

The BATTLE of the TUCKSHOP!



SCENE :

The Greyfriars tuckshop. A shop counter is on the right of the stage. Be careful that the audience cannot see behind it, for here you will conceal your Prompter, who must provide the "growls" supposed to be made by BILLY BUNTER. The fat boy is in the shop, arguing with MRS. MIMBLE, who stands behind the counter. On shelves and on the counter are cakes, sweets, ginger-pop, etc. A small table, with three chairs, stands in the shop.

A Play in Verse for Amateur Actors

By
THE GREYFRIARS RHYMESTER

CHARACTERS :

Billy Bunter ..	The famous fat boy of Greyfriars.
Mrs. Mimble ..	Proprietress of the tuckshop.
Temple	} Of the Upper Fourth Form.
Dabney	
Fry	
Harry Wharton ..	Captain of the Remove.
Bob Cherry	Wharton's chum.
Gosling	The Greyfriars Porter.
Loder	The bully of the Sixth Form.
Coker	The fathead of the Fifth Form.
Mr. Prout	Master of the Fifth Form.
Mr. Capper	Master of the Upper Fourth.

(Other Remove Juniors, in non-speaking parts, may be included if desired.)

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

MRS. MIMBLE :

You cannot have a single tart !
There, Master Bunter ; now I've said it !

BUNTER :

Oh, really, ma'am, you ought to start
A system of extended credit.

MRS. MIMBLE :

Nonsense !

BUNTER :

If you don't, you know,
You'll find your business cannot
grow !

MRS. MIMBLE :

And if it does not do so—well,
At least I'm paid for what I sell.

BUNTER :

But don't you see, ma'am——?

MRS. MIMBLE :

Yes, indeed,
I see quite well. You want a feed,
But do not want to pay the cost !
On business lines like that I'm lost.
If no one paid for what they eat,
I soon should be upon the street.

BUNTER :

But I'm as hungry as a hunter,
And yet you've got a heart of stone !
Just one small doughnut——

MRS. MIMBLE (*sharply*) :

Master Bunter,
Kindly leave those cakes alone !

BUNTER (*turning away sadly*) :

I shan't convince her, that is
clear ;

I wish she'd hop outside a tick !
(*He ponders.*)

But stay ! I've got a great idea !
Ventriloquism ! That's the trick !
(*He gives a fat cough, and immediately
the growling of a savage dog comes
from behind the counter.* MRS.

MIMBLE *jumps away in fright.*)

MRS. MIMBLE (*wildly*) :

Oh, help ! A savage dog is here !
He'll bite, I'm sure. Oh, help me,
quick !

(*She slaps wildly about her with a
teacloth.*)

Shush ! Br-r-r ! Begone ! Oh, oh !
He'll bite my feet, I know !

(*The dog growls savagely.*)

Oh, kick it, hold it, scratch it !

Bring Gosling here to catch it !

Oh, someone drive it out !

Call Gosling ! Call him ! Shout !

(*The dog gives a terrible snarl. She*

*utters a shriek and rushes out of
the shop.*)

BUNTER :

He, he ! She's unaware, no doubt,
That I can throw my voice about.
Now while she's absent from the
shop,

I'll treat myself to ginger-pop !

(*He rolls behind the counter.*)

I'm fond of doughnuts. Here's
some candy——

Ventriloquism comes in handy——
And currant buns—a tasty snack !
And then—oh, lor' ! She's coming
back !

(*Footsteps are heard outside. BUNTER
ducks out of sight behind the
counter. TEMPLE, DABNEY and
FRY come in.*)

TEMPLE :

There's no one here, it's quite all
right !

FRY :

Where's Mrs. Mimble ? Not in sight ?

TEMPLE :

No matter, we can help ourselves.

DABNEY :

Oh, rather ! Plenty on the shelves !
(*They help themselves to cake and
lemonade and sit down at the table.*)

TEMPLE :

Now tell me how the job has fared.
I hope that everything's prepared ?

DABNEY :

Oh, rather ! Tons of flour and soot !

FRY :

Red ink and gum as well, to boot !

DABNEY :

They're in the woodshed, on the
floor ;

All ready, just behind the door.

TEMPLE :

That's good ! We'll try to shorten
The smiles of Harry Wharton
And those Removite fags.

They say they're fond of rags
And never want to miss one——

We'll see how they like this one.

FRY :

They pillowed
us last night
in dorm
Until we gasped
for breath.

DABNEY :

Oh, rather! All
the blessed
form
Is cackling us
to death.

TEMPLE :

Let them cackle,
let them grin;
We'll show 'em
where the fun
comes in.
Well, let's get
going on the
lark;
You fellows go
and stand

Inside the wood-
shed in the
dark,

The soot and
stuff to hand;

And then, when either of you hears
A chap approach the shed,
The very second he appears
You'll swamp it on his head!
I'll go and find Removite men
And send them one by one
On some pretence to see you, then
We'll see a bit of fun!

FRY :

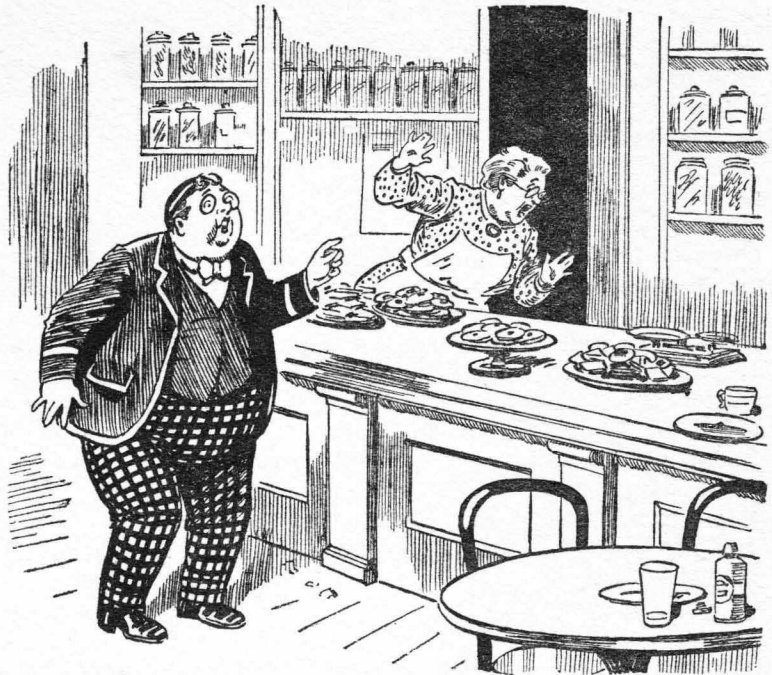
They're bound to get a fearful
fright!
We'll turn them red and black and
white!

TEMPLE :

That sounds all right! It's good
enough!
Let's start upon the job.

DABNEY :

We'll have to pay for all this stuff.
I've only got a bob!



BUNTER : "But stay! I've got a great idea. Ventriloquism! That's the trick."
(He gives a fat cough, and immediately the growling of a savage dog is heard from
behind the counter.) Mrs. MIMBLE (wildly): "Oh, help! A savage dog is here.
He'll bite, I'm sure. Oh, help me, quick!"

TEMPLE :

I'll see to that in half a minute.
The rag comes first, so let's begin it.
(They go out. BILLY BUNTER rolls out
from behind the counter, grinning
and munching.)

BUNTER :

So that's their little game!
Of all the artful tricks!
He, he! It seems a shame
To plan all that for nix!
It's quite a topping joke,
And yet I somehow feel
I'll have to put a spoke
In poor old Temple's wheel.
He'll send us one by one,
He says, to Gosling's shed;
They think it jolly fun
To turn us black and red;
Well, let them try! He, he!
If they get by with that



TEMPLE (little knowing Bunter is hiding behind the counter): "I'll go and find Removite men and send them one by one On some pretence to see you, then we'll see a bit of fun." FRY: "They're bound to get a fearful fright! We'll turn them red and black and white!"

And swamp that stuff on me,
I'll eat my Sunday hat!

(TEMPLE comes in and starts on seeing
BUNTER.)

TEMPLE:

How long have you been here?

BUNTER (grinning):

I've just come in!

TEMPLE (suspiciously):

Oh, have you? Well, it's queer,
For I've been standing near
And you did not appear.
And why that grin?

BUNTER:

Oh, nothing much! Just thoughts,
you know!

Have you seen Mrs. Mimble?

TEMPLE:

No!

I'd better leave the money on
The counter!

(He puts a half-crown on the counter, but it rolls off and drops behind. He goes round behind the counter.)

Bother, where's it gone?

(He drops out of sight behind the counter and starts groping for the coin.)

BUNTER:

If you've dropped half-a-crown there,
You'd better leave it down there.

(MRS. MIMBLE and GOSLING rush in. The

former is armed with a mop, the latter with a broom. They flourish these wildly, knocking cakes off the counter and nearly hitting each other.)

MRS. MIMBLE (shrieking):

Hoosh! Woosh! Get out, you brute!

Get out of here, you rascal! Scoot!
(She bangs her mop on the counter.)

GOSLING:

Now what's the good o' screaming?
There's no dorg 'ere, I'm thinking.
I fancy you've been dreaming—

MRS. MIMBLE (indignantly):

I fancy you've been drinking!

GOSLING:

Ho! Wot I ses is this—

MRS. MIMBLE:

Hit him! Please don't miss!

(BUNTER cackles as the porter raises

his broom and brings it down with a terrific thump on the hidden
TEMPLE.)

TEMPLE (*fiendishly*):

Ow-ow! What's that? Yaroooooh!

MRS. MIMBLE (*faintly*):

There! Can't you hear it shriek?

GOSLING:

Yes, mum! I never knoo

That savage dorgs could speak!

MRS. MIMBLE (*hysterically*):

Oh, kill it, kill it, kill it!

(TEMPLE rises into view caressing his head.)

GOSLING:

No, that won't do, mum, will it?

TEMPLE:

Ow-wow! You madman! Stoppit!

You nearly broke my crown!

You put that broom down! Drop it!

You hear me? Put it down!

GOSLING:

Well, there's your dorg, mum—yes!

I knoo as you was wrong.

It's just a trick,

I guess;

I thought so all along!

MRS. MIMBLE:

Oh, Master Temple, it's too bad

To give me such a scare!

GOSLING:

And now you'll come with me, my lad, To settle this affair!

TEMPLE:

You're scatty, Gosling! Oh, my napper!

GOSLING:

You'll come with me to Mr. Capper.

MRS. MIMBLE:

No doubt you think it clever To make this dreadful scene!

TEMPLE:

I didn't do it—never!

I don't know what you mean!

GOSLING:

Hindeed? You tell such things as these

To Mr. Capper, if you please!

So come with me. We'll see him now! (*Goes out.*)

TEMPLE (*following him out*):

I've not done anything! Ow-wow!

BUNTER:

Oh, what a horrid trick!



TEMPLE (*fiendishly, as the broom thumps down on his head*): "Ow-ow! What's that? Yaroooooh!"
MRS. MIMBLE: "There! Can't you hear it shriek?"
GOSLING: "Yes, mum. I never knoo that savage dorgs could speak!"

It's very much too thick !
I hope he gets the stick !
MRS. MIMBLE (*severely*) :
You, I think, will be the next
To get the cane. I'm very vexed !
Some goods, if I am not mistaken,
From off my counter you have
taken ?

BUNTER :
Oh, really, ma'am, it's quite all
right ;
My postal-order's due to-night !

MRS. MIMBLE :
Yes, yes ; I think I've heard of it,
And don't believe a word of it.
I cannot let you owe for it ;
To Mr. Quelch I'll go for it.

BUNTER :
I've paid for it. It's dropped behind
The counter, I am sure.
And if you look, you're sure to find
A half-crown on the floor.
(MRS. MIMBLE *puts on her glasses*
and searches for it. HARRY
WHARTON *comes in cheerily.*)

WHARTON :
Hallo ! Look out, old Owl,
For Loder's on the prowl !
I think there's trouble brewing ;
Now what have you been doing ?

BUNTER :
Oh, lor' ! I haven't done the lines
He gave me yesterday.

WHARTON :
Is that it ? Well, by all the signs
There's trouble on the way.

MRS. MIMBLE (*bobbing up*) :
The coin is here ! It's very strange !

BUNTER :
I'll have some cakes by way of
change.

WHARTON :
A ginger-pop for me, ma'am, please.
(*Enter CHERRY exuberantly.*)

CHERRY :
I'll have a cup of tea, ma'am, please.
Here, Bunter, Coker's on your track ;
He wants his pie and seed-cake back !

BUNTER (*groaning*) :
Oh, dear ! Oh, lor' !
How many more ?

WHARTON :
Be sure your sins will find you out.
You'd better scoot—don't hang
about.

BUNTER :
That pie I didn't touch,
Upon my davy !
It wasn't very much,
And had no gravy.
(MRS. MIMBLE *is serving them with*
food as LODER enters, complete with
cane.)

LODER :
Bunter !
BUNTER (*in alarm*) :
I'm not here !
I'm really not—no fear !

LODER :
The lines I gave you yesterday—
Have you done them ?

BUNTER :
Yes, no, of course ! I mean to
say,
I've just begun them.

LODER :
We'll see if " six " will help you ;
If that's no good, I'll scalp you !
Bend over !

BUNTER :
Just a tick——

LODER :
I said bend over—quick !
(BUNTER *bends over dismally.*)
Because your lines aren't done,
Take that ! (*Whack.*)

CHERRY :
That's number one.

LODER :
Because I'm tired of you,
Take that ! (*Whack.*)

WHARTON :
And that makes two.

BUNTER (*roaring*) :
Ow ! Stoppit, Loder, and perhaps
I'll tell you—I'm not joking—

Where you can go and find some chaps
Who're playing cards and smoking.

LODER (*starting*):

What? Where are they? Speak!

BUNTER:

They're in the woodshed.

WHARTON and CHERRY:

Sneak!

LODER:

Be quiet! Oh, the woodshed, eh?

Right-ho! I'll take a walk that way!

I'll put a stopper to their bliss,

And just because you've troubled

To tell me that, I'll tell you this:

Your hundred lines are doubled!

(*Exit LODER.*

WHARTON and CHERRY look grimly at the groaning BUNTER.)

WHARTON:

How dare you sneak to Loder?

CHERRY (*picking up a siphon of soda-water*):

Let's treat him to a soda!

(*He squirts it at BUNTER, who dodges wildly.*)

BUNTER:

Keep off! No matter what I said, There's no chap smoking in the shed!

WHARTON:

Then why send Loder there?

BUNTER:

Oh, rats! That's my affair.

(*COKER rushes in, wielding a cricket stump.*)

COKER:

Oh, here you are, you bloated tub! I'll teach you—collaring my grub!

(*He lays into BUNTER with the stump.*)



BUNTER (*roaring as Loder swipes him with the cane*): "Ow! Stop it, Loder, and perhaps I'll tell you—I'm not joking—where you can find some chaps who're playing cards and smoking."

BUNTER (*yelling*):

It wasn't me, I say!

What's happened, anyway?

COKER:

You know what's happened well enough—

You've pinched my pie and other stuff.

BUNTER:

Leave off! It wasn't me, I vow!

I'll tell you where your grub is now.

COKER :

Oh, will you? Well, where is it, then?

BUNTER :

Pinched by a gang of Fourth Form men.

A rabbit pie, a hefty cake,
And other things. I saw them take
The tuck into the woodshed, so
I dare say it's still there, you know.

COKER :

The woodshed, eh? Is that the truth?

CHERRY :

Oh, Bunter's such a blameless youth

That he could never tell a lie,
Not even for a rabbit pie.

BUNTER :

You'll find it there, that's flat!

COKER :

It better be, mind that!
(COKER *exits.*)

WHARTON :

Now, Bunter, what's the little game?

Come, out with it! Give it a name!
(*Before BUNTER can answer, TEMPLE rushes in furiously and collars him.*)

TEMPLE (*punching furiously*):

I know it now! You caused that row!

When Gosling told old Capper
What happened here, I soon knew how

I got this aching napper!

BUNTER :

Ow! Take this beast away!

MRS. MIMBLE :

Stop, young gentlemen, pray!
(WHARTON *and* CHERRY *pull* TEMPLE *away.*)

CHERRY :

I think you must be off your dot!

TEMPLE :

Perhaps! But Bunter knows I'm not.

Mysterious voices calling out

When Bunter's anywhere about
Are easily explained, no doubt!

WHARTON :

I still can't make out what's the matter.

BUNTER :

Oh, he's as mad as any hatter!
But, I say, Temple, just a word:
Fry's looking for you, so I've heard.
He asked me if I'd tell you so,
And says that you know where to go.

TEMPLE :

All right, then, I will hop along,
But how I'll smash you if you're wrong!

(*Exit* TEMPLE.)

WHARTON (*curiously*):

And what's the place that Temple knows?

BUNTER :

Oh, well—the woodshed, I suppose.
(*He goes over towards door, but*
CHERRY stops him.)

CHERRY :

You can't go yet, old pippin! Stop!
We'll treat you to a ginger-pop.

BUNTER :

I simply can't remain;
I'll have to go without it.

WHARTON :

You'll stop till you explain
This business—all about it.

CHERRY :

Speak up, now, Bunty; make it clear.

BUNTER :

All right. I chanced to overhear
Those bounders Temple, Dab and Fry

Arranging here upon the sly
To send you and the other men
To Gosling's woodshed.

WHARTON :

Well, what then?

BUNTER :

They've got some soot and flour
and ink,
So you can guess the rest, I think.

CHERRY (*wrathfully*):

The cheeky chumps! Great pip!
Thanks, Porpoise, for the tip!

(BUNTER gives a wild yell as LODER dashes in. The prefect is as black as the ace of spades, clothed in soot as with a garment. BUNTER hops behind the counter. MRS. MIMBLE shrieks. WHARTON and CHERRY roar with laughter.)

LODER:

I'll thrash him, I'll smash him,
I'll bang and I'll bash him

Until he is pretty well dead!
I'll clump him, I'll thump him,
I'll rag and I'll bump him

For chucking this soot at my head.

(COKER dashes in. He is brilliant red, like an unearthly sunset. WHARTON and CHERRY, roaring with laughter, endeavour to keep them away from BUNTER.)

COKER (*wildly*):

Where is he, eh?
Where is he?
I'm aching to
get busy!

MRS. MIMBLE
(*faintly*):

I'm going mad,
I fear!
Red Indians
and negroes
here!

COKER:

I'll slaughter
him, I'll slay
him!

LODER:

I'll burst him
and I'll flay
him!

COKER:

I'll fearfully
chastise him!

LODER:

I'll thrash and
pulverise him!

(TEMPLE rushes in as white as snow. Flour covers him entirely. He waves his fists.)

TEMPLE:

Lemme gerrat him, lemme gerrat
him!

I'll rag him and scrag him and bash
him and bat him!

BUNTER (*yelling*):

Oh, keep them off, you chaps!

CHERRY (*to WHARTON*):

Line up! Here come some scraps!

COKER:

I'll massacre and mangle him!

LODER:

I'll scarify and strangle him!

(The three of them rush on BUNTER.

WHARTON and CHERRY meet them
shoulder to shoulder. There is a
terrific battle. BUNTER catches up
cakes, tarts, etc., and throws them.
The air is full of flying pastry.)



WHARTON: "How dare you sneak to Loder?" CHERRY (picking up siphon of soda-water and squirting it at Bunter): "Let's treat him to a soda." BUNTER: "Keep off! No matter what I said, there's no chap smoking in the shed."

MRS. MIMBLE screams for help and rushes out of the shop. The battle wages until MRS. MIMBLE returns with PROUT and CAPPER. Order is restored after a lot of shouting.)

MR. PROUT :

How dare you thus create
This most unseemly noise ?
Of course, I need not state
You're Mr. Quelch's boys !
No other Form, I'm sure,
Would tolerate such scenes ;
Get up from off the floor
And tell me what this means !

MR. CAPPER :

I had no doubt that it would prove
Entirely due to the Remove.

MR. PROUT :

A most unruly Form, sir, quite !
No Fifth Form boy would take
delight
In scenes like this.

MR. CAPPER :

And I may say
No Fourth Form boy would act this
way,
And give such reason for complaint !
I think they've daubed themselves
with paint——

MR. PROUT :

Those boys are, no doubt,
The leaders of this rout.
(To LODER) : Now, rascal, who are
you ?

LODER (*sullenly*) :

I'm Loder, sir—that's who !

MR. PROUT :

A Sixth Form boy ! My word !
Such things I've never heard !
To paint your features black
And mix in this attack——

LODER :

It's one of Bunter's stunts !

MR. PROUT :

Be silent, sir, at once !
(To COKER) : Now, boy, reveal your
shame,
And let us know your name.

COKER :

I'm Coker—don't you recognise
me ?

MR. PROUT (*taken aback*) :

A Fifth Form boy ! This does sur-
prise me !

A boy of my Form in this riot !

COKER :

But, sir, I——

MR. PROUT :

Wretched boy, be quiet !

MR. CAPPER (*smoothly*) :

I'm sorry, Prout, to see
A boy of your Form here ;
I have no doubt that he
Did not know you were near.
In my Form, happily,
I have no cause for fear.

MR. PROUT (*choking*) :

And what's your name ? Speak
out !

TEMPLE :

I'm Temple, Mr. Prout.

MR. PROUT (*with joy*) :

A Fourth Form boy, in fact ! Dear
me !
Well, Capper, this is most un-
pleasant !

It must be hard for you to see
A Fourth Form boy among those
present.

MR. CAPPER (*with fury*) :

Temple, follow me directly !
I'll deal with your offence correctly.
(*Exeunt CAPPER and TEMPLE.*)

MR. PROUT :

Loder, go to Doctor Locke—
I hope he sternly rates you ;
And Coker, come ; 'tis five o'clock !
Your punishment awaits you !
(*Exeunt PROUT, LODER and COKER.*)

CHERRY :

Well, Bunter's luck is always good ;
He wasn't even pasted !

MRS. MIMBLE :

But who's to pay for all this food
You've thrown about and wasted ?

WHARTON :
Well, Bunter's
saved us by
his works
From soot
and gum
and ink,
So on the
whole, and
in the circs,
We'll pay for
it, I think.

CHERRY :
Old Loder
looked quite
Hunnish
Because he
could not
punish
Our twenty-
stone dis-
grace.

We'll do it in
his place!
Bump him!

WHARTON :
That's the
thing to do!

BUNTER :
I say, you fellows—— Ow!
Yaroooh!

(BUNTER is being bumped as the
curtain comes down.)

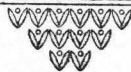
NOTE TO PERFORMERS.

Do not use soot or ink for Loder or Coker, as these are difficult to get off and might spoil the clothes. For soot use burnt cork, and for red ink use ordinary rouge, which you may obtain for a few pence at the chemist's. A black "eyebrow pencil" will be useful



LODER (as he rushes into the tuckshop and Bunter hops behind the counter):
"I'll thrash him, I'll smash him, I'll bang and I'll bash him until he is pretty well dead. I'll clump him, I'll thump him, I'll rag and I'll bump him for chucking this soot at my head!"

to add to the effect of the burnt cork, and the rouge should be light carmine, as this is the nearest colour to red ink. Flour may be used in Temple's case, as this does not harm the clothes. First lay a coat of No. 20 white greasepaint on the face, and finish off with flour or starch. This may also be used to give Gosling grey hair if you are not in possession of a "bald" wig. If you have no lady's hair wig for the performer who plays Mrs. Mimble, and wish to avoid the expense of hiring one, you should let him wear a "mob cap," which will no doubt be readily supplied by an affectionate aunt or friend.





Au Revoir.

YOU'VE reached the only dismal stage,
Which is, of course, my final page.
We've had enjoyment, you and I,
And now it's time to say Good-bye!

But let's be cheerful while we may;
We'll meet again some other day.
Next year you'll find me on the stall
All ready when you pay your call.

Yes, I'll be waiting for you, chum,
And hoping you'll be sure to come;
You would not purposely desert me,
For that would disappoint and hurt me!

Meanwhile, the lads of whom I speak
Are waiting for you every week
In rattling yarns of school and sport,
All stories of the finest sort.

If you have twopence you can pay,
The MAGNET every Saturday
Will give you all the Greyfriars news.
What finer value could you choose?

St. Jim's, of course, I could not miss!
The GEM, each Wednesday, sees to this.
The price of this is twopence, too!
My chums delight in it—do you?

And if you'd purchase (for a song)
A host of stories, extra long,
Then buy each month the SCHOOLBOYS'
OWN
For fourpence—well, it stands alone!

So, as you see, if you're about
When all these ripping books come out,
And buy them at your nearest stall,
We need not say Good-bye at all!



THE EDITOR

