hands, the fellows could guess what he would be like when invested with the power of the ashplant.

Any fellow was bound to "bend over" at the order of a prefect, so there was a happy prospect before the juniors of any amount of bending over now. As Smithy put it, the whole Lower School would soon be caught bending.

It was rather a serious outlook for the Famous Five, only too well aware that they had incurred the deep dislike of the bully of Greyfriars.

They made up their minds to avoid Van Tromp as carefully as they could, but they could not help feeling that he was not likely to let them avoid him.

More than once they had handled the bully of the Sixth, but that was no longer possible—a fellow who handled a prefect was liable to be expelled—and Van Tromp was a prefect now.

A prefect who was a bully, like Loder, was held in check by the rest of the prefects, and by the authority of the Head, and the necessity of keeping up an appearance, at least, of fair play. But there seemed no check on a prefect like Van Tromp, who was nephew to the Head, when the Head had already made it clear that favouritism to his relative was his system.

"There's going to be trouble, and lots of it!" Bob Cherry told his chums. And the Co. agreed that there was.

In break that morning the chums of the Remove sighted Van Tromp in the quad, and noted that he was looking about him. They judiciously walked in another direction.

"I say, you fellows, Van Tromp was looking for you in break," said Billy Bunter, when the Famous Five joined the Remove going in for third school. "I say, he's got it in for you! He, he, he!"

"Shut up cackling, you fat chump!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bunter chuckled.

"You're for it!" he grinned.

Bunter seemed to find something amusing in the prospect; but it was not amusing to the Famous Five.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the Beak!" murmured Bob Cherry, as the Remove gathered at their Form-room door. Mr. Quelch was arriving from one direction, while the new Head arrived from another.

Mr. Brander glanced over the assembled Form with his cold, sharp eye. He saluted Mr. Quelch very briefly as that gentleman came up.

The Remove master opened the Form-room door, wondering perhaps what the headmaster wanted there. Mr. Brander soon made that clear. The Remove filed in and took their places; very quiet and orderly, under the new headmaster's eyes.

Mr. Brander followed the Form in.

A glint came into Mr. Quelch's eye. His manner was icily polite as he looked inquiringly at his chief.

"I have a few remarks to make, Mr. Quelch, on the subject of discipline in this Form," said the new Head in his cold, incisive voice.

"You would like me to step into your study, perhaps," suggested Mr. Quelch.

"Not at all; I prefer to speak here."

"Such a discussion before the boys, sir——" said Mr. Quelch in a low voice.

"Pray allow me to decide that, Mr. Quelch."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Very well, sir!"

The Remove looked at one another in silence. Their Form-master was "called on the carpet" in their presence and in their hearing. This was the kind of thing that was "not done." But Mr. Meyer Brander evidently had methods of his own.

"I have received reports concerning your Form, sir, that have made a very bad impression on me," said Mr. Brander.

"May I ask from whom, sir?"

"From a prefect!" said Mr. Brander.

"May I ask which prefect?"

"That is immaterial," said Mr. Brander coldly. "Certain members of your Form, Mr. Quelch, have been guilty of insolence, and even violence, towards a senior boy. Perhaps you are unaware of this?"

"Quite!" said Mr. Quelch.

"It is, however, your duty to be aware of it."

"If you are referring to some trouble between the juniors and Van Tromp of the Sixth Form, sir," said Mr. Quelch, "the violence appears to have been on the side of Van Tromp."

Mr. Brander's cold eyes gleamed.

"The names of several members of your Form have been reported to me as the ringleaders in the disorderly scenes to which I have alluded. I require you to give your special attention to those members of your Form, and to see that nothing of the kind occurs again."

"Really, sir——"

"I have no more to say for the present, Mr. Quelch, but I will deal personally with the boys in question."

Mr. Brander turned to the Form, leaving Mr. Quelch rooted to the floor, speechless with indignation and suppressed wrath.

"Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh!" he rapped out. "Step out before the class!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five stepped out.

They stood in a silent group before the new Head. The cold, piercing eyes in the fat face scanned them.

"You are the boys who attacked my nephew?" asked Mr. Brander.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"We handled Van Tromp for bullying," he answered in a clear voice.

"That will do! Bring me your Form-master's cane!"

"Really, sir——" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I do not desire to be interrupted, Mr. Quelch. Bring me the cane, boy."

Wharton hesitated, and looked at his Form-master. Mr. Quelch's face was crimson, and he seemed on the point of choking.

"Obey your headmaster, Wharton!" he gasped.

"I repeat, Mr. Quelch, that I do not desire to be interrupted," said Mr.

Brander. "Give me that cane immediately, boy!"

Wharton fetched the cane from Mr. Quelch's desk.

Mr. Brander took it in his hand and switched it, his little, narrow eyes gleaming, his fat lips curving cruelly. He looked very like his nephew at that moment. He pointed to a desk with the cane.

"Bend over that desk, Wharton!"

"Really, sir!" stuttered Mr. Quelch. "Am I to understand that you are about to punish this boy?"

"You are, sir!"

"For no offence, sir?"

"His offence was a lawless attack on my nephew, as I have said."

"Sir! I—I protest against this!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "I—I am really bound to protest."

"You need say no more, Mr. Quelch. I am determined to restore order to this school, which has apparently been allowed to run riot under the late headmaster."

"Such a remark concerning Dr. Locke, sir, is uncalled for—unfounded—I am bound to say."

"You are bound to say nothing, Mr. Quelch! You are, on the other hand, bound to be silent. Pray say no more."

Mr. Quelch choked.

"I am waiting for you, Wharton," said Mr. Brander, swishing the cane.

Wharton set his lips, looking at his Form-master for guidance. But Mr. Quelch had no guidance to give him.

"I am informed," said Mr. Brander, fixing his eyes on the captain of the Remove, "that you are the most insolent and disobedient of the unruly members of this Form. I warn you that there must be a change in your conduct. You appear to hesitate to obey even your headmaster. If you do not obey me instantly, you leave the school to-day. I have little doubt that there must be some expulsions before the school is brought to a proper state of order and obedience. You will be the first to be expelled if you keep me waiting one moment longer."

Wharton gasped.

There was no help for it, and he bent over the desk. The cane came down with a vicious swish. Thrice it fell, and each cut was severe.

"Go to your place!" said Mr. Brander harshly.

Wharton in silence, with burning eyes, went to his place.

Then each of the Co. in turn bent over, and the cane swished three times. The Remove looked on in breathless silence. Mr. Quelch looked on with an indescribable expression on his face.

The castigation ended, Mr. Brander threw the cane down on the Form-master's desk. His icy eyes glittered over the Form, resting especially on five juniors, who were wriggling painfully.

"I trust that this will be a warning to you!" he said. "Let the whole Form take this lesson to heart!"

And he walked out of the Form-room.

## CHAPTER 25.
### Just Like Coker!

"STOP that row!"

The door of the games study at the end of the Fifth Form passage was thrown open and Van Tromp of the Sixth looked in. He rapped out the words sharply.

"What?" ejaculated Blundell, the captain of the Fifth.

"Stop that row!" said Van Tromp. "You can be heard all over the house. You're like a lot of noisy fags! Chuck it!"

"Wha-a-at?"

Only Fifth Form men used the games study. Most of the Fifth were gathered there that evening, and undoubtedly there had been some little noise. Coker of the Fifth was talking cricket, and when Coker talked cricket it had the natural effect of evoking laughter.

In all the history of Greyfriars no prefect had ever looked into the games study to tell Fifth Form men to be quiet, as if they were a set of fags in the Rag.

The Fifth were seniors, and though Fifth Form men were never appointed prefects, some of them were very great men—greater, in the opinion of the school, than prefects themselves. Blundell, for instance, was a member of the First Eleven, and, in consequence, a full-blown "Blood," and though a Blood had no official standing, a man who could make his century in a cricket match was not a man to be lightly regarded.

Most Greyfriars men had a high opinion of Blundell—and he had a fairly high opinion of himself. As a Blood he was a greater man than even a Sixth Form man who was not a Blood. Blundell could, if he liked, wear his cap on the back of his head—which would have been "side" in a lesser mortal. He could walk down the middle of the Head's Walk—lesser mortals had to keep to the sides. Even a prefect who was not a Blood would have been considered "sidy" had he walked down the middle of the Head's Walk. Yet, with all these important distinctions, Blundell was liable to be called to order by any official prefect—if the prefect had the nerve to call so tremendous a person to order and to brave the condemnation by the public opinion for doing so.

Van Tromp, in staring into the games study and rapping out an order to Fifth Form men, was within his theoretical rights; he was only exercising rights that never were exercised, and outraging tradition. Now that he was a prefect he could do this if he liked, with authority on his side, and only the public opinion of the school against him.

Blundell stared at him; all the Fifth Form men stared at him. And Blundell laughed.

It was rather amusing for this fellow—who had been a prefect only a day, and who was no good at games—to chuck orders at Blundell as if he were a fag. So Blundell laughed.

"Shut the door after you!" said Blundell.

"And don't put your cheeky nose into this room again!" added Coker.

Van Tromp came a little within the doorway.

There was an unpleasant smile on his face.

Not a man in the Fifth liked him or thought anything of him. Most of them despised him because he avoided games. Some of them had openly expressed their opinion of his bullying proclivities. Coker, in fact, had punched him for kicking a junior—before his uncle became Head. Van Tromp was not the fellow to forget offences. Prefects were generally careful in the exercise of their powers in dealing with seniors—especially such seniors as Blundell. But Van Tromp was the fellow to exercise his powers to the very utmost, and to make every ounce of his authority felt.

"I've told you," said Van Tromp coolly, "that there's too much noise in this room, and you're to stop it. Don't let me have to speak again!"

"I don't think you quite know where you are, or whom you're speaking to," said the captain of the Fifth contemptuously.

"Faith, it's rather got into your head being made a prefect, hasn't it?" said Fitzgerald of the Fifth.

"Who are you, anyway?" inquired Hilton.

"I am a prefect—keeping order in the house," said Van Tromp in the same cool tone, "and you are fellows who can be whopped if you don't toe the line!"

"Whopped?" repeated Blundell dazedly.

"Just that. Take care I don't whop you!"

"Whop me?" said Blundell, as if he could not believe his ears—as indeed he hardly could.

"That's it!" assented Van Tromp.

Blundell gazed at him.

But as he gazed it was borne in upon his mind that this tick, this outrageous outsider, was speaking the sad truth. In theory, at least, a Fifth Form man, even a great and glorious Blood, could

be whopped by a prefect on sufficient cause.

Blundell realised it; realised, too, that the penalty for hitting a prefect was likely to be expulsion from the school. And Blundell stifled his indignation and wrath and turned away. He would not be civil to the fellow—he couldn't! But he realised the wisdom of silence.

The Fifth Form men took their cue from their captain. General silence fell on the games study.

Van Tromp smiled vauntingly.

Power was in his hands, and he liked using it. In the opinion of the school he was nothing—less than nothing—in comparison with George Blundell. But he had reduced Blundell to angry silence, and the whole games study along with him.

But there was at least one fellow in the Fifth who was blind and deaf to the dictates of prudence. That was Horace Coker.

Coker was silent for the moment, but not because he realised that silence was judicious. He was speechless with wrath, scorn and indignation. He gazed at Van Tromp with breathless indignation in his gaze.

He found his voice at last. When he found it, he used it in tones that were heard far beyond the games study.

"You cheeky rat!" roared Coker.

"Shut up, old man!" whispered Potter, and Greene touched his chum warningly on the arm.

Coker did not heed Potter, and he shook off Greene's warning finger. He jumped up and faced Van Tromp.

"Get out of this room!" he bawled.

Van Tromp smiled softly. Coker was the man he wanted! Coker was the man who had punched him a week ago! And Coker was delivering himself, bound hand and foot, as it were, into his power.

The prefect had his official ashplant under his arm. He slipped it down into his hand, and pointed to a chair.

"Bend over!" he said.

With all his insolence, and all his truculence, and the knowledge that the new Head would back him up in any tyranny, Van Tromp would not have had the nerve to tell Blundell to bend over. But Coker was an easier proposition. Coker was not a Blood, he was no good at games, though very keen on them. He was rather the butt of his Form. He was, in fact, nobody. And he was asking for it.

"Bend over!" repeated Van Tromp, as Coker stared at him in blank astonishment. Coker, in his time, had had a prefects' beating. But an order to bend over like a fag was new to Horace Coker's ears.

"Are you potty?" gasped Coker.

"Will you bend over?" asked Van Tromp.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "Will I bend over? Not quite! Do you think you're talking to a Second Form fag, you dummy?"

"I'm talking to you," said Van Tromp coolly, "and I'm ordering you to bend over that chair and take six."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker again. His wrath seemd to have evaporated into merriment at this cheek on the part of a "tick" like Van Tromp.

"I'm waiting!" said Van Tromp.

"Keep on waiting!" grinned Coker. "Oh, my hat! This is funny, you men! This worm thinks he can come here and tell Fifth Form men to bend over! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You refuse?" asked Van Tromp.

"Just a little!" chuckled Coker. "Just a few! Yes, I rather think I refuse."

"Very well! I shall report you to the Head!"

"Why not make me bend over?" asked Coker temptingly. "Why not, old bean? Perhaps you could do it?"

"Do shut up, old man!" murmured Potter.

"Don't be an ass, Potter!"

"Coker, you ass!" breathed Greene in his ear. "Can't you see the cad is watching for a chance at you?"

"Don't be a dummy, Greene!"

Coker made another stride towards Van Tromp.

"You're going to report me to the Head, are you?" he said.

"Yes."

"You're going to tell the Beak that you ordered a Fifth Form man to bend over in the Fifth Form games study?"

"Yes."

"Well, while you're about it," said Coker, "I'll give you something else to tell him. Tell him I said you were a silly, pie-faced, sneaking, cringing, rotten worm, and that you ought to be kicked out of any decent school! Tell him you put your cheeky nose in where it wasn't wanted, and that I pulled it for you!"

And Coker, with a sudden clutch, grabbed hold of Van Tromp's rather prominent nose and tweaked it.

There was a yell from the prefect.

Coker's hand was heavy, and he had put force into that tweak. The water rushed to Van Tromp's eyes.

Coker grinned at him as he released the nose, which Van Tromp clasped, in his turn, in anguish.

"Now trot along to the Beak, and tell him that!" grinned Coker. "And if you don't get out of this room in one second, you'll be able to tell him, too, that I pitched you out on your neck!"

The Fifth Form men looked on in grim silence. The tweaking of Van Tromp's nose was a pleasant sight to them, but they realised what Coker did not, that the results to the tweaker were likely to be more painful than to the tweakee, so to speak.

Van Tromp's face was crimson with rage. He caressed his nose, which had a rather severe pain in it.

"You've heard what I said!" continued Coker. "You can walk out of this room, if you like. But if you don't walk out, you'll be chucked! And I'm not waiting more than another second!"

Van Tromp, with a gasp of rage, struck at Coker with the cane. Coker caught the lash on his arm.

"That does it!" said Coker.

He fairly sprang at the bully of the Sixth. Right and left, Coker's heavy fists crashed into the crimson, savage face. Van Tromp reeled back in the doorway.

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Potter.

Van Tromp leaped back at Coker. In a moment they were fighting fiercely, the Fifth Form men gazed on as if spellbound.

The bully of the Sixth was quite as hefty as Coker. And he was by far a better boxer than the Fifth Form man. With as much pluck as Coker, he could have held his own with ease. Coker overflowed with pluck. But that valuable quality was a little lacking in the composition of the bully of the Sixth.

After a minute or two of fierce scrapping he backed away from Coker's crashing fists, and retreated through the doorway.

Coker followed him up.

Coker was not finished yet.

"For goodness' sake, old man——" said Greene almost in despair.

Horace Coker did not heed.

He followed up the bully of the Sixth, hitting out, and driving him backwards towards the stairs. Naturally, the shindy in the Fifth Form quarters drew attention. The sight of a Sixth Form prefect retreating and trying to defend himself as he retreated from the onslaught of a Fifth Form man caused a crowd of fellows to gather from all sides.

"Clear off!" said Coker, grinning at Van Tromp over his hammering fists. "Clear off, you cad! Crawl away, you worm!"

Van Tromp reached the stairs, and there he turned and fairly bolted. Coker made a final rush and kicked, and his boot caught the bully of the Sixth as he fled.

There was a roar from Van Tromp as he missed his footing under the propulsion of Coker's heavy boot, and he rolled down.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from fifty

fellows who were on the scene by this time.

"Bravo, Coker!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Good old Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Van Tromp picked himself up dazed and breathless, fairly foaming with rage. He glared up the staircase at Coker, who grinned down at him.

"Come back if you want any more!" roared Coker.

Van Tromp apparently did not want any more. At all events, he did not come back. He tramped away almost babbling with fury, and disappeared.

Coker walked cheerily back to the games study. He smiled at the silent, almost awe-stricken Fifth Formers.

"That's the way to handle the cad!" said Coker. "I fancy he won't come here again in a hurry."

The Fifth Form men made no reply.

Coker apparently supposed that the matter was now at an end. He was the only fellow who supposed so.

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### CHAPTER 26.
### The Flogging!

"FLOGGED?"

"Yes!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows, it's true!" gasped Billy Bunter. "After prayers to-morrow morning——"

"In Big Hall!" said the Bounder.

"Coker of the Fifth——"

"Flogged—a Head's flogging——"

"Great pip!"

The news spread like wildfire through Greyfriars.

Many fellows had wondered what would be the outcome of the affray in the games study. That it was certain to have some serious outcome none doubted.

There were many excuses for Coker in the eyes of the Greyfriars fellows. But in the eyes of authority there was no excuse for a fellow who not only punched a prefect, but kicked him downstairs.

Fellows had wondered whether Coker would be sacked. It seemed unlikely that the new Head would wish to begin his career at Greyfriars by expulsion—matters that might draw the eyes of the governors to the scene. But if he was not sacked, it seemed difficult to know how the offender was to be dealt with.

For a simple caning would hardly meet the case; and the Fifth, of course, were never flogged. It was unknown for a Fifth Form man to be caned even, while as for a flogging, it was undreamt of.

So the news made a sensation in the school.

Coker, it was learned, had been sent for to the Head's study. He had gone quite cheerfully, perhaps feeling that as he really was in the right, the Head might agree that he was. If so, Coker was quickly disillusioned.

He came away from the Head's study looking quite dazed. Potter and Greene drew from him what the Head had said. It made them jump; and it made other fellows jump when they were told. A flogging in the Fifth Form! It was unknown, unheard-of, unthinkable! Mr. Brander seemed bent on making history at Greyfriars.

The news spread in the Lower School that evening, and there was excitement far and wide.

"It's a rotten shame!" said Bob Cherry. "I wonder how poor old Coker will take it?"

"Coker says he won't stand it," said Harry Wharton. "I hope he won't do anything fat-headed. He's got to toe the line."

Plenty of fellows wanted to see Coker that evening, but the Fifth Former kept to the seclusion of his study. Coker was in an overwhelmed state—hardly able to believe that the new Head was in earnest, and quite at a loss to know what he was going to do in these strange circumstances.

It was all very well for Coker to say in haste that he would not stand it.

But other alternative there seemed none.

There was, of course, the alternative of leaving Greyfriars. Coker considered that seriously.

"If I hit him in the eye——" he said in the study to Potter and Greene meditatively.

"If you whatted?" ejaculated Potter, while Greene stared at the cheery Horace open-mouthed.

"If I hit him in the eye, I suppose I should be sacked," said Coker.

"No supposing about it!" gasped Greene.

"Well, a man of my standing in the school can't be flogged," argued Coker. "I might as well have let that tick Van Tromp give me six in the games study. I can't stand a flogging. It's a question of a man's dignity, and a question of his Form."

"It's a rotten shame," said Potter, "but——"

"I'd like to hit him in the eye—in Hall, before all the school," said Coker.

"But——"

Even Coker realised that there was a "but." Coker did not want to be expelled from Greyfriars School.

What he was going to do was not clear to Coker, when he went to bed that night. His friends urged him to take it quietly, to put up with what couldn't be helped. But there was no telling what Coker would do. Some fellows, thinking rather of their own entertainment than Coker's good, hoped that he would hit the new headmaster in the eye instead of taking the flogging. Certainly such a proceeding would have provided Greyfriars with a sensation.

Morning dawned on an excited school.

Even Billy Bunter heeded the first clang of the rising-bell that morning. Even Lord Mauleverer did not turn his head on the pillow for another minute.

Everybody at Greyfriars was down early.

Prayers were conducted by Mr. Prout, and it was observed that the Fifth Form master looked worried and worn. This disgrace to a member of his Form was deeply felt by the Fifth Form master.

Some fags remarked that Prout almost looked as if he were going to be flogged himself.

After prayers there was a buzz in the assembled school. Among the Sixth, Van Tromp was seen smiling an unpleasant smile. Most of the Sixth seemed to be keeping well away from him, except his few friends. Even Loder and Carne, though for their own reasons they were keeping on the right side of the bully, felt that he was acting unwisely in antagonising the whole school. Wingate treated him with unconcealed contempt. Coker, in the ranks of the Fifth, made a movement, and Potter caught hold of his arm. It was in Coker's mind to go over to Van Tromp and, as he expressed it, give him something to grin for. Fortunately, Coker was restrained by his friends.

A slight buzz was followed by a dead silence when the new Head entered.

He was followed by Gosling, who carried a birch.

All eyes were fixed on Mr. Brander.

Mr. Prout was observed to approach him and speak in a low voice. The new headmaster listened with a dry sarcastic expression on his face, visible to all eyes.

"At the last moment, sir," murmured Mr. Prout, "I would urge you to reconsider your decision. A Fifth Form boy——"

"My decision is irrevocable, Mr. Prout," interrupted the Head.

"If, sir, I cannot prevail upon you," said Mr. Prout with dignity, "let me at least suggest that the flogging of a senior should be administered in private—in your study, sir—not before the whole school——"

"On the other hand, sir, it is my special desire to allow the whole school to witness this punishment, in order that it may be a warning to them from

the Sixth Form to the Second," answered Mr. Brander.

Mr. Prout breathed stertorously.

"It is—is unprecedented, sir. No senior was flogged in Dr. Locke's time. The late Head would be amazed, shocked, if he heard——"

"I am quite indifferent to the opinion of the late Head, sir; and equally so to the opinion of any person who may have hopes to succeed him here," said Mr. Brander caustically.

Mr. Prout drew back, purple with indignation at that jibe.

Taking no further heed of the discomforted Form-master, the new Head glanced over the silent school, and called sharply: "Coker!"

"Here!" answered Coker of the Fifth.

"Come forward!"

Coker came forward.

Mr. Brander gave him one cold, scornful look, and then glanced at Gosling. The porter handed him the birch.

"Take him up!" said Mr. Brander.

On the rare occasions of a public flogging at Greyfriars, it was Gosling's duty—a duty which he was said to find not unpleasant—to "take up" the offender. But taking up a fellow of Coker's size and weight was a new experience for Gosling; and he eyed the culprit rather dubiously.

"Do you hear me?" snapped Mr. Brander.

"Yessir!" mumbled Gosling.

He approached Coker.

Horace Coker drew back a pace, his fists clenched, and his eyes ablaze.

Mr. Brander eyed the rebellious senior.

"Coker! Allow Gosling to take you up immediately."

"You can't flog a Fifth Form man, sir!" gasped Coker. "You jolly well know you can't."

"That is an error on your part, Coker," said Mr. Brander. "For such an offence as you have been guilty of, I should flog any boy in the school, even the head of the Sixth Form."

There was a gasp from the crowded room. The Sixth Form men looked at one another in eloquent silence.

"Now take him up, Gosling!" said Mr. Brander. "Coker, if you venture to made the least resistance, or to impede Gosling in any way, I shall instantly expel you from the school, and you will leave by the next train."

The words were rapped out like bullets; and there was no doubt that the tyrant of the school meant every one of them.

There was a terrible pause—and Coker's rugged countenance told his thoughts. He was thinking of resistance—even to the extent of knocking the new headmaster headlong.

Many fellows present hoped that he would do it. It would have been a joyful moment for Greyfriars had the tyrant been seen spinning under the crash of Coker's heavy fist. But the result would not have been joyful for Coker!

He hesitated; and then made up his mind. His hands unclenched. The alternative was too serious; Coker did not want to be expelled. Gosling took him up—almost staggering under Coker's weight.

The birch swished.

Save for the swishing of the birch, Severe as the infliction was, Coker uttered no sound; he would have died there was dead silence in the Hall. sooner than utter a cry.

As if he desired to draw some cry of pain from the victim, Dr. Brander laid on the birch harder and harder. But Coker clenched his teeth and bore it.

The last stroke fell.

In dead silence the school was dismissed. Coker staggered away, with Potter and Greene on either side of him. Coker's face was pale. There was perspiration on his brow, and his looks showed unutterable thoughts.

In the doorway, Van Tromp passed him, and turned on him with a derisive grin.

"Not so cheeky, now?" he said.

Coker spun round on him, his eyes

ablaze, and the bully of the Sixth started back, the colour wavering in his cheeks. But Potter and Greene grasped their chum firmly by the arm, and forcibly marched him away. Coker had had enough; without asking for more.

"There's going to be trouble at Greyfriars, you men!" Bob Cherry said soberly to his chums.

And they nodded in silence. Trouble was coming—though, as yet, unlooked for by the tyrant of the school.

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### CHAPTER 27.
#### To Fag or Not to Fag?

THE Bounder lounged into Study No. 1 on the following day, and found the Famous Five at tea there.

"Seen the notice, you fellows?" he asked.

"No. Something new on the board?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes; new paper by the Beak—just up."

The chums of the Remove were interested at once.

Since Mr. Brander had "arrived" notices had appeared on the board at a great rate. His system appeared to be chiefly to run counter to everything that his predecessor at Greyfriars had done.

Every day there was at least one change—sometimes two. Changes in the time-table affected every Form and every Form-master. No doubt Mr. Brander considered that he was producing more efficiency by such changes. The masters did not agree, and they had long ago decided that Mr. Brander was a mere meddler, who mistook his desire to meddle for a sense of duty.

"What is it this time?" yawned Bob Cherry. "The French set to move into another class-room?"

"Or Roman history in the Remove on Tuesdays instead of Thursdays?" grinned Nugent.

"Or another extra call-over?" asked Johnny Bull.

"A bit more serious than that, so far as the Remove is concerned," answered Vernon-Smith. "So far, the new Beak has been only playing the goat, so far as I can see, with his meddling and chopping and changing. But this time he has got home on us."

"What is it?" asked Harry.

"Order that in future the Remove shall fag for the seniors, like the Third and Second," said the Bounder.

"What?" yelled the Famous Five, with one voice.

"The dear man has got it up against the Remove," drawled the Bounder. "We've ragged his dear nephew, you know, and his dear nephew isn't the man to forget it. If this thing goes through, Van Tromp has got us all where he wants us, and no error."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob blankly.

Harry Wharton compressed his lips.

"The Remove don't fag," he said. "That was settled a long time ago. There was a row about it at the time, and it was settled."

"The settlefulness was terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh indignantly. "This is too preposterously thick."

"Well, it's unsettled again, if the Beak has his way," said the Bounder. "I suppose the headmaster has authority to upset all the tradition of a school if he likes. The man's a fool!"

"The man's a rotter, you mean!" roared Bob Cherry.

"He's riding for a fall, I fancy," drawled Smithy. "He's interfered with every Form at Greyfriars in one way or another. But he's got a special eye on the Remove, and I fancy a very special eye on this study. What are you fellows going to do about it?"

"What can we do?" said Nugent.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I know what I'm going to do," he said, "or, rather, what I'm not going to do. I'm not going to fag!"

"The Beak!" said Nugent.

"The Beak can do as he likes, but I'm not a fag, and I'm not fagging," said Smithy. "It's up to you, Wharton, as captain of the Form, to stand out against it. Every man in the Remove must agree not to fag, and to stick together over it till Brander chucks it up."

"He's not the man to chuck it up," said Harry.

"No fear!" said Johnny Bull. "He's the man to keep on, and flog and sack fellows who give him trouble. And the more in the wrong he is, the more he will keep on."

"Well, I'm not fagging, for one," said the Bounder, and he lounged out of the study, leaving the Famous Five in excited discussion.

Tea was quickly finished, and the chums of the Remove went down to look at the new notice on the board. They found a crowd gathered round it. Removites stared at it with deep indignation, but fellows who did not belong to the Remove seemed to feel rather differently. Some fags of the Third and Second were grinning.

The notice was in Mr. Brander's hand, and it stated briefly that from this date the Remove and Lower Fourth would be subject to fagging on the same terms as the Third and Second Forms.

"Cheek!" said Bob Cherry.

"It's the giddy limit!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"The Remove won't stand this!" said Squiff.

"How are we going to help it?" asked Skinner.

Squiff had no reply to make to that. His face was dark and angry and rebellious. But how it was to be helped was a difficult problem.

"You fellows kickin' about this?" asked Temple of the Fourth, with a cheery smile. "I don't see it myself. Why shouldn't you fag like other fags?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney of the Fourth.

"Not a bad idea, if you ask me," said Fry of the Fourth blandly. "The Lower Fourth really are fags, you know."

These observations on the part of Temple & Co. were followed by drastic proceedings on the part of the irritated Remove men. There was a sound of bumping and scuffling and yelling, and Temple, Dabney & Co. departed from the spot in haste, and in a rather dusty and rumpled condition.

"I say, you fellows, we can't stand this, you know!" said Billy Bunter, when the injudicious Fourth Formers had fled. "It's too thick! Quelchy ought to interfere. He's our Form-master."

"Something in that," said Bolsover major. "What about speaking to Quelch?"

"He, he, he!" came from Sammy Bunter of the Second Form. "Why shouldn't you Remove fellows fag, I'd like to know? I think it's a jolly good idea."

"Make it easier for us," said Gatty of the Second. "Jolly good idea to make the Remove fag, too, I think."

"My idea exactly!" said Paget of the Third.

The fags were unheeded. A dozen Remove men gathered and eagerly discussed the matter. Resistance to the Head's order seemed dangerous and difficult, but it was agreed that the Remove master was bound to intervene and stand up for the rights of his Form.

"Wharton ought to put it to him, as captain of the Form," said Hazeldene, "and the sooner the better."

"That's so!" said Tom Brown. "Go it, Wharton!"

"I'm afraid it won't be any good," said Harry. "But I'll certainly speak to Quelch, if you like."

And Wharton went at once to the Remove-master's study, the other fellows waiting anxiously to hear the result.

Mr. Quelch glanced at his head boy

with a troubled frown. Probably he guessed why Wharton had come. He held a warning finger before the captain of the Remove could speak.

"Wharton! You have seen the Head's new notice on the board?"

"Yes, sir. And——"

"Is it upon that subject that you desire to speak to me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then it is futile," said Mr. Quelch. "I have no power to intervene. I can only recommend you to submit cheerfully to the authority of your headmaster."

"We thought you might speak to Mr. Brander, sir."

"It would be perfectly useless for me to speak to Mr. Brander, Wharton, on that or any other subject. Please say no more."

"Very well, sir."

Wharton left the study.

"Well, what's the jolly old verdict?" asked Bob Cherry, when Wharton rejoined the crowd of Remove fellows.

"Nothing doing!"

"Quelch won't interfere?" asked the Bounder.

"No."

"Well, I knew he wouldn't. The masters are all funky of the Beak," said Vernon-Smith. "The fact is, he would sack them as soon as look at them. Capper and Twigg fairly crawl at his feet, and Quelch eats a lot of humble pie. If we're going to nip this in the bud, we've got to stand up for ourselves!"

"What can we do?" asked Peter Todd dubiously.

"Refuse to fag!" answered the Bounder coolly.

"That means six——"

"I don't care if it means sixty!"

"Wait till Van Tromp or Loder calls on you to fag!" grinned Skinner.

"They can call on me till they burst their crop, and I shan't fag," said Vernon-Smith, "and every fellow in the Form who has the pluck of a bunny rabbit will stick by me!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"We're not going to stand it," he said. "Goodness knows what we can do; but if you stand up against fagging, Smithy, here's one man who'll stand by you through thick and thin."

"And here's another!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The anotherfulness is terrific!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Van Tromp!"

Silence fell on the crowd of Removites as the bully of the Sixth came up.

The look on Van Tromp's face was enough to apprise them of what was coming. The Head's order had been less than an hour on the board, and Van Tromp was going to put it into practice at once. To fag or not to fag was a question to which the Removites had to find an immediate answer.

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### CHAPTER 28.

### The Bounder Wants to Know!

"CHERRY!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Don't answer me like that, Cherry!"

"I—I mean, yes, Van Tromp!" said Bob meekly.

"I've decided on you for my fag!"

"Oh!"

Bob Cherry, having uttered that ejaculation, remained silent.

Harry Wharton opened his lips and closed them again.

It was useless to repeat to Van Tromp that the Remove did not fag, when there was the Head's order, in black and white, announcing that they did.

The dark, incensed look of the juniors brought a grin to Van Tromp's heavy, ill-favoured countenance. Possibly he would not have been keen to fag the Remove if they had not objected to fagging. But the more they objected, the better Van Tromp liked it.

He looked the Removites over mockingly.

"I'm going out now, Cherry," he said. "Clear up my study while I'm gone."

"Oh!" repeated Bob.

"It's rather untidy," said Van Tromp. "I shall expect to find it in perfect order when I come in."

"Oh!" said Bob; he seemed rather at a loss for words.

The Bounder smiled sarcastically. He was waiting for Harry Wharton to speak, but Wharton was silent. The Head's order was an outrage on the cherished liberties of the Remove, but defiance of the Head's order was an extremely serious matter, not to be decided upon in a hurry.

As Wharton did not speak, the Bounder chimed in. Smithy was always reckless, and not much given to considering consequences.

"Hold on a minute, Van Tromp!" he said.

The bully of the Sixth, having failed to draw any of the Famous Five into a reply that could be construed into an excuse for a licking, was turning away. He turned quickly as the Bounder spoke.

"Well?" he rapped.

His brow darkened at once. A better-tempered and more dutiful prefect than Van Tromp might have been irritated by the sarcastic expression on the Bounder's face.

"You're makin' rather a mistake," said Vernon-Smith coolly and clearly, while the other fellows stood hushed. "The Remove don't fag!"

Van Tromp pointed to the notice on the board.

"You've seen that?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, I've seen it!" answered the Bounder carelessly.

"Then you know that the Lower Fourth is not exempt from fagging now."

"Not at all!"

"Are you disputing the headmaster's order?" asked Van Tromp, his eyes glinting.

"I'm simply pointin' out that the Remove don't fag," answered the Bounder. "I suggest that you, as head prefect, should remind the Head of it, as he seems to have made rather a mistake on the subject."

Van Tromp stared, and some of the juniors grinned.

"You cheeky young sweep!" said Van Tromp. "Are you asking for a licking?"

"Not in the least! We'd rather you didn't fag us," said the Bounder. "If you insist on it, of course——"

"You can take that as a certainty!" said Van Tromp, laughing.

"Then I'm bound to tell you that I, for one, shall not fag," said the Bounder, quietly and deliberately.

Van Tromp's jaw set grimly.

"We shall see about that," he remarked. "I've told you, Cherry, to tidy my study while I'm out. Vernon-Smith will help you. You understand me, Vernon-Smith. If I find a spot of dust in my study when I come in, look out for squalls. Have my tea ready, too. Everything in perfect order."

He paused.

"Both of you will fag in my study this afternoon," he said categorically, "and if either of you does not, look out for trouble. I warn you that it will mean a Head's flogging. That's all!"

With that, Otto van Tromp turned and walked away. He joined Gerald Loder in the quad, and they went down to the gates.

The Removites looked at one another.

"Well, you've done it now, Smithy!" said Skinner.

"Looks like it!" agreed the Bounder.

"Where are you going, Smithy?" asked Tom Redwing, as the Bounder turned away.

"I'm going to see the Head about it."

"Smithy!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, Smithy!"

Unheeding the exclamations on all

sides, the Bounder walked away to the Head's study.

Wharton compressed his lips.

What was best to be done in the present troublous circumstances Wharton did not know. But it was not agreeable to have the lead taken by another fellow in this decided way. Still, he could not deny that the Bounder had given him a chance to take the lead if he had liked.

"The awful ass!" muttered Redwing uneasily. "He's simply asking for a licking if he cheeks Brander!"

"I say, you fellows, the Bounder's got a nerve!" said Billy Bunter. "If he gets us off fagging he ought to be captain of the Form. Wharton's no good."

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"He hasn't got us off fagging yet," said Harry quietly. "Let's see the result before we do a song-and-dance about it!"

The Removites followed the Bounder as far as the corner of the Head's corridor. Thence they had a view of Herbert Vernon-Smith tapping at the Head's door.

"Come in!" called out the hard voice of Mr. Brander.

Vernon-Smith entered the study.

The new Head was busy with a stack of papers on his desk. Mr. Brander was always a very busy man—much busier than Dr. Locke had ever been.

He was, in fact, one of those men who mistook meddling for efficiency and tyranny for firmness. Many things that Dr. Locke had been content to leave to his staff Mr. Brander took into his own hands. Probably he did twice as much work as the late Head, but the results he produced were not half so good.

There was something Prussian in Mr. Brander's nature. He had a love of detail, a desire to keep all the threads in his own hands, a determination that nothing, howsoever trivial, should be done without his cognisance.

At the present moment he was correcting papers for the Fifth Form—a task that might well have been left to Mr. Prout. Any relief Mr. Prout might have felt at missing the laborious task was more than counterbalanced by his deep resentment at having his proper work taken out of his hands.

The Fifth liked it still less than Prout, for the headmaster was a much more severe critic than the Form-master.

Probably the burden of overwork, which his system of interference placed on his own shoulders, helped to make Mr. Brander irritable and snappish.

He gave Vernon-Smith a glance that was more like a glare, as the Bounder entered the study.

"What is it?" he snapped.

"May I speak to you, sir?"

"Yes, be brief."

"About the new notice on the board, sir," said the Bounder calmly. "As you are new here, sir, I thought perhaps Mr. Quelch might have explained to you that the Remove do not fag."

"What!"

"As he has not done so, sir, I thought I'd better mention it," said the Bounder.

There was a faint sound in the corridor of stealthy footsteps. Some of the Removites had crept along to the door, which the Bounder had left ajar. They looked at one another as they heard Smithy's voice. Where the Bounder found his nerve was a mystery to his Form-fellows.

Mr. Brander glared at Vernon-Smith silently, as if Smithy had taken his breath away. He found his voice at last.

"What? What did you say, Vernon-Smith?" he ejaculated. "Have you come here to be impertinent?"

"Oh, no, sir! I was merely pointing out that the Remove are not a fag Form, as you seemed not to know it, bein' new here."

Mr. Brander gasped.

"The Lower Fourth will, in future, fag for the Sixth Form, like the Third and Second," he said. "Have I not

made that plain in my notice on the board?"

"Yes, sir. But isn't it a mistake?"

"It is not! You may go, Vernon-Smith." Mr. Brander's hand strayed to a cane, but he withdrew it, and repeated: "You may go!"

"Van Tromp has told me to fag in his study this afternoon, sir," said the Bounder. "I hoped you'd say that I need not do so."

"On the contrary, I warn you to obey my nephew's directions," said Mr. Brander. "I shall punish you very severely if you fail to do so."

"I should like to have it clear, sir," said Vernon-Smith. "Am I going to be punished if I don't fag in Van Tromp's study?"

"Most assuredly."

"Very well, sir. I only wanted to know."

And with that the Bounder left the study, leaving Mr. Brander staring. His hand strayed to the cane again. It was on his lips to call Vernon-Smith back for a caning. But he refrained, and devoted his attention again to the Fifth Form papers.

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### CHAPTER 29.

#### Fagging for Van Tromp!

HERBERT VERNON - SMITH glanced at the juniors in the passage and strolled away, his hands in his pockets.

The Removites followed him.

"Well, you've got a nerve, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry.

"I believe so," assented Vernon-Smith.

"I thought you'd get a licking from the Beak."

"So did I."

"Well, you've got it straight from the horse's mouth now," said Skinner. "You jolly well know that you've got to fag for Van Tromp, Smithy."

"Quite!" yawned the Bounder.

"What are you going to do, then?" asked Harry Wharton. "I mean what I said, Smithy—if you stand out against fagging, I'll back you up."

"Same here," said several voices. But most of the fellows were silent and dubious.

"My dear chap," said the Bounder, "how can I stand out against fagging when the Beak himself has ordered me to fag in Van Tromp's study. I shall be flogged if I refuse." He laughed. "And I expect I shall be flogged if I don't refuse."

"How's that?" asked Nugent.

"Why, I'm going to fag for Van Tromp, but I hardly think he will like the way I do it," drawled the Bounder. "I'm going to his study now. You coming, Cherry?"

Bob Cherry nodded.

"I'll go if you do, Smithy," he answered. "But if you stand out against it, I'll stand out, too."

"My dear chap, let's go and fag like good, obedient fags," said the Bounder, and he walked away to the Sixth Form passage, Bob following him.

"What on earth has Smithy got in his head now?" asked Peter Todd, rather uneasily. "I don't like the look in his eye."

There was a jeering laugh from Skinner.

"I jolly well knew that he would come to heel, like any other fellow," he said. "He's got to toe the line, and he knows it. He was only gassing."

"Looks like it," said Snoop.

"He's up to something," said Peter.

"The upfulness is terrific," declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The crowd of Removites broke up, some of them wondering, some of them uneasy, but most sharing Skinner's view that the Bounder, after all his bold words, had made up his mind to bow the knee to the inevitable.

Meanwhile, Bob Cherry and his fellow-fag reached Van Tromp's study in the Sixth.

They found the room rather untidy, as the senior had told them. Bob Cherry glanced round it and grunted.

He was very unwilling to begin fagging. It went deeply against the grain.

The Bounder looked at him and laughed.

"Here's for a start," he said.

He took the table by one leg, tilted it over, and sent it crashing into a corner of the study.

Books and paper, inkstand and ink, shot off the table in a shower. Bob Cherry gave a jump.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "Is that what you call fagging?"

"That's what I call fagging," assented the Bounder, "and it's the only kind of fagging that any man at Greyfriars will get out of me!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

Vernon-Smith took the clock from the mantelpiece and dropped it in the grate. There was a crash and a smash.

"Smithy, old man——" gasped Bob.

"You going to look on?" asked the Bounder. "I thought you'd come here to fag for Van Tromp? He told you to."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

The Bounder proceeded with his fagging. He opened the study cupboard, in which crockery and other things were kept. He tossed out cups and saucers, jugs and plates, and they landed one after another on the floor, breaking into fragments as they landed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "I fancy Van Tromp won't like this kind of fagging, Smithy."

"My idea exactly," agreed the Bounder. "He may get fed-up on fagging the Remove after this. You never know."

A large cake was hurled out of the cupboard. The Bounder kicked it across the study, and Bob, entering into the spirit of the thing, passed it back to the Bounder. It flew into three or four pieces from Bob's foot. Two or three pots of jam and marmalade and jelly shared the sad fate of the cake.

The cupboard was soon bare.

"Go it!" said Vernon-Smith. "We may get interrupted, and we want to do our job thoroughly."

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"The table looks a little bit untidy, with the legs sticking up in the air like that. Van Tromp said we were to make the study tidy. Lend a hand."

Smithy grasped a leg of the table and wrenched. The leg, with a sounding crack, came off in his hands.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob, and he gave his attention to the other table-legs, wrenching them off in turn, while the Bounder looked round for fresh worlds to conquer.

There was plenty of work for willing hands. A knife came in useful for ripping out the cushioned seats of two armchairs, after which Smithy snapped the blade under his foot. Two or three vases joined the clock in the fender, in fragments. There were a couple of pictures on the walls, and they looked quite a harrowing sight after the Bounder had thumped upon them with the poker. There was a rather large and handsome gilt mirror over the mantelpiece, and when the Bounder hurled the poker at it, there was a terrific crash, and the mirror was distributed in fragments all over the study.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob.

"Go it!" said the Bounder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's somebody coming."

The study door opened and Wingate of the Sixth looked in. He stared at the two juniors and stared round the dismantled study.

"What—what—what the thump are you doing?" asked Wingate.

"Fagging for Van Tromp!" answered Smithy.

"What!" yelled Wingate.

"The Remove are fags now," explained Bob Cherry. "We've got special orders to fag this study. This is how we're doing it."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Wingate. "You young sweeps, you clear off and let Van Tromp's room alone!"

"Can't; we're ordered to fag here, and we're not finished yet," answered the Bounder. "There are a few more things to smash. Lend a hand with this cabinet, Cherry."

"Stop!" exclaimed Wingate.

The Bounder glanced at him carelessly.

"Sorry I can't oblige," he answered. "May I remind you that you are not a prefect now, Wingate?"

Wingate coloured.

"I'm captain of the school, you young rascal——" he began.

"That cuts no ice!" retorted the Bounder. "The captain of the school has no authority outside games, unless he's a prefect, too. You can rag me as much as you like at cricket, Wingate, but you can't interfere here, and you know it."

Wingate paused.

"Look here, Smithy, don't you cheek old Wingate," said Bob. "I don't care whether Brander took away his prefectship or not; I'd rather obey Wingate's orders than the Beak's, if you come to that."

"Same here," said the Bounder. "All the same, I'm not going to stop ragging this study. I'm going on."

"Look here——"

"Rats!"

"Oh, I'm not going to interfere," said Wingate. "You're right, Vernon-Smith; I'm no longer a prefect, and I can't order you to stop. But I advise you as a friend to chuck it. You've done enough to be flogged for now."

"Thanks for the advice, though we're not taking it," said Smithy.

Wingate shrugged his shoulders and walked away. It was by the new Head's act that he had now no authority to stop the ragging; Van Tromp had been given his post of head prefect of the school. The captain of Greyfriars went back to his own study and gave the raggers no further heed.

"Keep on," said Smithy. "Van Tromp won't be long—he's late for tea already. There's more to be done yet. Don't slack."

"What next, then?" grinned Bob.

"Lend me a hand with this cabinet."

It was quite a handsome cabinet, with glass doors, and there were books and some fancy pieces of china in it. The next minute it was far from being a handsome cabinet. The glass went into fragments as it crashed on the floor; and as it lay face down, Smithy jumped on it, and his feet went through the back. He trampled right and left, till the cabinet was in sections. The pieces of china in it were reduced to something like dust, and Smithy sorted out the books from the ruins and tore a handful of pages from each.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob. "Let's clear, old man. I—I really don't want to be here when Van Tromp comes in."

"May as well be off the scene," said the Bounder, with a cheery nod. "I fancy he will get a bit excited."

"Ha, ha! More than a bit, I think."

Vernon-Smith looked round the study.

"I think it will do," he remarked.

The room presented a scene of havoc such as had never before been seen within the ancient walls of Greyfriars. Had a cyclone struck Van Tromp's study, it could scarcely have done more damage. From wall to wall, from corner to corner, the room was wrecked and ruined.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob was looking from the window. "There comes Van Tromp, Smithy."

Van Tromp and Loder were visible in the distance, strolling towards the house.

"Let's cut!" said the Bounder.

The two juniors rather hastily left the study. They lost no time in getting out of the Sixth Form quarters.

"This way," said Smithy, drawing Bob to the door of the house, where Van Tromp and his companion were coming in.

The bully of the Sixth glanced at the two juniors as he entered.

"Here!" he called out.

"Yes, Van Tromp," said the Bounder. with a smile.

"You've done as I told you?"

"What a question!" said the Bounder, raising his eyebrows. "Aren't we here to do as you tell us?"

"To hear is to obey, you know," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Don't be cheeky!" said Van Tromp. "Answer me—have you fagged in my study, as I ordered you?"

"Yes."

"Well, I shall soon see!" said the bully of the Sixth. "If you haven't, look out for squalls."

"But we have," said the Bounder, "and we've done the work more thoroughly than any Third Form fag would have done it."

"Yes, rather," grinned Bob.

Van Tromp gave them a suspicious stare, and walked away to his study. The two juniors hurried up to the Remove passage. And the Remove, when they heard how the two fags had fagged for Van Tromp, simply gasped, and waited for the thunderstorm to burst.

## CHAPTER 30.

### Rebellion in the Remove!

"WHAT——"

Van Tromp of the Sixth stared into his study.

He gasped.

It was difficult for the bully of the Sixth to believe the evidence of his eyes.

He stood in the doorway, and gazed into the wrecked room, his eyes bulging, his mouth open, his jaw dropping.

"What's up?" called out Loder.

Loder was going into his own study, when he noted the extraordinary aspect of Otto van Tromp. He came up the passage.

"What's up?" he repeated. "You look as if you've got a ghost in your study, old bean. What——" Loder broke off as he glanced into the interior of the room. "Oh! Great Pip! Great Christopher Columbus! What—what's happened?"

"Those—those young villains——" gurgled Van Tromp.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look! The—the room's ragged—wrecked—ruined!" Van Tromp gasped for breath. "Why, I—I—I'll——"

Loder suppressed a grin. During their walk that afternoon Van Tromp had been telling him how easy it was to bring cheeky fags to heel. Van Tromp, according to his own view, was the fellow to do it; indeed, he boasted that he had done it. Two of the most unruly fellows in the most unruly Form at Greyfriars, he had told Loder, were fagging meekly in his study, while they were taking that walk.

This, apparently, was how those meek fags had done their fagging! Loder saw a comic side to the matter, which was quite lost on Otto van Tromp.

"My hat, they've put their beef into it!" remarked Loder. "The room doesn't look as if you'll ever get it to rights again, by gad."

Van Tromp spluttered with rage.

"I—I'll smash them—I'll cut the skin off their backs! I—I'll—— Where's a cane? Can you see my cane?"

"There it is—in the grate—but it's split to pieces," said Loder, trying not to smile. "They don't seem to have overlooked anything."

"Get me a cane from your study!" bawled Van Tromp.

"Certainly, old fellow."

Loder of the Sixth fetched a cane from his study; Van Tromp clutched it from his hand, and started for the stairs. Loder loked after him, and whistled.

The bully of the Sixth tramped up the stairs. Coker of the Fifth was coming down, and he stared in surprise at the white, furious face of the prefect. He was so surprised that he stopped directly in Van Tromp's way, staring at him.

Van Tromp shoved him roughly aside, and Horace Coker staggered against the wall. The Sixth Former tramped on up the stairs.

Coker crimsoned with wrath.

"You rotter!" roared Coker. "Do you

think you can shove a Fifth Form man about? You cheeky toad!"

Van Tromp did not heed the indignant Coker. He tramped and stamped on his way to the Remove passage.

That passage was crowded with Remove fellows. A breathless discussion had been going on; but there was a sudden hush as Van Tromp appeared. The expression on his face was startling.

His burning eyes swept over them.

"Where are Vernon-Smith and Cherry?" he gasped.

"In Smith's study!" said Snoop.

Van Tromp stamped on to Study No. 4.

He kicked open the door, with a crash, and stamped in.

Three juniors were in Study No. 4—Smith and Redwing, to whom the study belonged, and Bob Cherry. Redwing and Bob rose quickly as the infuriated bully stamped in. Vernon-Smith remained sprawling in the armchair, his glance as cool as ice. His face was perfectly calm; but his eyes were dancing. It might have been supposed that the reckless Bounder was enjoying the thrilling pass to which things had now come.

"You—you—you——" Van Tromp was stuttering with rage. "You—you've ragged my study——"

"Fagged, you mean!" said the Bounder. "You told us to fag, you know! Haven't we done the job thoroughly?"

Van Tromp did not answer. He made a rush at the Bounder, slashing with the cane, careless where the blow fell.

Vernon-Smith jumped up and backed round the table. His face was still cool; but the light of battle glinted in his eyes.

Van Tromp panted.

"Come here!" he gasped. "Bend over that chair! At once!"

"Rats!" said the Bounder coolly.

"Bend over, I tell you!" hissed Van Tromp.

"And I tell you, rats!" said the Bounder. "You've caned me a dozen times since you've been a prefect, Van Tromp! That's the lot! You're not going to cane me any more. So put that in your pipe and smoke it."

"Bend over that chair—you first, and then Cherry—or I'll take you by the collar and thrash you!" said Van Tromp hoarsely.

"Will you?" said the Bounder. He caught up a cricket stump from the corner of the study. "Come on, then, and begin!"

"Smithy!" gasped Redwing.

"Stand by me, you men!" said the Bounder. "I'm fed up with bullying, and I'm not standin' any more. Keep off, Van Tromp, if you know when you're safe!"

There was a crash as Smithy warded with the cricket stump. But the terrific force of the slash drove the stump down, and the cane rang on to the Bounder's shoulder, and he gave a yell of pain. The next moment there was another crash as he struck with the stump. Van Tromp reeled back from the crashing blow on his bullet head.

"Oh!" he gasped. "You—you dare to strike a prefect——"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said the Bounder.

"Oh, my hat!" stuttered Bob Cherry, while Tom Redwing stood in blank dismay

Van Tromp rushed at Vernon-Smith He received, without heeding, a blow from the stump, and grasped the Bounder in his strong hands.

"Back up!" yelled Vernon-Smith, as he was fairly swept off his feet in the powerful grasp of the big Sixth Former.

It was no time to think of consequences. Bob Cherry rushed to the Bounder's aid, and Redwing was only a second behind him. Two pairs of hands fastened on the bully and dragged him back.

The doorway was crowded with faces now. Harry Wharton leaped into the study, followed by Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh. They, too, were quite forgetful of consequences now. Their chum was engaged in a furious

grapple with the tyrant of Greyfriars, and that was enough for the Co.

They rushed on Van Tromp and grasped him on all sides.

The enraged bully had lost all self-command now. The cane had been wrenched from his hand, and he was hitting out with clenched fists—blows that would have done serious damage had they landed. But the odds were too heavy for him now; and he went to the floor with a crash, the juniors sprawling over him.

"Bag him!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Thump him!"

"Give him beans!"

"The beanfulness is terrific!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Peter Todd, staring in at the door. "I—I say, he's a prefect, you know. The Head——"

"Blow the Head!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Give the cad beans, you men! We've had enough of his bullying!"

"Yes, rather! Give him gip!"

"Give the esteemed rotter a preposterous ragging!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "We are for it now, my absurd chums, and the hangfulness is as good for a sheep as for a lamb."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it!"

"Pile in, you men!" yelled the Bounder. "It was bound to come to this—and now it's come give him toco!"

"Good egg!" said Peter, and he rushed in to lend a hand. And several fellows followed him in.

Van Tromp almost disappeared under the swarm of juniors. There was not a fellow in the Remove who had not a score to pay—every fellow had felt the weight of the bully's cane, more than once. Now was the time to pay off the score; and it was paid with interest.

Bumped and thumped and pulled and ragged, Van Tromp gasped for breath helplessly. His head was pushed into the coal-locker and came out black; an inkpot was up-ended over his face; a handful of soot from the chimney was rubbed into his hair; his collar and tie were torn away, his coat split up the back. In a gasping, stuttering, spluttering heap he was rolled out of the study at last, and sprawled helplessly in the Remove passage.

"Kick him downstairs!" shouted the Bounder.

"Hurrah!"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper."

"Go it!"

"Give a fellow room!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Otto Van Tromp squirmed frantically along the passage, assisted by a dozen feet. Kicks landed on him right and left. Breathless as he was, he reached the Remove staircase very quickly. A shower of kicks rolled him off the landing, and he went bumping down.

"After him!" cried the Bounder.

The wretched object on the stairs picked itself up and fled. Yells and howls and catcalls followed him as he vanished down the lower staircase.

"Well," gasped Bob Cherry, fanning himself after his exertion—"well, my beloved 'carers, we've been and gone and done it now!"

And there was no doubt that they had!

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## CHAPTER 31.
### Locked Out!

"HA, ha, ha!" roared Coker of the Fifth.

Potter and Greene chuckled.

The sight of Otto van Tromp was really calculated to appeal to a fellow's sense of humour.

He was almost crawling away from the stairs—gasping, spluttering, and in a shocking state of dishevelled untidyness.

Many fellows were gathered at the foot of the staircase. The din from the Remove passage had been heard far and wide. It was known that Van Tromp had gone there with a cane; and the uproar indicated that his visit was not prospering. And even Sixth Form men, who believed firmly in keeping juniors in order, were not sorry to hear Van Tromp getting a ragging.

"Look at the tick!" said Coker. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Blundell of the Fifth chuckled.

"Anything happened, Van Tromp?" he asked blandly.

The bully of Greyfriars gave them a bitter glare. A score of pairs of eyes were on him, all glimmering with amusement. Not a fellow there sympathised with him in his disaster.

"Had a row with the fags?" grinned Coker.

"Did you let the fags handle you like that?" asked Walker of the Sixth.

"Better call nunky!" chortled Coker. "The Remove are rather above your weight, Van Tromp! Better call nunky!"

Smack!

Coker staggered, with a roar of surprise and wrath.

Mr. Brander had come suddenly on the scene.

His first action was to box Coker's astonished ear—a terrific smite with his open hand that made Coker spin like a humming top.

No doubt Coker should not have alluded to the Head as "nunky." But the smacking of heads was a new thing at Greyfriars—especially senior heads.

Coker spun round and glared at the Beak.

"What are you up to?" he roared. "You old donkey——"

"What?"

"Do you think you can smack fellows' heads?" roared Coker. "Keep your paws to yourself!"

"Coker!" gasped Mr. Brander. "How dare you? Go to my study and wait for me there. I shall flog you!"

"You won't!" said Coker.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Go and eat coke!"

With that retort, Horace Coker stalked away—not in the direction of the Head's study. A dead silence fell on the crowd of Greyfriars fellows. Potter and Greene exchanged hopeless looks. Coker of the Fifth had done it now!

Mr. Brander seemed to have lost his voice. He recovered it, however, and shrieked after Coker.

"Coker——"

"Rats!" roared Coker over his shoulder. Coker had been flogged. Now he had had his ears boxed, and that was the limit!

"What did you say?" raved the new Head.

"Rats!" roared Coker.

"Go to my study and wait for me there, or you shall be expelled from the school!" roared Mr. Brander.

"Bosh!"

With that retort, Horace Coker stalked off the scene, leaving Mr. Brander staring and spluttering.

There was a chuckle from somewhere, and the glinting eyes of the new headmaster gleamed round for the chuckler.

"Who was that?" he hissed.

No reply.

"Did you laugh, Hobson?"

Hobson of the Shell started.

"I, sir?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, you!" roared Mr. Brander. He had a cane in his hand, and he gripped it hard. "Come here, Hobson!"

"I—I only coughed—sort of coughed, sir!" gasped Hobson.

"Come here!"

James Hobson looked at Mr. Brander, at his infuriated face and gripped cane. The example of rebellion was easy to follow. Instead of coming to Mr. Brander, Hobson of the Shell made a bolt in the opposite direction.

"Hobson!" shrieked Mr. Brander. "Come back! Come here! Come back at once, Hobson!"

James Hobson vanished.

Mr. Brander made a stride in pursuit, and then stopped. He had other matters on hand. Hobson had to wait, as well as Coker. The new headmaster fixed his eyes on Otto van Tromp.

"What has happened, Otto?" he gasped. "I heard a noise—an uproar! What has happened?"

"I've been attacked—ragged—assaulted. A crowd of Remove boys—in the Remove passage!" panted Van Tromp.

"I will deal with them!" said Mr. Brander, between his teeth; and, with the cane gripped in his hand, he mounted the stairs.

"Now look out for fireworks!" murmured Temple of the Fourth.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" a voice was heard from above. "Here comes the Beak!"

There was a scampering of feet.

Mr. Brander, his teeth set, his eyes gleaming, arrived on the Remove landing. He was going to put down this outbreak of rebellion with a firm hand. His mind was already made up to cane the whole of the Remove, not sparing a single member of the Form.

He marched into the Remove passage. Not a fellow was in sight.

A minute earlier the passage had been crowded with Remove men. Now it was quite deserted.

Mr. Brander stopped at the first study and turned the door-handle. The door did not open.

He rapped on the door of Study No. 1 with his cane.

"Open this door at once!" he called.

"What do you want?" asked Harry Wharton's voice from within.

"Is that Wharton? Open this door, Wharton! Is it locked?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I command you to open it!"

"What for?"

"I am going to cane you and all the Form! Every member of this Form shall receive the severest possible punishment! I will make an example of the Remove!" roared Mr. Brander. "Now open the door!"

No answer.

The cane crashed on the door again.

"Do you hear me, Wharton?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Let me in immediately!"

"Not for a licking, sir," answered the captain of the Remove.

"Do you dare to disobey my orders, Wharton?"

"Yes," answered Harry.

"What? What? What did you say?" shrieked Mr. Brander.

"We've had enough lickings," answered the captain of the Remove. "We're fed up, sir. I won't open the door!"

"Same here!" chimed in Frank Nugent's voice. "I won't, either!"

The new headmaster stood trembling with rage. His grip on his cane was convulsive. But a strong oaken door stood between him and the juniors who defied his authority, and they were out of reach of his vengeance.

He gasped for breath. He was as much surprised as enraged. It had never occurred to his narrow, obstinate mind that tyranny was the shortest path to rebellion. Even a worm will turn, and the Greyfriars fellows were anything but worms. The turning-point had been reached now.

The new Head's system had, in fact, put a sort of premium on rebellion. When severe and incessant punishments were handed out for any offence, it was hardly more dangerous to rebel than to submit.

For some moments Mr. Brander remained outside Study No. 1, rather at a loss. But his cane was useless against an oaken door, and he passed on to the next study. He rapped on the door.

"Open this door!" he snapped.

"What do you want?" came Tom Brown's voice.

"I command you to open the door!"

"Nothing doing!"

"Brown, you shall be expelled!"

"You'll have to expel all the Remove along with me, then," answered the New Zealand junior. "You won't be let into any of the studies."

"Hazeldene! Are you there, Hazeldene?" Mr. Brander's retentive memory recalled the names of all the occupants of the Remove studies.

"Yes, sir," came Hazel's faltering voice.

"Open this door, Hazeldene!" Mr. Brander was well aware that Hazel was not made of the same stuff as the sturdy junior from New Zealand.

"I—I say, Browney——"

"Let that door alone!" said Tom Brown.

"Silence, Brown!" roared Mr.

Brander. "Hazeldene, open this door immediately, and I will deal with you leniently."

"Keep away from that door, Hazel!"

"I—I say, it's the Head, you know, and——"

"Never mind the Head—keep away from that door!"

"Look here, Brown, I'm not going to be sacked to please you! I'm bound to open the door! I——"

"Stand back!"

"I am waiting, Hazeldene!" exclaimed Mr. Brander.

There was a movement in the study. Hazeldene was evidently in a state of terror. His hand was heard on the door. The next moment there was a yell and a fall. There was a sound of scuffling.

"Hazeldene, will you open this door?" roared Mr. Brander.

"Groogh!"

"He can't, sir," came back Tom Brown's cheery voice. "I'm sitting on his head."

"What?" roared Mr. Brander. "Brown, release Hazeldene at once! Do you hear me?"

"I'm not deaf, sir."

"Hazeldene!" roared Mr. Brander.

"Ow! Oooogh! Gerroff! Ow!"

The door of Study No. 2 did not open. Hazeldene reposed on the floor, with Tom Brown sitting on his head, and the door remained locked. And Mr. Brander, almost foaming, passed on.

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### CHAPTER 32.
### Defeated!

RAP, rap, rap!

Herbert Vernon-Smith winked at Redwing, who smiled faintly.

The door of Study No. 4 was locked, like all the doors in the Remove passage. Every fellow had gone to his study and locked himself in. In the deserted passage the enraged headmaster raved, a good deal like a tiger in a cage.

"Vernon-Smith!" He banged on the door of Study No. 4 with the cane. "Vernon-Smith!"

"Adsum," said the Bounder cheerily, as if he were answering to his name at calling-over.

"Open your study door, Vernon-Smith!"

"No fear!"

"I order you——"

"Call again next Christmas," answered the Bounder.

"I shall expel you from the school, Vernon-Smith!"

"Thanks!"

Rap, rap, rap! came the cane on the oaken panels. Mr. Brander would have given much to land it on Smithy instead of Smithy's door. But Smithy was safe on the inner side of the oak.

"Redwing! Are you there, Redwing?"

"I'm here, sir," answered Tom.

"Open the door, Redwing!"

"I'm standing by Smithy, sir."

"You young rascal!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said the Bounder. "You've asked for this, Brander, and now you've got it! The best thing you can do is to chuck it up, and get out of Greyfriars! You're no good here!"

"You are expelled, Vernon-Smith!" roared the new Head.

"Rats!"

"You shall be sent home to-morrow!"

"Fathead!"

"What?" shrieked Mr. Brander, scarcely believing his ears.

"Fathead!" repeated the Bounder. "F-a-t-h-e-a-d—fathead!"

"Smithy——" murmured Redwing.

"My dear man, in for a penny, in for a pound!" drawled the Bounder. "Do you think anything I may say will make him madder? It's time we told the old fool what we thought of him!"

"Vernon-Smith, I heard your words!"

"I meant you to hear them, Brander. Like to hear some more? Fathead! Ass! Chump! Silly old buffer!"

Mr. Brander choked. He gave the door a last crash with the cane, and stamped on along the Remove passage. There was nothing, evidently, to be done

with the Bounder so long as the study door was locked.

It really looked as if the new Head would have to retreat, defeated, from the quarters of the Remove. But he made another attempt, at the door of Study No. 7. That study was tenanted by Billy Bunter, Peter Todd, and Tom Dutton, the deaf junior. Bunter, at least, was not the fellow to defy the voice of authority.

Mr. Brander wrenched at the door-handle of Study No. 7. It was locked like the rest, and he rapped on the panels.

"Bunter! Are you here, Bunter?"

"Oh! No!" came a gasping voice. "I—I'm not here, sir."

"Bunter, open this door!"

"I—I can't, sir!"

"I shall flog you, Bunter!"

"Oh, crikey! Toddy's got the key, sir!"

"Todd! Peter Todd, unlock this door!"

Peter Todd made no reply. He was determined not to unlock the door, but he did not want to add fuel to the flame of the new Head's fury. So he remained judiciously silent.

"Todd! Do you hear me, Todd?"

"I say, Toddy, the Beak's talking to you, and—— Yaroooooh! Stop kicking me, you beast! Ow!"

"Todd! I am aware that you can hear me! I command you to let me into this study!"

Silence from the judicious Peter.

"Very well," said Mr. Brander, between his teeth. "I shall deal with you presently, Todd! I will make an example of you, with the rest of the Remove! Bunter, take the key from Todd and open the door!"

"I—I say, Toddy—— Yaroooooooh!"

"Are you taking the key from Todd, Bunter?"

"Ow! Wow! How can I take the key from him, sir, when he's kicking me?" wailed Bunter. "Ow! Wow! Leave off kicking me, you beast!"

"Dutton! Dutton! Answer me, Dutton!" roared Mr. Brander.

"Eh?"

"Open the door, Dutton!"

"The floor, sir?" asked the deaf Removite. "Bunter's on the floor. Toddy's keeping him there. What about the floor, sir?"

"I did not say floor. I said door, you fool!"

"No, sir! there's a chair——"

"A chair?"

"Yes; but there isn't any stool. We don't have a stool in the study. There's a stool in the box-room, I think, if you want one."

"You senseless fool!"

"Eh?"

"Take the key from Todd!"

"Would you mind speaking louder, sir? I'm a little deaf."

"Take the key from Todd, and open this door at once!" roared Mr. Brander.

"I don't think I'm a dunce just because I can't hear you, sir. I told you I'm a little deaf."

"Let me into this study!" shrieked Mr. Brander.

"Who's muddy?"

"Dutton! You stupid boy, Dutton!"

"I can't make him out," said Tom Dutton. "First he said somebody was muddy, and now he's talking about mutton, Toddy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Brander gave it up. He tramped along the passage, banging with his cane on door after door, and commanding the doors to be opened.

Not a door was opened. Some of the fellows answered, but the more prudent remained silent. But not a key was turned back.

At Study No. 13. Bob Cherry's voice answered him. He requested the applicant for admission to go and eat coke.

Mr. Brander ground his teeth.

"You are the ringleader in this, Cherry!" he hissed. "You shall be expelled from the school!"

"My pater will have something to say about that!" retorted Bob.

"Silence! Linley! Open this door, Linley!"

"Can't, sir," answered Mark Linley.

"Hurree Singh! Are you there, Hurree Singh?"

"The herefulness of my esteemed self is terrific, sir."

"Let me in, Hurree Singh!"

"The regretfulness is prepostercus, sir; but your esteemed presence would not be a boonful blessing in this worthy study."

"Wun Lung! Open this door, my boy."

"No can," came the soft voice of the little Chinese. "Me velly solly, sir; no can opec door."

Breathing fury, Mr. Brander stamped on to the last study in the Remove. He banged on the door furiously.

"Chuck it, old bean!" came Johnny Bull's voice from Study No. 14. "We're not letting you in! Run away and play!"

"Keep your temper, sir!" said Squiff cheerfully. "If you lose your temper, you won't catch any fish!"

"You rebellious young rascals——"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I will flog you——"

"First catch your hare!" said Johnny Bull.

"Fish! Is Fish there? Open this door, Fish, and I will pardon you!"

"I—I guess——" stammered Fisher T. Fish.

"I will pardon you, Fish, if you open this door immediately."

Mr. Brander evidently believed in that old maxim of treacherous politicians, "Divide and conquer."

"I—I guess we can't stand out against the Beak, you guys!" said Fisher T. Fish. "We sure can't! I guess——"

"Guess again!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"I calculate I'm going to let the Head in," argued Fisher T. Fish. "I sure ain't going to be flogged. Not if this infant knows it. I guess——"

Bump!

"Yaroooh! Wake snakes! Yoooooop!"

"Fish! Open the door, Fish!"

"Fishy can't open the door, old scout," answered Johnny Bull. "Fishy's head is in the coal-locker."

"Yurrrrrrgggh!"

Mr. Brander drew a deep, deep breath.

He had gone the length of the whole passage now, and not a single door had been opened. Safe, for the present, behind locked doors, the whole Remove had defied the authority of the new headmaster.

Slowly, consumed with fury, Mr. Brander traversed the long passage to the stairs again. On the landing he paused.

He was bitterly reluctant to retire and leave the Removites masters of the situation, even for a short time. But there was nothing doing; he was powerless so long as the doors were locked.

Still, they could not remain locked for ever. His time would come, and it would come soon. He descended the stairs at last with a look on his face that made fellows who saw him retire hurriedly from his presence. The baffled tyrant of the school was yearning for a victim upon whom to wreak his rage, and nobody wanted to serve his turn.

Had the new Head of Greyfriars been an escaped tiger his path could not have been avoided more carefully as he strode back to his study.

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## CHAPTER 33.

### Coker's Defiance!

GREYFRIARS SCHOOL was in a buzz of wild excitement.

It was time for evening prep, but nobody at Greyfriars was thinking of prep.

The Remove, certainly, were in their studies; but it was quite certain that preparation was not in their minds.

The Third and the Second had been taken into their Form-rooms by their respective masters; but the Third and Second were in a buzz, like the rest of the school; and Mr. Wiggins and Mr. Twigg, as a matter of fact, were giving them no attention. Wiggins and Twigg, like the rest of the masters, were in a perturbed and excited state.

Neither were the Shell and the

Fourth at prep. The Shell and the Fourth were eagerly discussing the amazing outbreak in the Remove quarters. Some of them were proposing to follow the example of the Remove, especially Hobson of the Shell, who was well aware that he was booked for vengeance.

"Britons never shall be slaves!" said Hobson. "If those Remove kids can kick, we can kick."

"Hear, hear!" said Stewart of the Shell. "If the old blighter comes after us, we'll lock him out, too!"

"You men," said Temple of the Fourth to his cronies, "the Beak's in a frightful bait, and he will take it out of somebody. If he tries to take it out of us, I'm going to lock him out of my study, for one."

"What-ho!" said Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"But those kids will have to come out of their studies sooner or later," said Wilkinson. "The Beak will have them then."

"Um! Perhaps we'd better see how it turns out, before we put our foot in it," said Cecil Reginald Temple.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

The Fifth were mostly gathered in the games study. Coker of the Fifth was there, occasionally rubbing his ear, which was still singing a little from the terrific smack the Beak had bestowed upon it.

The Fifth Form men were perturbed and troubled. They were seniors, and as seniors they, of course, condemned anything in the nature of insubordination on the part of juniors. The lofty dignity of a senior Form prevented them from even thinking of sharing in such an outbreak. Nevertheless, there were few of them who did not wish the Lower Fourth luck in their stand against the tyrant of the school. And Coker, at least, was as rebellious as any fag.

Coker, obviously, was up for another flogging, after the way he had talked to the Head. And Coker declared, in a voice that could be heard over half Greyfriars, that he wasn't going to be flogged.

"Once is enough—more than enough!" declared Coker. "I'm done with the Beak. Let him try to flog me, that's all!"

"You don't want to be sacked," said Potter.

"I expect my friends to stand by me," said Coker. "The Beak can't sack the whole Form."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Blundell irritably.

"Well, sack or no sack, I'm not going to have that rotter's paws laid on me," said Coker. "Who ever heard of smacking a Fifth Form man's head?"

"The man's a rank cad," said Hilton; "but he's the Head of Greyfriars."

"Time he was turned out!" said Coker.

"Yes, ass! But we can't turn him out."

"Well, I'm not going to be flogged," said Coker positively. "And if he sacks me I won't go, so there!"

"Here comes Prout!" murmured Potter.

Mr. Prout entered the games study. The plump face of the Fifth Form master was deeply clouded and troubled.

"Coker," he said. "Is Coker here? Coker, you are to follow me to the Head's study."

"To be flogged, I suppose?" said Coker disdainfully.

"I—I fear so, Coker. I am sorry, my boy; but it is necessary to submit to the authority of the headmaster."

"I'm not going, sir."

Mr. Prout blinked at him.

"You must go, Coker."

"I'm not going! If Brander wants to see me tell him to come here," answered Coker. "No disrespect to you, sir. I know you'd stand up for your Form against that rotter if you could. But I'm not taking any more from Brander."

"You must not allude to the Head in such terms in my presence, Coker," stammered Mr. Prout.

"Well, sir, you know he's a rotter as well as we do. If he wants an answer from me, sir, tell him I won't come."

"Coker! Really, Coker——"

"And tell him," went on Coker, "that the Fifth Form are fed-up with his meddling, and that we want to be left to our own Form-master. Tell him the Fifth won't stand any more of his meddling!"

Mr. Prout gasped. Coker's words found an echo in his own plump breast, as a matter of fact. But, as a Form-master, he could not listen to them.

"Say no more, Coker. You make matters worse. Go to the Head's study immediately, my boy."

"I'm not going, sir."

"Better go, old man," whispered Potter. "You see——"

"Don't be an ass, Potter!"

"Old chap——" pleaded Greene.

"Don't be a fathead, Greene!"

"Coker, really—really——" said Mr. Prout.

"I'm not going, sir. Tell the Beak to fetch me if he wants me. That's final," said Horace Coker.

Mr. Prout blinked at him helplessly, and left the games study. He left a dead silence behind him. Coker's reckless defiance of the Head's authority had rather taken away the breath of his Form fellows.

Coker of the Fifth looked round scornfully on the clouded faces of the fellows in the games study.

"Back me up!" he said. "If that bullying old rotter comes here after me, back me up. See?"

"Who wants to be sacked?" asked Price.

"Oh, rats!" said Coker. "I'd rather be sacked a dozen times over than let that rank outsider smack my head. "You'll see."

"Here he comes," breathed Blundell.

There was a heavy footstep outside, and Mr. Brander entered the games study. He had a cane in his hand, and a malignant glitter in his eyes. Mr. Brander had been longing for a victim, and Coker had obligingly offered himself. Mr. Brander had come to deal with Coker.

"Coker," said Mr. Brander, between his teeth, "you have refused to come to my study at my command."

"You've got it," said Coker.

"I have come here to punish you for your insolence."

"Rats!" said Coker.

"Bend over that chair, Coker," said Mr. Brander, taking a convulsive grip on the cane.

"Shan't!" retorted Coker.

The Fifth Form men held their breath. This was rebellion with a vengeance. Evidently the example of the Remove was spreading.

"Did you say——" Mr. Brander gasped.

"I said shan't!" answered Coker. "If you're deaf, I'll say it again. Shan't!"

Mr. Brander stood quite still for a moment or two.

Perhaps it dawned upon his narrow mind that he was raising a storm that he would find it difficult to control.

But he had gone too far to recede. Having provoked rebellion, he had to crush it, or see his authority break in his hands like a reed.

"Coker! Obey me instantly, or you are expelled!"

"Rats!"

Mr. Brander said no more. He strode at Coker, with the cane uplifted.

Coker breathed hard and quick. But he, like the Head, had gone to far to recede now.

"Hands off, Mr. Brander," he said. "If you touch me, I can only say—— Whoooooop!"

Coker said that quite involuntarily as the cane came down with a terrific swipe.

Mr. Brander struck and struck again. Coker, with a roar or rage, grappled with him.

The cane was torn from Mr. Brander's hand and tossed into a corner. Coker faced the headmaster with flashing eyes and clenched fists.

"That's enough from you, you

rotter!" roared Coker. "Hands off, you cad! Touch me again and I'll knock you spinning!"

"Coker, you—you—you have dared to raise your hand against me—you—you ——" Meyer Brander stuttered.

"Oh, get out!" said Coker.

The new headmaster gasped.

"Coker! You are expelled! You will leave Greyfriars the first thing in the morning!"

"I won't!" retorted Coker.

It looked for a moment as if the infuriated man would leap at Coker like a tiger. The seniors stood round with horrified faces. Coker put up his fists; and his intention to hit out was so obvious that Meyer Brander, in the midst of his fury, paused. A drive from Coker's hefty fist, with Coker's weight behind it, would have flattened out the fat gentleman on the floor of the games study.

"Coker! You—you young scoundrel! You are expelled—expelled in disgrace from the school! You leave in the morning!"

And with that the new headmaster turned and swept from the room.

The Fifth Form men looked at one another. Coker breathed hard. He had passed the Rubicon now, and burned his boats behind him. For Coker of the Fifth there was now no retreat.

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### CHAPTER 34.
#### The Only Way!

"WHAT next?"

Bob Cherry asked that question.

The Remove fellows had come out of their studies, after making sure Mr. Brander was gone. There was a crowd in the passage, and watchful eyes were kept on the staircase, lest the Head should return.

All the Form were gathered there. Excitement reigned, but there were many doubtful faces. Fellows like Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish had been glad to escape the Head's wrath behind locked doors, but they were deeply apprehensive of what was to follow.

"What next?" repeated Bob.

It was a difficult question to answer.

There was a cloud of deep thought on Wharton's brow. Matters had come to such a pass now that it was scarcely possible to go back; the rebels of the Remove had to go forward, whether they liked to or not.

"Blessed if I know what to do next," said Johnny Bull. "But I jolly well know that I'm not going to be licked any more by Brander or by his precious nephew, either!"

"Same here!" said Nugent.

"The shamefulness is terrific."

"That's all very well," jeered Skinner, "but do you think we can play hide-and-seek with Brander—bolting into our studies when he butts in, and coming out again when he's gone?"

"I guess you guys have made it worse than ever," said Fisher T. Fish. "The Beak will sure take it out of us for locking him out of the studies. I guess ——"

"Shut up, Fishy!"

"It's all rot," said Hazel sulkily. "What's the good of making the man wild when he's got us in his power?"

"Just what I think!" agreed Skinner.

"If you fellows want to kow-tow to Brander, there's nothing to prevent you from going to him now!" suggested the Bounder. "I'm sure he'd be glad to see you in his study. He must be just yearning to use his cane on somebody!"

"Yes, go it, Skinner!" grinned Bob Cherry.

But Skinner was not disposed to "go it." It was one thing to criticise the measures the leaders of the Form had adopted, but quite another to face the tyrant of the school in his wrath.

"We're for it now!" said Harry Wharton. "We've stood up against the Head, and we've got to keep on. Shoulder to shoulder——"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, it's important——"

"Well, what is it, fathead? Sharp!"

"What about supper?"

"What?" roared Bob.

"Supper," said Bunter, with a very serious blink through his big spectacles. "All very well to lock the Head out of the studies, but it stands to reason that he won't send our supper up here. Well, supper's important!"

"Kick him, somebody!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Somebody's coming!" There was a footstep on the stairs, and immediate alarm.

Some of the juniors bolted for the studies at once. Two or three doors were slammed and locked. But the cooler-headed fellows stopped to ascertain first who was approaching.

"It's only Walker," said Nugent.

"Oh, Walker don't matter! If he cheeks us, we'll roll him downstairs, as we did Van Tromp!" said Vernon-Smith.

Walker of the Sixth came up to the Remove landing. He was a prefect, and a friend of Loder's, and had been rather "thick" with Van Tromp since the latter had become the most important senior at Greyfriars. But the Removites were past caring whether they handled a prefect or not; after their defiance of the Head himself, that was a small matter. The looks that were cast at James Walker were far from respectful or submissive.

"Well, what do you want?" asked the Bounder sharply.

"Message from the Head!" answered Walker, taking no notice of the Bounder's offensive tone. Walker's own manner was unusually civil. He did not want trouble with the Remove in their present excited state.

"Does the dear man want us in his study?" grinned Smithy. "If he does, you can tell him we won't come!"

"Tell him to go and eat coke!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Let a fellow speak," said Walker pacifically. "Mr. Brander has sent me here to tell you to assemble in your Form-room immediately."

"What does he want us there for, Walker?" asked Harry.

Walker grinned.

"He was sorting out a birch when he told me to fetch you," he answered. "I fancy it's a flogging all round!"

"Tell him we're fed up on floggings," said Johnny Bull. "We're not having any more."

"The fed-upfulness is terrific, my preposterous Walker."

"That isn't all," said the Sixth Form man. "The Head expects you all there in ten minutes. Every fellow who doesn't come will be sacked!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I fancy he means it," said Walker. "You'd better toe the line, you know. Brander's in a mood to sack half the school, if it comes to that. Take your licking and make the best of it."

And having delivered his message, Walker of the Sixth descended the stairs again and disappeared.

The juniors exchanged glances. There was silence in the Remove passage for some moments. The fellows who had gone into the studies came out again. All the Remove knew that they had reached a crisis now. In many faces there was a deep dismay.

"Well, it's the jolly old cross-roads now," said Bob Cherry, breaking the silence at last. "What's the verdict?"

"I'm not going to be sacked, I know that!" said Skinner.

"I'm not going to be flogged!" said the Bounder. He glanced round with a sarcastic grin. "If we give in now, we're done for. Stick together! He can't sack the whole Form; the governors would chip in if it came to anything like that. He could sack one or two! He can't sack the lot!"

"That's so!" said Harry Wharton. "We've got to stand shoulder to shoulder, and take the risk! I'm not going to the Form-room!"

"I'm sticking here!" said Bob.

"The stickfulness is terrific!"

"The fact is, it's safer to stick out!"

said Squiff. "If we give in, the brute can do as he likes. If we all stand out together he can't sack a whole Form, as Smithy says. I'm for sticking it out."

There was a chorus of approval. The Famous Five were quite firm; the Bounder ready for any recklessness; and Tom Brown, Squiff, Toddy, Redwing, Mark Linley, Lord Mauleverer—in fact, almost all the Form were of the same mind.

"Stick it out!" said Russell.

"As the poet says——" began Wibley. Wibley always had a quotation ready.

"Oh, never mind the poet; shut up, Wib!"

"My dear chap, what Tennyson says is quite to the point," said Wibley.

"'Not once or twice, in our rough
island story,
The path of duty was the way to
glory.'"

"Blow Tennyson!" said the Bounder. "Kipling is more to the point in stirring times like these. Doesn't he say somewhere:

"'Hit him in the eye, sergeant,
Bung him on the floor!
Kick him in the ribs, sergeant,
Wipe him round the jaw!'?"

"Is that Kipling?" asked Wibley suspiciously..

"Well, it sounds like Kipling, anyhow," said the Bounder, while the other fellows laughed. "Is it agreed, you men—we stay here?"

"Agreed!" said a dozen voices.

"Where are you going, Fishy?"

"I—I guess I'm going down!" said Fisher T. Fish. "You guys are simply asking for it, you know. You'll have to toe the line, and you'll get it right in your pesky necks! I guess I'm going!"

"Come back, you rotter!" roared Johnny Bull. "We've got to stand shoulder to shoulder Stop him!"

"Collar him!" shouted Bob. "No deserters!"

"I guess——"

"Oh, let him!" said Harry Wharton. "We don't want any funks here! Let him go if he likes."

"We don't want a Remove man greasing up to Brander!" growled Smithy. "That rotter thinks he's going to get out of a licking by giving in Let's give him a licking before he goes!"

"Good egg!" said Bob.

Fisher T. Fish accelerated, and disappeared down the Remove staircase. Skinner and Snoop exchanged a glance, and followed him; but they stopped short.

"Aren't you fellows coming?" asked Skinner uneasily.

"No fear!"

"And you'd better think twice," said the Bounder, with a sneer. "Brander may let you off for funking and giving in; but he may take it out of you


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because he can't get at us. It's rather a gamble."

Skinner and Snoop exchanged another uneasy glance, and they came back into the passage.

"After all, he can't sack the whole Form!" said Skinner. "And—and when the sacking begins, he will pick out the ringleaders."

"Oh, shut up, you worm!" said Squiff. "Look here, you men, we're not going down. That's settled. But Brander will come up if we don't go down, and he may bring the other masters and the prefects with him."

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

"We haven't got much choice left, after going so far, unless we go down on our knees to the brute," he said. "What we've got to make up our minds to is this: It's either unconditional surrender or a barring-out!"

"My hat!"

"Good!" exclaimed the Bounder, his eyes dancing. "That's the game! Bar out the rotter! Who's for a barring-out?"

"Good egg!"

"Hurrah!"

"The goodfulness of the egg is terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The barfulness out is the proper caper!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"But what about supper—— Yaroooh!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"We're booked now!" he said. "It's a barring-out, or nothing! We've locked the brute out, now we're going to bar him out. If the other Forms join up, we'll turn Brander out of the school, and keep him out!"

"Hurrah!"

"But if they don't?" said Bob.

"If they don't, we'll bar him out on our own! And we'll begin by barring him out of the Remove passage!" exclaimed Wharton. "Once we get going I fancy the other Forms will join in; they're jolly near as fed-up with Brander as we are! The example's the thing!"

"Hurrah!"

"Pile in!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "No time to lose, my infants. Brander will be coming back, and he won't come alone! Go it!"

And the Removites set to work.

Obviously, matters could not remain as they were. Mr. Brander would come back, and he would bring force with him. Locked doors would be broken open; if threats failed, Brander was the man to take drastic action. All the fellows realised it, and they worked rapidly. Tables, chairs, desks were dragged out of the studies and stacked across the passage where it joined the landing. Cricket stumps and bats, foils, and Indian clubs, and pokers were sorted out for weapons of defence.

The great rebellion of Greyfriars had commenced.

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## CHAPTER 35.

### Fearful for Fishy!

MR. BRANDER gripped the birch hard in his hand and started for the Remove Form-room. His face was set as hard as iron, and there was a ruthless glint in his narrow eyes. Ten minutes had elapsed since Walker had carried his message to the rebels of the Remove, and the new Head had no doubt that the juniors were now assembled in their Form-room, according to his command.

The threat to expel every fellow who did not come was bound to have its effect—in Mr. Brander's opinion, at least. Expulsion was the last and severest penalty that could fall on any fellow, and it was not to be lightly faced.

"Come with me, Otto!" said Mr. Brander. "I may need your assistance. It is my intention to flog the whole Form!"

"Good!" said Van Tromp.

He followed his uncle.

Mr. Quelch met them before they

reached the Form-room. The Remove master was deeply troubled and disturbed.

The new Head waved him aside.

"Kindly do not interrupt me now, Mr. Quelch."

"One word, sir," said the Remove master. "My Form——"

"Your Form, sir, is in a state of rebellion," said Mr. Brander grimly. "A state that reflects no credit whatever on your management. Your Form, sir, is the most unruly Form at Greyfriars. But I shall bring them to obedience!"

"One word, sir——"

"You need not speak. I shall deal with your Form personally. I cannot trust you, sir, to keep order in it."

"You have a birch in your hand," said Mr. Quelch. "May I ask——"

"It is my intention, sir, to flog your Form, not sparing a single member of it," said Mr. Brander. "I shall administer such a punishment as will never be forgotten at Greyfriars. Six boys will be expelled—Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Hurree Singh, Bull, and Vernon-Smith."

"Such a wholesale sentence, sir——"

"Enough!"

"I am bound to protest! Several of the boys whom you have banned are the very best boys in my Form——"

"I say, enough!" repeated Mr. Brander.

He pushed rudely past the Form-master, and strode on, with Van Tromp at his heels. The Sixth Former gave Mr. Quelch a mocking leer as he passed that brought the colour to Mr. Quelch's indignant cheeks.

The new headmaster reached the Remove Form Room. He threw open the door and tramped in, followed by his nephew.

Then he stared.

He had expected to find the Lower Fourth all in their places. It had not even occurred to him that his threat might have no effect.

But there was only one Remove man in the room—Fisher T. Fish. And Fishy eyed the new Head with deep apprehension.

"Fish! What does this mean? Why are you alone here?"

"I—I guess——" faltered Fisher T. Fish.

"Where are the others?"

"They—they haven't come, sir."

"They have not come?" repeated Mr. Brander.

"Nope, sir."

"Where are they?" thundered the Head.

"I guess they're in the Remove passage, sir!"

"Upon my word! So the Remove have defied my order to assemble in their Form-room?" gasped Mr. Brander at last.

"Yep! Except me!" said Fisher T. Fish eagerly.

"Very good. As you are here, Fish, I will deal with you now, and then proceed to deal with the others."

"I—I say, sir, I—I guess——"

"Bend over your desk, Fish."

"Oh, carry me home to die!" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

With a dismal groan he bent over the desk; Mr. Brander swished the birch in the air, and smote.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yoooooop!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

The tyrant of Greyfriars was red with rage. One victim only was there for him to wreak it upon, and Fishy had to pay scot and lot for the whole of the rebel Form. Submission, evidently, was not the way to get off cheaply. The boldest rebel in the Remove could hardly have suffered more severely at the hands of the tyrant.

Whack, whack, whack!

Fisher T. Fish squirmed and yelled and roared. Fishy had been flogged before for his sins, but never had he been flogged like this! Never had any Greyfriars fellow been through such an infliction.

The yells of the wretched Fishy rang through the House. The door of the Form-room opened, and Mr. Quelch looked in.

"Mr. Brander! What——"

"Do not enter here, sir!" roared Mr. Brander. "Do not seek to interfere in this matter, Mr. Quelch! Retire at once!"

"I will not retire, sir!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I will not allow a boy of my Form to be treated in this manner, sir!"

"What?" spluttered Mr. Brander. "Are you mad, sir? Do you dare to interpose between the headmaster of this school and a junior boy?"

"I do, sir!" exclaimed the indignant Form-master. "I will not allow this, sir! So long as I am a Form-master here it is my duty to protect a boy of my Form from brutality, sir! Leave that boy alone!"

"Mr. Quelch!" gasped the Head. "Sir, I shall dismiss you! You shall leave Greyfriars! You—you——"

"That is as you will, sir," retorted Mr. Quelch. "But while I remain I will protect my boys from brutality! Fish! Leave this Form-room and go to your study!"

Fish, squirming away from the desk, fled from the room,

Mr. Brander spluttered with fury.

"Mr. Quelch, I will deal with you later. Otto, call the prefects—all the prefects—and follow me to the Remove studies!"

And Mr. Brander strode out of the Form-room.

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## CHAPTER 36.

### Barred Out!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here's Fishy!"

The Removites were still labouring at the barricade in the Remove passage when Fisher T. Fish came scudding up the stairs. He charged across the landing at top speed. The barricade stopped him; but Fisher T. Fish proceeded to clamber over it in frantic haste.

"Had enough of Brander, Fishy?" grinned Bob.

"Ow! Lend a guy a hand!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "Help me over, you jay! That villain's after me! Yaroop! Help a guy over!"

A dozen willing hands were extended to help Fishy across the stack of furniture that blocked the passage from side to side.

He gasped with relief as he came tumbling down on the safe side of the barrier.

"How did you get on with the Beak?" asked Skinner.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, holy smoke! Ow! Carry me home to die! Wow! By the great horned toad!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "The pesky bushwhacker's nearly killed me! Ow! Wow! I shan't be able to sit down till next term! Yow-ow-ow!"

"You asked for it!" grinned the Bounder. "Any other fellows here feel like giving in to Brander?"

"No takers!" chuckled Bob. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!"

"Look out!"

There was a swarming to the barricade as Mr. Brander was spotted on the Remove staircase.

He came tramping up the stairs, with Otto van Tromp at his heels.

Behind them came Loder, Carne, Walker, North, Gwynne, and several other Sixth Form men, all of them, however, looking very dubious. It was not easy for a prefect to disregard a command from the headmaster; but it was quite clear that the seniors did not relish dealing with the rebel Form.

Mr. Brander swept across the landing. He stopped and stared at the sight of the barricade that opposed his further progress.

"What—what—what does this mean?" ejaculated Mr. Brander. "Who has—has placed all this—this furniture here?"

The prefects exchanged significant glances. North and Gwynne quietly went back down the stairs. Several other fellows followed them. Loder

and Carne and Walker remained, but they looked far from enthusiastic.

"Boys!" thundered the Head. "Take this—this furniture away at once!"

"Rats!"

"Go home, Brander!"

"Go and eat coke!"

The tyrant of Greyfriars trembled with rage. He glanced round at the dubious Sixth Formers.

"Tear down that barricade at once!" he gasped. "Follow me! Assist me! I command you!"

And Mr. Brander hurled himself at the barricade and started dragging at the tangled furniture. Van Tromp followed him at once, and Loder and Carne more slowly. Walker slipped away and disappeared.

"Come on, old bean!" roared the Bounder, brandishing a cricket stump.

Mr. Brander came on fast enough. The barricade rocked under his furious clutching. Vernon-Smith, standing on a chair, leaned over and smote with the cricket stump.

"Oooooooooh!"

"One for his nob!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Brander staggered back. Desperate as matters had grown now, he had not supposed that the rebels would venture to handle him personally. Now he discovered that that was a mistake. He rubbed his head dazedly.

Van Tromp, sprawling over the barricade, was seized by half a dozen hands. A cricket stump cracked on his shoulders, an Indian club jammed into his ribs, five or six fists crashed on his furious face. He roared and struggled, and his legs slipped down among the furniture and held him fast.

"Come on!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Loder, jumping back from a poker wielded in a reckless hand. "Yarooogh!"

"Oh, crumbs!" howled Carne, as a whizzing boot caught him under the chin! "Ow! Great pip! Wow!"

"Go it!" roared Harry Wharton.

Missiles rained over the barricade. Loder and Carne fairly turned tail and ran. Van Tromp, entangled in the furniture, yelled and shrieked and raved as blows showered on him from all sides. He struggled frantically to escape, and tore himself free at last, covered with bumps as with a garment, and jumped for safety. A cushion caught him on the back of his head as he ran, and he bolted down the stairs after Loder and Carne.

Mr. Brander stood stuttering with rage.

Whiz, whiz, whiz! A boot caught him in the eye, a teacup cracked on his nose, a Latin dictionary banged under his fat chin. He tottered away, hardly able to believe that this was not all some fearful dream. Yells and catcalls and whirling missiles followed him down the stairs.

"Come back and have some more!" roared Bob Cherry.

But Mr. Brander did not come back.

"We win the first round!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Hurrah!"

The rebels of Greyfriars had won the first round—there was no doubt about that. And they were ready for the second round when it came.

The Remove were in rebellion, and—as yet—unsubdued! The great barring-out at Greyfriars had begun!

THE END.

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***The sequel to this amazing story appears in next month's Schoolboys' Own Library, No. 247, under the title of "VICTORY FOR THE REBELS!" Don't miss it.—Editor.***

# FILM DRAMAS OF THE OCEAN BED

IMAGINE diving into the depths of a tropical lagoon, armed with only a small knife, to find and do battle with a man-eating shark!

That sounds like the world's easiest method of committing suicide, yet it is done frequently by native divers to make thrills for cinema audiences. The cameraman is enclosed in a special diving-bell, with his camera focused through windows of special glass, and when the shark appears and attacks the diver, he is able to film the fight.

So far the diver has always won!

**A Fight to the Death!**

Several big films with underwater scenes have been made recently, and some of the thrills they have contained have been amazing. What is perhaps the most dramatic incident ever photographed below the surface appeared in a film which you may have seen—"Samarang."

A cameraman had been lowered in his diving-bell for no more thrilling purpose than getting some shots of undersea coral beds, and thoughts of danger were far from his mind when suddenly he caught sight of a huge octopus lashing its way towards him, obviously with the intention of attacking the queer diving-bell which had invaded its domain.

Had the octopus reached the bell, that cameraman would probably never have regained the surface alive. But it did not. For at the last moment a dark mass flashed across the glass window, and the cameraman saw that it was a giant tiger shark—deadliest enemy of the octopus!

Like a torpedo, the shark darted at the octopus and plunged its razor-sharp teeth into one of its enemy's tentacles. Quick as lightning the other seven limbs of the octopus twined round the shark's body.

For twenty minutes the cameraman kept his instrument trained on the ferocious battle which was being fought out in eerie silence a few feet away from him, and then abruptly the octopus released its hold and sunk downwards out of sight. The shark had won!

**Dangers of the Deep.**

On another occasion an octopus did actually get its tentacles twined round a diving-bell in which two cameramen were taking shots for a film. It was eventually driven off by the ingenuity of a man in the boat above, who put on a diving dress and came to the rescue with no other weapon than an oxy-acetylene blowlamp—an instrument which is used for cutting up steel plates underwater.

Quite a different mishap, and one which illustrates how varied are the dangers that beset the men who make films under the sea, happened to the famous cameraman Homer Scott just off the coast of California.

Some quite ordinary undersea pictures were wanted, and he had been lowered from a boat over a suitable spot wearing a diving-bell which only came down to his waist. The advantage of this was that it enabled him to walk about on the sea-bed and find the kind of pictures that he required. So that he could let the men on the boat know how he was progressing, he had a telephone running from his bell to the surface.

He was busy filming when, without warning, a cry of "Look out!" sounded in his earphones, and unseen hands picked him up and hurled him headlong along the rocky bed of the sea. A squadron of destroyers of the United States Navy, engaged in battle practice, had come past at full speed, and the tremendous undercurrent set up by their passage had turned the calm water into a veritable death-trap!

He was lucky to escape with his life!

S.S.

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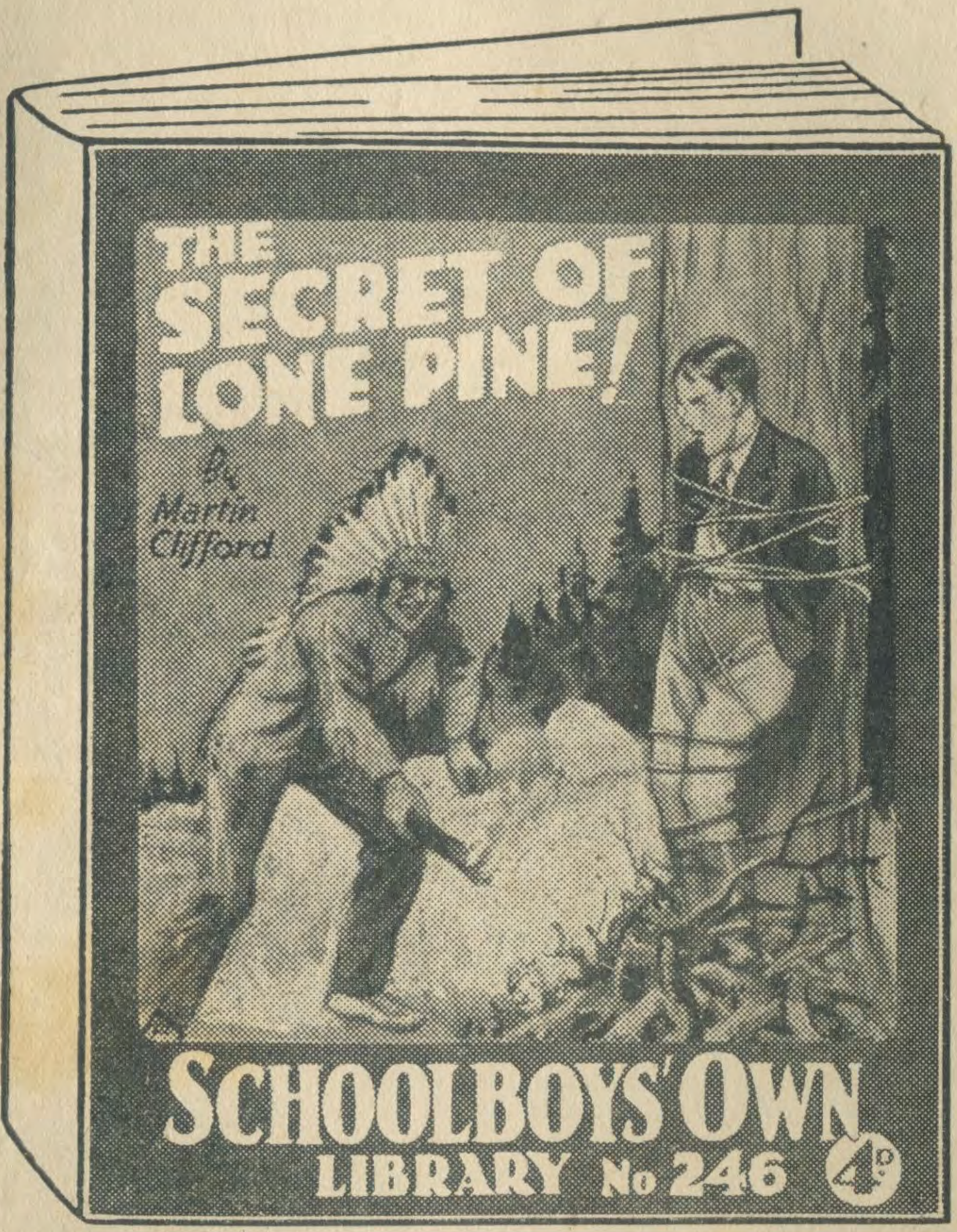


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