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  **The First Chapter.  
  
 A Thunderbolt for Bunter!**  
“HERE he is!”  
 “Here’s Bunter!”  
 “Poor old Bunter!”  
 Billy Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove blinked round him in surprise. A dozn fellows in the big doorway all spoke at once as he rolled up to the House. They were apparently waiting for Bunter to come in, and watching for him.  
 Which was surprising, for Billy Bunter, though of unlimited importance in his eyes, was of no importance whatsoever in anybody else’s. His Comings and goings, as a rule, excited no attention—though no doubt his goings were preferred to his comings!  
 “I say, you fellows—” began the surprised fat junior.  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo!” Here you are” roared Bob Cherry. “Where have you been, you bold, bad barrel?”  
 “Eh? I’ve been to the bunshop at Courtfield—”  
 “Gammon!” said Johnny Bull.  
 “I’ve had tea there with him Mauly—”  
 “Sez you!” grinned Skinner.  
 “Your for it, old fat man!” said Harry Wharton.  
 Bunter blinked at the juniors through his big spectacles more and more surprised. The Owl of the Remove had rolled home to Greyfriars in quite a cheery mood that half-holiday in time for call-over. There was a happy, shiny, sticky look on his fat face which seemed to bear out his statement that he had been out to tea. Certainly he had been somewhere where there was jam! It was never necessary to engage the services of Sherlock Holmes or Ferrers Locke to discover what Bunter had last had for a meal. Clues always remained on his fat face.  
 “I say, you fellows, what’s this game?” demanded Bunter. “I haven’t done anything—--”  
 “Didn’t you say you’d tea’d with Mauleverer?” asked Bob Cherry.  
 “Eh? Yes!”  
 “You’ve done Mauly!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Beast! I say, you fellows, what’s up?” asked Bunter, beginning to feel alarmed.  
There were many sins on Bunter as fat conscience, most of them connected with the lawless annexation of grub. “I say, is anything up?”   
 “The game is!” grinned Skinner. “Your game, old man! The Head wants you in his study.”   
 “ Oh lor’” gasped Bunter. “Well, I never had the pie!”   
 “The what?” ejaculated Harry Wharton.   
 “The pie!” said Bunter firmly. “If there’s a pie missing, I know nothing about it! I never touched it! Besides, I shouldn’t have, if I’d been certain of finding Mauly at the bunshop! But you know what Mauly is —always dodging a fellow! Not that I had the pie, you know! I never there was one! Measly thing, too—hardly any gravy in it—”  
 “Oh, my hat!”  
 “It’s something more than a pie this time, you fat duffer!” said Wharton. “It’s all over the House, fathead! You’ve been out of bounds!”  
 “I haven’t!” roared Bunter.  
 “Pub haunting!” chortled Skinner. “Fancy Bunter! Bold, bad Bunter! Bunter, the giddy kipper! Bunter, the rorty dog!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha”  
 “You’re for it, Bunter!” grinned Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.  
 “Beast!” roared Billy Bunter, in alarm. “I haven’t done anything! Think I’m a smoking, horsey bounder like you, Smithy? Think I want to get the sack, like you? The beak might not let me off as he did you!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Why, you fat sweep!” exclaimed the Bounder angrily; and he made a movement towards the fat junior. Tom Redwing pulled him back.  
 “Chuck it, Smithy! Bunter’s Redwing to get enough from the Head—”  
 “The jolly old sack!” grinned Skinner. “Fancy Bunter bunked! All right for us—but what a blow for his people when he gets home!”  
 “May let HIM off with a flogging!” remarked Johnny Bull. “The Head knows that Bunter is a blithering idiot, and—”  
 “Oh, really, Bull—” Billy Bunter, really alarmed now, blinked to and fro, his little round eyes popping behind his big, round spectacles. “I say, you fellows, if this is a lark—”  
 “The larkfulness is not terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!” said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head. “You are going to get the absurd and ridiculous chopper.”  
 “What for?” shrieked Bunter.  
 “You know what you’ve been up to.” said Harry Wharton. “I suppose there isn’t any mistake about it?”  
 “No jolly fear!” said the Bounder. “I tell you I had it from the Head! Bunter was copped getting over the fence of the Three Fishers—a place, I believe, with a rather unsavory reputation—not that I know anything about it personally, of course—”  
 There was a chuckle from some of the Remove fellows. “hardly a week ago the bounder had been “sacked” after being caught at that delectable resort, though he had pulled through, after all. Probably there was no a fellow at Greyfriars who knew more about that dingy, disreputable den than the Bounder knew.  
 “He was copped, and he had the neck to give my name instead of his own,” went on Smithy, “and if I jolly well haven’t been in detention, and if the Head hadn’t found me in the Form-room, I should have got it right in the neck!”  
 “Oh!” gasped Bunter. “Is that it?”  
 “You own up?” exclaimed Bob Cherry.  
 “Oh, that’s all right!” said the Owl of the Remove. “You see, a beast threw my cap over the fence of the Three Fishers, and I went after it to get it back—”   
 “Too thin!” said Skinner, shaking his head. “Better make up a better one than that for the Head, Bunter!”  
 “I’m not going to tell the Head, fathead! He mightn’t take my word.” said Bunter. “He’s doubted my word before!”  
 “Go hon!”  
 “But that’s how it happened,” exclaimed Bunter, while the juniors eyed him very doubtfully, “and as I was getting back over the fence into the road, a sneaking, interfering, meddling rotter came along and makes me give him my name. He knew I was a Greyfriars chap from my cap, you see! I don’t know who he was—some meddling ass, you know! But I could see but he was going to barge in and tell the Head, so I didn’t give him my own name!”  
 “You give him mine!” roared the Bounder.  
 “Yes, old chap! You see, as you were in detention, I knew they couldn’t put it on you. Rather deep, wasn’t it?” Bunter grinned. “If that meddling rotter barged in and told the Head—I suppose he did, from what you say—Well, where was the harm? You were safe enough—and so was I! See?”  
 The juniors stared at Bunter.  
 “But do you think the man won’t know you again?” hooted Bob.  
 “He won’t see me again; I suppose he won’t come here any more.” said Bunter. “that’s why I’ve stayed out till close on call over, to give him plenty of time to get clear.” The fat Owl gave a sudden start. “I—I say, he’s not here still, is he? Why, it was hours and hours ago—--”  
 “He jolly well is!” said Bob.  
 “Oh crikey!”  
 “Didn’t you know who he was?” roared Johnny Bull.  
 “Eh? No! How should I know? I’d never seen the silly, meddling ass before!”  
 “He’s our new beak—quotes  
 “What—--”  
 “Mr. Smedley—--“”  
 “Eh?”  
 “Man who’s come to take Quelch’s place where he’s away—--”  
 “Oh lor’!”  
 Billy Bunter as fat jaw dropped! He blinked at the Remove fellows in blank dismay.  
 “The—the—n-n-new beak!” he stuttered. “Oh crikey! Smedley! Oh lor’! I knew that brute was coming this afternoon, but— Oh crumbs! Why, as soon as he sees me, he’ll know! Oh scissors!”  
 “He knows already, and so does the Head!” grinned the Bounder. “Smedley gave him your jolly old description—fat freak in specs—”  
 “Beast!”  
 “And they’re waiting for you!”  
 “Oh lor’!”  
 “Poor old Bunter!”  
 I—I—I say, you fellows!” tasped Bunter. “I—I really went over that fence for my cap—oh crikey! Just nipped over and back —oh my word, you know! I—I say, d-d-d-do you think the bea. will believe me?”   
 “Hardly!”   
 “Oh crikey!”   
 “Any man caught out of bounds night say that!” grinned Skinner. “Smithy told a tale about taking a short cut, once , when he was nabbed getting over that very fence!”   
 “That happened to be true, Skinner!” said the Bounder.   
 “Oh, of course!” said Skinner blandly. “Let’s hope Bunter’s yarn happens to be true, too. Let’s hope the Beak will think so! While there’s life, there’s hope!  
 “For goodness sake, Bunter, don’t tell the Head any whoppers when you see him. Said Harry Wharton anxiously. “Here may let you off with a whopping, knowing what a fool you are—”   
 “Beast!”   
 “ But if you tell him any lies, you fat duffer—”   
 “ Am I a fellow to tell lies?” demanded Bunter indignantly. “ Have you ever known me to do it? I ask you!”   
 “ Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Wingate!”   
 Wingate of the Sixth came through the crowd of juniors . Evidently he had sported Billy Bunter. He dropped his hand on a fat shoulder.   
 “ The Head wants you, Bunter!” he said.   
 “ I—I say, Wingate—” stammered Bunter.   
 “ Come on!”   
 “ It—it wasn’t me, Wingate—”   
 “ This way!”   
 “ But I wasn’t—I mean, I never—”   
 Wingate hooked the fat Owl of the Remove into the house, and marched him away to the Head’s study. Billy Bunter ‘s fat face was a picture of dismay and alarm as he went. Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars school, was quite a kind a benevolent old gentleman; but no fellow liked a personal interview with him in his study! Such interviews often had a painful outcome.   
 The Remove fellows were left discussing the affair with considerable interest. The question was, whether Billy Bunter would be sacked, or only flogged—an interesting question to his Form; perhaps still more interesting to Bunter himself! Mr. Eustace Smedley, the new master of the Remove, had been only a few hours in the school; but his coming had already provided his Form with a sensation.   
   
   
  **THE SECOND CHAPTER.  
  
 Bunter Before The Beak!**  
“BUNTER, sir!” said Wingate.   
 Dr. Moore was writing at his table. He glanced up.   
 “Thank you, Wingate! Will you ask Mr. Smedley to step here?”   
 “Certainly, sir!”   
 The Sixth Form prefect left the study, leaving Billy Bunter with his headmaster.  
 Dr. Locke resumed writing, oblivious of the presence of the fat junior, while he waited for the arrival of the new master.   
 Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. He shifted from one fat leg to the other, and then back to the one. Possibly the Head’s work was of some importance—to the Head! But it was rather thick, in Bunter’s opinion, to leave him standing like this, with his fate in the balance, in a state of anxiety and alarm. After a few minutes Bunter ventured to break the silence.   
 “If—if you please, sir—” he mumbled.   
 The Head glanced up again.   
 “ Kindly say nothing, Bunter, until Mr. Smedley is here.” he said.   
 “Oh! Yes, sir! I was only going to say that it wasn’t me, sir—”   
 “ That will do, Bunter!”   
 “ I mean to say, sir I never—”  
 “Silence!”   
 “ Oh, lor’!” groaned Bunter.   
 There was a note in the head’s voice that was not to be denied; and Bunter was silent again.   
 The silence in the headmaster’s study was broken only by the scratching of the pen. Dr. Locke’s silvery head was bent over his work, to which he was giving all his attention, regardless of Bunter.   
 The fat junior’s eyes glittered through his spectacles at that silvery head. Really, it looked as if the beak had forgotten his existence, which was extremely irritating to Bunter. He scowled at the bent head; then he raised a fat fist and shook it at the same, secure in the knowledge that Dr. Locke had no eyes in the top of his head, and could not see him.   
 It was rather unfortunate that Dr. Locke came to the end of a paragraph at that precise moment, and raised his head.  
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 He stared at Bunter, whose fat fist, rather in want of a wash, was displayed fairly under his nose as he looked up.  
 “Bless my soul!” ejaculated the Head. “What—what are you doing, Bunter?”   
 “Oh crikey!” gasped Bunter.. I—I—I was going to—to— scratch my n-n-nose, sir—”   
 “Boy!”   
 “I—I—I mean, sir—”   
 Fortunately for Bunter, there was a step in the passage, and a tap at the door. It opened, to admit Mr. Smedley, the new master of the Remove.   
 Dr. Locke’s attention was transferred to him, much to Billy Bunter’s relief.   
 “You wished to see me, sir?” said the new master.   
 “Yes, Mr. Smedley! Bunter is here!” said the Head.  
 Bunter’s eyes, and spectacles, turned on the new, turned on the newcomer. He knew him again at once! He was a rather tall young man, with hard, keen eyes, and a hard mouth, with a small black mustache. He was interfering stranger who who had come along at the unlucky moment when Bunter was getting over the fence of the Three Fishers, on the Courtfield road.  
 It could not go and on Bunter spot the lean that he was time you beat who was expected at the school that afternoon. Had he been aware of that Bunter certainly would not have given Vernon-Smith’s name as his own when he was questioned.  
 The heart eyes turned on Bunter without much interest. But it was plain that Mr. Smedley recognised him at once.  
 “Is that the boy , Mr. Smedley?” asked the Head.  
 “ Yes, sir. That is the boy.”   
 “ Bunter!”   
 “ Oh lor’!”   
 “ this gentleman, Mr. Smedley , is your new Form-master, who has come to take the place of Mr. Quelch’s while he is away. I presume that you were not aware of that when you give him a false name ?”   
 “ Oh! No, sir!” gasped Bunter. I—I thought he was just some meddling ass butting in, sir—”   
 “What?” ejaculated the Head.  
 “I never knew he’d be here when I came back, sir.” groaned Bunter.” I thought he’d be gone long before, if he butted in at all. How was I to know who he was, sir? He never told me.”   
 “That is immaterial, Bunter! There is no doubt that you have been out of school bonds this afternoon , in a place that it is strictly forbidden for any Greyfriars more to enter!” said the Head sternly.   
 “ Oh, no, sir!” gasped Bunter. “ The—the fact is, I—I haven’t! It wasn’t me at all, sir, that Mr. Smedley saw!”  
 “ It was not you!” exclaimed the Head.   
 “ No, sir! Some other fellow like me. Remove fellows are much alike, you know, sir—and—and it was some other chap!”  
 “Bless my soul!” said the Head blankly.  
 Mr. Smedley gazed at Bunter. He had seen a good many of the remove by this time. But he had not seen any fellow like Bunter yet! Bunter rather prided himself upon his distinguished appearance—and there was no doubt that any man who saw Bunter once knew him again! His circumference was not to be mistaken.  
 “That’s how it was, sir!” said Bunter eagerly. “It wasn’t me at all, sir! I shouldn’t have given Smithy’s name, sir, if I’d been asked! Besides, I never knew it was Mr. Smedley! Hadn’t the faintest idea!”  
 “This is surely a most extraordinary boy, sir!” said the new master, staring at Bunter.   
 “ A remarkably stupid boy, Mr. Snedley!” said Dr. Locke. “And as untruthful, I fear, as he is stupid!”   
 “M-m-may I go now, sir?” gasped Bunter, edging towards the door. “Now—now you know it was all a mistake, sir—”   
 “ You may not go, Bunter!”   
 “Oh, lor’!”  
 “It is clear, Bunter, that you have been in a disreputable resort this afternoon! I shall—”   
 “I haven’t, sir!” groaned Bunter. “ That beast Ponsonby—it was all his fault, sir! Oh, dear!”   
 “ What?” Dr Locke frowned. He had heard a good many things about Ponsonby, of Highcliffe School. It was in the merry Pon’s company at the Three Fishers that the Bounder had been caught. “ Bunter! Do you mean to say that you visited that disreputable resort with the boy Ponsonby?”   
 Bunter jumped.   
 “ Oh, no, I didn’t! I went—I never went—-- I—I—-I—-mean—”   
 “What do you mean?” snapped the Head.   
 “ He chucked my cap over the fence, sir!” gasped Bunter. “I had to climb over the fence to get it back. That was all, sir."   
 “Oh!” ejaculated the Head.   
 “ I wasn’t in the place five minutes, and I never went anywhere near the pub, sir—”   
 “The what?”   
 “ I mean the inn, sir. Just inside the fence to get my cap. That was all , sir.” groaned Bunter.   
 “ Do you expect me to believe that statement, Bunter?”  
 “Oh, lor’! I—I hope so, sir!”   
 Dr. Locke’s frown grew sterner. Billy Bunter’s defence was, in point of fact, a little too complete. Either his statement that he hadn’t been there at all, his statement that he had only gone in after his cap might have been believed. But both those statements couldn’t possibly be . The natural result was that the head master believed neither.   
 “ I do not believe you, Bunter!” said Dr. Locke sternly. “ If there is some grain of truth, mixed up with your untruthful statements, I cannot undertake to sift it out. The fact remains that you were discovered climbing out over a disreputable resort, and for whatever reason you may have entered, you were well aware that you were breaking a strict rule of the school. If, however, I could believe what your motive was such an innocent one—”  
 “I—I hope you can take my word, sir!” groaned Bunter.   
 “I can do nothing of the kind, Bunter.” said the Head coldly.” You are too unscrupulously untruthful for that.”   
 “Oh, really, sir! I wish Mr. Quelch was here, sir. He would tell you that I’m the most truthful chap in the Remove, sir.”   
 “Mr. Quelch has told me what you are the most untruthful in all his experience, Bunter.”   
 “ Oh lor’!”   
 “Moreover, you gave a false name when Mr. Smedley questioned you. You gave for a the name of another Remove boy.”  
 “I knew Smithy could prove that he hadn’t been there, sir!” gasped Bunter. “That’s why I give his name, sir. Not that I was there, sir—”   
 “What?”  
 “It wasn’t really me at all, sir. I —I haven’t been anywhere near the press this afternoon.”  
 “You have just told me that you climbed the fence for your cup!” almost shrieked the Head.   
 “Well, I had to, sir, when that Highcliffe cad threw it over, sir.” argued Bunter. “I couldn’t go on to Courtfield without my cap.”  
 “Then how dare you say that you were not there?”  
 “So I wasn’t, sir—nowhere near the place! I went the other way around, sir, going to Courtfield, and never passed the Three Fishers at all. I never saw Mr. Smedley, sir, and he—he—he never saw me. He saw somebody else, sir,—and took him for me, sir. That—that’s how it really was, sir. I—I—I hope you believe me, sir.”  
 “Believe you!” gasped the Head.  
 “Yes, sir. M-a-may I-g-g-go now?”  
 Dr. Locke reached for his cane. Mr. Smedley was gazing at Bunter in something like wonder. Probably the happy Owl of the Remove was a new experience for that young man. The headmaster rose to his feet.  
 “Bunter, I am disposed to credit your statement that you climbed the fence because an ill natured boy threw your cap over. But you entered forbidden precincts; you gave a false name, and you have stood in my presence of killing a series of outrageous falsehoods. Bend over that chair, Bunter!”  
 “Oh crikey! I—I say, sir—--”  
 “Instantly!” hooted the Head.  
 “Oh lor’!”  
 Billy Bunter bent over chair in a drawer full state of horrid anticipation.  
 Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe!  
 The roar from the heads study could be heard half across the quad. Remove fellows there exchanged glances. That terrific bellow was an answer to the question—whether it was a whopping or the sack. Evidently it was a whopping.  
 It might have been a dozen whoppings rolled into one, to judge by the uproar. Certainly Bunter’s six swipes were severe enough  
 “Now, Bunter—”  
 “Yaroooh!’ roared Bunter.  
 “You may go!”  
 “Yoo-hooop!”   
 “Cease that ridiculous noise instantly, Bunter!”  
 “Yah-hoop! Whooop!”  
 “Or I will cane you again!”  
 “Oh!” gasped Bunter.  
 He ceased the ridiculous noise, and quitted the study in haste. The ridiculous noise recommenced, however, as he went down the corridor. And it continued till he reached the Remove passage. And for quite a long time afterwards fellows who went up or down the passage head the fat owl was signs of role from Study No. 7.  
  
 **THE THIRD CHAPTER.  
  
 Putting Wharton’s Back Up!**  
“That man Wharton here?”  
 Tubb of the Third Form put his head into the Rag and stared round. It was not yet time for prep, and a good many of the Remove and the Fourth were in the Rag. Among them were the Famous Five, who, with some of the Remove fellows, were discussing the new beak, who had arrived to take the place of the “late lamented” Quelch, as Skinner called him.  
 The Remove fellows agreed that Mr. Smedley looked like a man who would stand no nonsense—for which there were rather inclined to respect him. As he was only half Quelch’s age, and obviously could not have had anything like Quelch’s experience, some of the Fellows had contemplated a “rag" in the Form-room to begin with. But three had given up that idea after seeing Mr. Smedley. He did not look like a man to the ragged with impunity. Whether they were going to like him or not the Removites did not feel at all sure.  
 He had not made a good impression on them by “nailing” a Remove man on his way to the school. True, it was any masters duty to “nail” a fellow out of bounds, but it was not a pleasant way to begin, and most of the fellows thought that he might have left such a disagreeable duty till he was, at least, installed at the school as a master.  
 Billy Bunter hated him with a deep, dark, and deadly hatred. Bunter declared that he was a spying rotter, a meddling ass, and an interfering beast. These condemnatory opinions were founded on the fact that Bunter had not yet recovered from the Head’s whopping. But Vernon-Smith, also, had something to say in the new masters disfavour  
 “I tell you he was disappointed when it turned out that it wasn’t I that he nailed at the Three Fishers,” the Bounder told the fellows in the Rag. “I could see it all over his face.”  
 “Why should he care?” asked Harry Wharton.  
 “Blessed if I know—unless he likes to see a fellow in trouble. But I jolly well saw it, anyhow.”  
 “I say, you fellows, he’s a frightful beast!” groaned Billy Bunter. “I’ve still got a pain—”   
 “Ha, ha, ha! ”  
 “it’s got a bit odd, you men.” remarked Peter Todd. “from what I hear this man Smedley is a stranger in these parts. Nobody’s ever seen him here before, anyhow. How the bickens did he know the Three Fishers was out of bounds? How the thump did he hear of the place at all before he came here?”  
 “That’s rather queer.” agreed Wharton. “The place has a juicy reputation about these parts, but I don’t suppose it’s ever been kind of a dozen miles away.”  
 “He knew all right, the beast!” groaned Bunter. “And we weren’t anywhere near the pub, you know; only at the fence on the Courtfield road, where they have a sign up. Might have been a teashop where we could go if we liked, for all he knew. But he jumped on me at once.”  
 “That man Wharton here?” bawled Tubb of the Third from the doorway, in tones of impatience.  
 “That man Wharton” heard him, but he heeded not. A howl from a grubby fag of the Third Form was beneath the notice of the captain of the Remove.  
 “Look here!” roared Tubb, indignantly. “If that man Wharton’s here, his beak wants him in his study—see?”  
 “Oh!” Harry Wharton glanced round at that. “Does Smedley want me, Tubb?”  
 “Yes, he does!” snorted Tubb. “Sent me to find you—bother him! You can tell him for me, Wharton, that Third Form men don’t carry messages for other men’s beaks—see? Tell him he’s a cheeky ass, while you’re about it!”  
 And Tubb of the Third, justly indignant, slammed the door of the Rag, and stocked away. Evidently Mr. Smedley, being new to Greyfriars, did not know how important Third Form “men” were—especially such a “man” as George Tubb.  
 “What the thump does he want you for, Harry?” asked Frank Nugent. “You haven’t been getting into a rout already?”  
 Harry Wharton laughed.  
 “Hardly! I suppose he wants to jaw to me because I’m head boy. It’s one of the privileges of head boy to be jawed by his beak! I’d better cut off if he wants me.” Remarked if if if if if if th if and O caption shows and  
 The captain of the Remove left the Rag and make his way to Masters’ Studies. He tapped at the door of the study that had been Mr. Quelch’s and was now Mr. Smedley’s. A rather hard voice bade him enter, and he went in.  
 Mr. Smedley was seated in Mr. Quelch’s armchair, with a cigarette in his mouth.  
Wharton’s glance went involuntarily to the cigarette. If Mr. Quelch ever smoked, he never did so in the presence of his boys. At Greyfriars, as at other schools, there was, in fact, a certain amount of solemn humbug on this subject. Masters were never seen to smoke, except by chance.  
 Even Prout, the master of the Fifth, who often rolled into his Form-room fairly reeking of his hefty Trichinopoly cigars, was seldom or never seen with one in his mouth.  
 Wharton’s glance was involuntary, and it was instantly averted. But Mr. Smedley was quick on the uptake. As if reminded where he was, he threw the cigarette into the fire.  
 “Please sit down, my boy!” he said. He had already met Wharton, and was aware that he was head boy of the Form. “Now, Wharton, as my head boy, I should like to have a few words with you.”  
 “Certainly, Sir!” said Harry, In His Politest Manner.  
 It was, as he had said, a head boy’s privilege to be “jawed” by his beak, and a head boy, like everybody else, has to take the rough with the smooth.  
 He felt Mr. Smedley’s sharp eyes keenly on him. On his side, he regarded Mr. Smedley with some interest. Mr. Quelch was to be away till after the Easter holidays, and perhaps longer, recuperating after a severe attack of influenza.  
 Smedley might be weeks at Greyfriars, or possibly a whole term, so the kind of man he was was rather interesting to the fellows who had to work with him. All Wharton knew of him was that he was a temporary master, supplied by the usual school agency—Messrs Leggett & Teggers.  
 It was said that the Head had heard about him, though he had never met him before, and that Mr. Prout if had been heard to say that he had known a man named Smedley at Oxford. That, however, could hardly have been this man Smedley, who had probably been at his prep school when Prout was at Oxford.  
 While Mr. Smedley talked, it was Wharton’s business chiefly to listen and to answer questions put to him. The new master evidently wanted to know all about the Remove and it’s manners and customs.  
 For a quarter of an hour or so the talk was what Wharton expected it to be—on matters connected with the Form, and the Form work, and classes, and preparation, and so forth. But the captain of the remove had a vague impression that there was something else in Mr. Smedley’s mind of time. And he knew that impression was correct, when the new master said suddenly;  
 “There is a boy in the Remove named Vernon-Smith?”  
 “Yes, sir!” answered Harry.  
 “Owing to what happened today on my way here, I have heard a good deal about this boy Vernon-Smith.” said Mr. Smedley.  
 “Yes, sir!” said Harry again, wondering blankly what was coming.  
 “I understand,” said Mr. Smedley, “that he is a boy of some dubious character.”   
 Wharton looked at him.  
 He was head boy of the Remove, and therefore, came into official contact with his Form-master to that extent. But if Smedley supposed that he was going to say anything against any fellow in the Form, Smedley was making a mistake.   
 “It seems,” said Mr. Smedley, “that allowed a week ago this boy Vernon-Smith was sentenced to be expelled from Greyfriars.”  
 “That is well known, sir.”  
 “For some reason the headmaster allowed him to continue here.”  
 “He is still here, certainly, sir!”  
 “From what I have heard—from the headmaster, of course,”—said Mr. Smedley, rather hastily. “he is a boy who requires to be kept under some observation.”  
 “I suppose the Head knows best, sir.”  
 “As his Form-master, the matter concerns me very closely, Wharton! I do not desire to have in my Form a boy likely to bring disgrace upon the school, and discredit upon me as his Form-master.  
 “Indeed, sir!” said Harry, hardly knowing what to say.  
 “You are, of course, well acquainted with this boy?”  
 “Of course.”  
 “As I have heard the very best account of you from your head master, Wharton, I conclude that a boy of this questionable character is not a friend of yours?”  
 Wharton coloured.  
 “We’re friendly enough, sir.” he answered.  
 Mr. Smedley gave him a sharp glance.  
 “You are my head boy, Wharton! I shall expect your help and loyal assistance.”  
 “Certainly, sir!”  
 “I have reason to believe that the headmaster doubts very seriously whether this boy Vernon-Smith has changed his disreputable course of conduct since his narrow escape from expulsion. From what I have heard of him I doubt it very much myself. In the event of any further known as F lee on the spot, what may never reach the ears of the masters may very likely be common knowledge in the boy’s own Form.  
 “That’s not uncommon, sir!” said Wharton, with a faint smile.  
 Certainly it was a fact that if the Head had known as much about Smithy as the remove fellows knew, his sentence of expulsion would have been very unlikely indeed to be rescinded.  
 “Quite so,” said Mr. Smedley. “And, as head boy of my Form, Wharton, trusted by me, it will be your duty to acquaint me with any such matter   
 Wharton stared at him.  
 He could hardly believe his ears.  
 Was this fellow, he asked himself in wonder, such a rank outsider, such a toad, as to fancy that a Remove fellow would act as a spy and informer against another Remove fellow?  
 Wharton’s face crimsoned.  
 “ I’m afraid I don’t, sir!” answered the captain of the Remove coolly. “I’m not a prefect! A Sixth Form prefect has to report fellows—that’s his duty. Any other fellow who reported a fellow would be a sneak and a rotter, and would be cut by all his Form—and jolly well kicked too!”  
 “Wharton!”  
 Mr. Smedley half rose.  
 Wharton rose, too. He faced the new master, his face red, his heart beating rather fast. But he was ready to repeat his words, if necessary, and still more plainly, if they were not plain enough already.  
 The new masters hard jaw squared and a glint came into his hard face. But he controlled his anger.  
 “This is not what I expected of my head boy, Wharton.” he said at last.  
 “It’s what you might have expected from any Greyfriars fellow, sir!” answered Harry Wharton. “It’s no bizney of mine what Smithy does! Been head by doesn’t mean being a spy and a tell-tale!”  
 Mr. Snedley glanced round the study. Wharton knew what he was looking for—Mr. Quelch’s cane. But if the new master had thought of caning the   
captain of the Remove, he gave up the idea the next moment.  
 “Very well, Wharton!” he said quietly. “You may leave my study.”  
 Wharton left it.  
 The Remove fellows were going up to prep as he came along. He went up with them, his face still rather red, and breathing rather fast.  
 Herbert Vernon-Smith tapped him on the arm in the Remove passage.  
 “Like the new beak?” he asked.  
 “No!” answered Wharton briefly.  
 He went in to study No. 1 for prep. Frank Nugent gave him a curious look when the door was closed.  
 “Like the new beak?” he asked.  
 “No!” answered Wharton briefly.  
 “You’ve had a jaw with Smedley, Wharton?”  
 “Yes.”  
 “He seems to have rubbed you the wrong way.”  
 “A little!”  
 “What do you think of him?”  
 “I think he’s a toad and a rotter!” said the captain of the Remove. “I think it’s sickening for such a blighter to barge into Greyfriars! By gum, I wish Quelch was back! Pah! He’s left a nasty taste in my mouth.”  
 Wharton said no more; but that was enough to make his chum stare at him in astonishment. His face was still clouded as he sat at prep. The Remove fellows were wondering what their new beak was going to be like. Wharton knew—that he was the rankest of rank outsiders! It was not a pleasant discovery for the captain of the Remove.  
  
 **THE FOURTH CHAPTER.  
  
 A Catspaw Required!**  
“I SAY, you fellows!”  
 Billy Bunter blinked into Study No. 4, in the Remove, after prep. That study belonged to the bounder on his chum Ton Redwing. Bunter could hardly have considered himself “persona grata” in that study after his lawless use of the Bounder’s name that afternoon.  
 Considering that suspicious eyes were genuinely on the scapegrace of the school, that trickery of Billy Bunter’s might easily have caused serious trouble for the Bounder. But the fat Owl had apparently forgotten that little circumstance. Since then, Bunter had been caned by the Head! The effects had worn off by this time, but a few painful twinges still lingered. Bunter’s fat thoughts were occupied by that uncommonly severe licking, and his deep and deadly wrath towards the new master who had been the cause of it.  
 Redwing had finished prep, but Vernon-Smith was still at his books. This was rather new for the Bounder, who was often careless with prep.  
 But Smithy was on good behavior now. Redwing, with great earnestness, had urged him to make a good start with the new master, and not fall into the old state of semi-hostility that had reigned between Smithy and Mr. Quelch. And, seldom as the Bounder acted on good advice, he was doing so now. His recent escape from the sack had not exactly scared him, but it had make him think hard and think deep.  
 His father, intensely exasperated with his endless escapades, had disowned and disinherited him—and only the fact that Dr. Locke had allowed him to stay on at the school had caused Mr. Vernon-Smith’s to relax that severe sentence. It was a sharp lesson, that was not lost even on the reckless Bounder.  
 For the present, at least, Herbert Vernon-Smith was going to “walk delicately” to avoid trouble. Hence his unusual attention to his work that evening. Mr. Smedley if he put Smithy on construe the next morning, was going to have no cause of complaint.  
 Billy Bunter blinked in at the two juniors. Bunter had scuffled through prep, as usual, taken his chance with the new master, as he had been accustomed to taking it with Quelch. Smedley looked rather a hard customer; but a very hard customer indeed would have been required to make William George Bunter work!  
 “I say, you fellows—“repeated Bunter impatiently.  
 Vernon-Smith did not even look up. Tom Redwing waved the fat junior away. Bunter was not to be waved away, however. He rolled into the study, and shuts the door after him.  
 “I say—“ he snorted.  
 “Shut up” said Tom. “Smithy’s working.”  
 “What the thump is he working for?” grunted Bunter. “Smithy never works. Greasing up to new beak, or what?”  
 Vernon-Smith’s eyes glinted, and he laid down his pen. “Greasing” up to any master was hardly in the Bounder’s line. He prided himself on his reputation as a his reputation as a rebel, defiant of authority.  
 “You fat ass!” exclaimed Redwing, greatly annoyed. “Go and talk rot in some other study!” he saw at once the effect of Bunter’s words on the Bounder. Smithy had “chucked” work at once!  
 “Oh, really, Redwing! I came here to speak to Smithy!” said the fat Owl.  
 “You shut up! I say, Smithy—”  
 “Just the fellow I wanted to see!” remarked the Bounder grimly. He rose from the table, and glanced round the study for a fives bat. “you had the neck to give Smedley my name this afternoon, Bunter, when you were copped—--”  
 “I didn’t know the beast was the new beak here, Smithy! Besides, it was all right for you—as you were in detention, you were quite safe.”  
 “And suppose I’d cut detention?”  
 “Eh?”  
 “Suppose I’d been out of gates at the time without leave?”  
 “Oh crikey!” said Bunter. Evidently the fat junior had not thought of that possibility, though, really, in a fellow who knew Smithy might have thought of it.  
 “No harm done, as it turns out.” said Smithy. “But you’ve got to learn not to use other fellows’ names to crawl out of a scrape, Bunter.”  
 “Oh, really, Smithy—”  
 “Where’s that fives bat, Reddy?”  
 “I—I say, don’t be shirty, old chap!” urged Bunter, with a wary eye on the Bounder. “I say, I’ve come here to put you on to something! You don’t like that you beast Smedley, do you?”  
 “Not a lot!”  
 “He’s dining with the Head this evening.” said Bunter.   
 “What does that matter to me, fathead?”  
 “I mean, there’s nobody in his study. The beast got me a fearful licking from the Head! I want to take him out!” exclaimed Bunter. “I’ve got told his bottle of dom to put in his armchair! Fancy his face when he sits in it! He, he, he!”  
 “You blithering ass! exclaimed Redwing. “Take it back to Toddy! Smedley isn’t the man to play tricks like that on!”  
 “You shut up, Redwing! I’m talking to Smithy! Smithy isn’t afraid to jape the new beast, are you, Smithy ?”  
 Vernon-Smith’s smiled gamely. He understood why Bunter had come to study No. 4 now. Bunter wanted vengeance on the new beak who had caused his licking. But he did not want to handle the matter personally—not desiring to risk another licking! Bunter was in search of a catspaw!  
 “My idea is this,” said Bunter, blinking at the Bounder through his big spectacles. “You get into Smedley’s study with the gum, Smithy—”  
 “Do I?” said the Bounder. “  
 “Yes, old chap! I’ll keep watch at the end of the passage, in case Smedley comes back! The post of danger for me, you know!”  
 “Oh, my hat!”  
 “Safe as houses, old chap!” urged Bunter. “Smedley’s dining with the beak, over in the Head’s house; he won’t be back yet. You simply can’t be caught! Besides, I shall be on the watch. If he shows up, I’ll give you the tip.”  
 “Think it’s quite safe?”  
 “Absolutely!” said Bunter.  
 “Then why not put the gun in his study, yourself?”  
 “Oh, really, Smithy—”  
 “you fat chump!” said Tom Redwing, laughing.  
 “You shut up, Redwing! I say, smithy, don’t be a funk! That you beak is a beast! He’s put Wharton’s back up already! He’s got me a licking! Might have got you the sack! Look here—“  
 Vernon-Smith hab spotted the fives bat, on the bookshelf, by this time. He took it down.  
 “Come on, Smithy!” urged Bunter. “I’ll go with you, and—and wait at the end of the passage. Come on!”  
 “Coming!” answered Smithy. And he came—with the fives bat in his hand.  
 “I—I say, Smithy—yaroooh!” roared Bunter, as the end of the fives but jammed on his wealth ruled waistcoat. “Beast! Keep off! Oh crikey!”  
 Bunter turned and grabbed at the door.  
 Whack  
! The flat of the bart came down on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars, with a crack like a rifle shot.  
 “Whooooooop!” roared Bunter.  
 He tore the door open, and leaped into the passage.  
 Whack!  
 Another lick from the fives bat caught him as he leaped. Another fearful yell rang along the Remove passage as he disappeared.  
 The Bounder grinned, and and tossed the fives bat back on the bookshelf. Billy Bunter was gone! If he was still in want of a catspaw, he was not likely to come again to Study No. 4 in search of one!  
  
 **THE FIFTH CHAPTER.   
  
 Bunter’s Catch!**  
“OLD ass!” murmured Billy Bunter.  
 Thus disrespectfully did the Owl of the Remove allude to no less a person than MR. Prout, the master of the Fifth.  
 Bunter was annoyed.  
 It was half an hour since his visit to Study No.4. Since then, Billy Bunter had propounded his scheme to several Remove fellows in turn—and it had been received with a plentiful lack of enthusiasm.  
 Nobody in the remove seemed disposed to distinguish himself by playing japes on the new beak his first evening in the school.  
 Nobody, in fact, except Bunter, cared whether the fat Owl had been whopped or not—indeed, many fellows told him he deserved it, and another to follow, and a few more!  
 Bunter, of course, cared! He cared very much! But it was born in upon his fat mind that japes on the new beak were at a discount, so to speak, in the Remove. Catspaws were not to be had! If anybody was going to gum the armchair in Quelch’s study for the behoof of Quelch’s substitute, the gumming had to be done by Bunter himself!  
 The fat Owl, at long last, made up his mind to it. Really, there seemed to be little risk. Smedley was in the Head’s house, where he had dined with Dr. Locke. He was as safely off the scene as could be wished. Bunter, of course, would have preferred some other fellow to handle the gum. No other fellow being available he made up his mind to handle it himself. For which Bunter was now blinking round the corner of Masters’ Studies, through his big spectacles, to ascertain that the coast was clear.  
 Most of the beaks were in Common-room! But Prout was in his study, for Bunter sighted him looking out of his doorway.  
 Bunter popped back behind the corner, like a fat porpoise popping its head back into its shell.  
 “Old ass!” he grunted. “Fat old chump! Yah!”  
 He waited for Prout to disappear.  
 Prout’s ways were known—and perhaps dreaded—by other beaks at Greyfriars. Bunter knew why he was “squinting” out of his doorway. It was in the hoa pe of seeing some other master come along, two inveigle him into his study for a chat. Prout’s chats were long, and all about Prout.  
 Bunter waited a few minutes, and then blinked round the corner again. Prout, luckily, had stepped back into the study.  
 His door was still open. But Prout was not to be seen. The fat Owl of the Remove tiptoed along the passage, reached the door that had been Mr. Quelch’s, and went quickly into the study.  
 He shut the door after him and breathed hard.  
 He was safe now.  
 Prout could look out of his doorway again—in search of prey, as it were—but he could see nothing of Bunter.  
 The light was not on in Quelch’s old study, now the new master’s. But the fire was burning in the grate, and it gave Bunter quite sufficient light for his purpose.  
 The armchair was beside the fire, and Bunter stepped towards it. From under his jacket he drew a large bottle of gum.  
 To empty that large bottle into the seat of the chair was quick work. Bunter grinned, and jammed the empty bottle into the wastepaper basket. There was nearly a pint of gum in the seat of the leather chair—quite enough to surprise any Form-naster who sat in it.  
 Billy Bunter was not finished yet. From his various pockets he drew other smaller bottles. He had been making quite a collection. There was a bottle of liquid glue from Squiff’ s study and a bottle of liquid cement from Bob Cherry’s tool chest. This latter was really terrible stuff, frightfully sticky and adhesive, which, from Billy Bunter’s point of view, was all the better!  
 “He, he, he!” breathed Bunter.  
 Gun and glue and liquid cement were mixed in the seat of the chair. Spread out thin, the liquid did not show up on the dark, well-worn leather. It was thousand to one that any man sitting down in that armchair would sit down in complete ignorance of its sticky state. The discovery would come later  
 Bunter was finished now. Having jammed the empty bottles into the waste-paper basket under the table, he turned to the door.  
 Then he halted, petrified.  
 Bunter knew those footsteps.  
 Only Prout had footsteps like that. It was either Prout or an escaped elephant.  
 Obviously, there could be no escapeb elephant in the House. So it was Prout.  
 “Oh crikey!” gasped Bunter.  
 There was no danger of Smedley coming back yet. Bunter was sure of that. But if any master caught him leaving the study, it would be just as bad. He was thankful that he had heard those footsteps before opening the door to escape.  
 With his fat heart thumping, he waited for the footsteps to pass the door. They came closer and closer.  
 They arrived at the door, and Bunter waited for them to die away in the other direction.  
 But they didn’t  
 They stopped  
 As the study was empty, except for Bunter, Smedley being in Dr. Locke’s house, it had not occurred to the fat Owl that Prout might be coming to that very study.  
 But he was!  
 Bunter gave a gasp of horror as the footsteps stopped and there was the tap at the door. The next second the door handle turned, and the door opened before the terrified fat Owl had even time to think.  
 Prout’s portly and ample form appeared in the doorway.  
 “My dear fellow!” said Prout genially.  
 Bunter could only blink.  
 Pratt had formed and there, fresh from his jape on his former master, and he had addressed him as “My dear fellow”! It was really amazing!  
 The next moment, however, Bunter realised that Prout supposed that he was addressing Mr. Smedley. Prout gave a start, operation surprised to find no light on and a fat junior revealed by the firelight.  
 “What—who—what—!” ejaculated Prout.  
 He switched on the light.  
 He stared at Bunter.  
Upon my word!” said Prout crossly. “What is this? Who are you— Oh, Bunter! I thought that I heard Mr. Smedley come to this study.” Billy Bunter’s stealthy tiptoeing had not, perhaps, been so silent as Bunter supposed.  
 “Oh!” gasped Bunter. “I—I—I came to—to—”  
 “What?”  
 “I—I came-to—to—--”  
 “What?”  
 “I—I came to—to—to speak to my Form-master, sir!” groaned Bunter. “I—I—I want to ask him about—a—a—a book, sir!”  
 “I see!”  
 To Bunter’s great relief, there was no sign of suspicion in Prout’s face. Correct was thinking, not about Bunter, barked and barked Mr. Smedley and his intended “jaw” with that young man. After all, there was nothing very unusual in the juniors coming to his form masters study, and Bunter could only hope that Prout did not mention to Smedley that he had seen him there.  
 “He—he’s not here, sir!” added Bunter, rather superfluously; and he edged to the doorway.   
 Prout’s ample form almost filled it.  
 Prout stepped into the study.  
 As soon as he moved, Bunter was able to get out. Prout, with his ponderous tread, rolled across to the fire.  
 Having dropped in to see Mr. Smedley, an finding that Smedley had not, after all, returned to his study yet, it was apparently Prout’s intention to await him there.  
 That was natural enough on Prout’s part. But it was horrifying to Billy Bunter as he saw the Fifth Form master prepared to plant his ample form in the armchair!  
 Bunter blinked at him.  
 He blinked at him in dismay and horror.  
 The leather seat of the armchair was almost swimming in gum and glue and liquid cement! It was intended for Smedley. But if Prout sat in it—--  
 He sat!  
 Solid and heavy, Prout dropped into the capricious armchair, which, capacious as it was, was not too roomy for the portly Prout. It gave a creak, as if in protest, as it received Prout’s weight.  
 “Oh lor’!” gasped Bunter.   
 He whipped out of the study.  
 It was judicious not to be present when Prout discovered the gum! In a state of utter dismay, Billy Bunter rolled away to the Rag.  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo!” Bob Cherry greeted him, as he rolled into that apartment. “Where have you been, you fat duffer!”  
 Bob was one of the fellows who had declined to be a catspaw.  
 “Eh—nowhere” said Bunter. “I mean, I haven’t been to Quelch’s study—I mean, Smedley’s study! I mean, don’t you Fellows give a fellow away, you know! I say, it’s awful!”  
 “Mean to say that you’ve gummed Smedley’s chair, you howling ass?” exclaimed Tom Redwing. “There will be a row if you have!”  
 “The rowfulness will be terrific!” grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “Bunter, you ass—” exclaimed Harry Wharton.  
 “I say, you fellows, it’s awful!” groaned Bunter. “I say—”  
 “You blithering bandersnatch!” exclaimed Bob Cherry. “If you’ve really played that idiotic trick, you’ve got time to wash it out before Smedley comes back from the Head! He’s not back yet. Go and clean up the gum!”  
 “I—I can’t!” Gasped Bunter.  
 “Why not, fathead?”  
 “Prout came in while I was there!”  
 “Oh, my hat! All the more reason why you should clean up the gum before Smedley sits in it!” chuckled the Bounder.  
 “I—I—I can’t!   
 “Why can’t you?”  
 “Because—because Prout’s sat in it!”  
 “Wha-a-a-at?”  
 “I think he’s waiting for Smedley to come in. Anyhow, he’s sat in it—”  
 “Great pip!”  
 “He’s sitting in it now—”  
 “”Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “I say, you fellows—“  
 “Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I say—”  
 “”Ha, ha, ha!”  
 The rag rang with laughter. The thought of the portly and ponderous Prout sitting in the gum seemed to take the Removites by storm. They yelled and they roared.  
 Only Bunter did not join in the merriment. Bunter was not feeling merry. Bunter was thinking of the possible—and awful—consequences. From the bottom of his fat heart, he wished that he had not thought of japing the new beak. It was rather too late to wish that now, and Bunter could only wonder, in dismal dismay, what was going to happen.  
  
 **THE SIXTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Sticking to It!**   
  
“MY dear fellow—” there  
 Mr. Prout started at once as the rather tall figure of the new Remove-master appeared in the doorway of the study.  
 Prout had been there about a quarter of an hour, toasting his toes at Mr. Smedley’s fire and wondering how long the young man was going to be. If Smedley kept him waiting much longer Prout was going to roll along to the common-room and inflict his conversation on the other beaks there.   
 Still, it was very comfortable in Mr. Quelch’s deep, old armchair, with his toes on Mr. Quelch’s fender, and Prout waited cheerfully enough, quite unconscious, of course, that a mixture of gum and glue and cement was still only but surely affixing him to his seat. The ample folds of Mr. Prout’s gown absorbed the sticky fluid, and that gown was getting stuck together, tighter and tighter, and harder and harder. Unconscious of it, Prout glanced around at the sound of Mr. Smedley’s footsteps, and bestowed a genial node and smile on the young man as he appeared in the doorway.   
 Part was not inclined to rise from that comfortable chair, though, had he known what he was sitting on, no doubt he would have wanted to rise in a hurry. But politeness urged him to his feet. He could hardly remain sitting in a man’s study when the man came in. But that leather armchair, in which Mr. Quelch’s angular figure found ample space, was rather tightly packed round Prout’s portly form. Prout was portly, Prout was ponderous, Prout was plump. Prout’s way of rising from an armchair was to place his hands on the arms thereof and heave! He had plenty of weight to heave! It was not a rapid process with Prout.  
 Mr. Smedley stepped into his study.  
 His first glance at Prout expressed surprise; he had not expected to find anyone there. Then he smiled genially.  
 Prout’s hands were on the arms of the chair, and he was giving his preparatory heave, to rise to his feet, when Mr. Smedley, with a polite gesture waved him back.  
 “Please don’t get up.” said the new master. “Mr. Prout, I believe? It is kind of you to give me a look in, like this!”  
 Prout, instead of heaving up, sank back again. He was quite pleased not to have to get up!  
 “Not at all, my dear fellow.” said the Fifth Form master. “I had hardly a word with you, when the chief presented you to us in the Common-room. I have been looking for an opportunity for a little chat.”  
 “A pleasure, sir!” said Mr. Smedley. “I regret that I was not here when you came, sir. I trust you have not waited long.”  
 “A few minutes only—hardly more than a few minutes. It is a real pleasure to me to welcome you to the Greyfriars, Mr. Smedley.” said Prout.  
 “You are very kind, sir!”  
 Mr. Smedley sat down, facing Prout.  
 Whether he looked forward or not to enjoying a chart with that ponderous gentleman, at all events he desired to be civil to Dr Locke’s staff, and to make an agreeable impression upon them.  
 “You see, my dear sir,” said Prout, beaming, “I am already acquainted with you. In a sense—”  
 The new master started violently.  
 “What?” he ejaculated.  
 “I mean to say, your name is familiar to me, sir.”  
 Paired was not an observant man. But he could not help observing the startling effect of these words on the new master.  
 The civil expression and agreeable smile faded from Mr. Smedley’s face, as if wiped off with a duster.  
 He half rose, staring at Mr. Prout, his hard lips coming together in a sharp line, his eyes glinting.  
 “What do you mean?” he said. “I fail to understand you, sir!”  
 Prout’s eyes opened wide.  
 “My dear fellow,” he ejaculated, in surprise, “all I mean is that I’ve seen you before—”  
 “What?”  
 Mr. Smedley was on his feet now, staring down at Prout in the armchair. Prout blinked up at him blankly.  
 “you will see me before?” exclaimed Mr. Smedley and his voice was loud, sharp, and harsh.  
 “Certainly! You see—”  
 “Where, and when?” rapped Mr. Smedley. “If you are speaking seriously, sir, tell me where and when, and at once!”  
 Mr. Prout fairly goggled at him. The change in Mr. Smedley’s face was surprising and startling. It was hard, sharp, angry, suspicious. And indeed, Prout’s might have thought that he read alarm there, could he have imagined but that the new master had any cause for alarm. The hard eyes, under the knitted brows, glinted at the astonished Fifth Form master.  
 “My dear sir.” gasped Prout. “There is nothing to get excited about. Really, my dear sir— Really— I really fail—”  
 “Speak plainly, sir!” snapped Mr. Smedley. “I am a strangers here; I have no acquaintances in the school. I had never heard your name before Dr Lockp introduced us, a few hours ago. Yet you say—--”  
 “No doubt out of some press you, sir.” Said Mr. Prout’s backspace backspace, a little offended by the young man’s manner, as well as greatly surprised. “But, really, sir—“  
 “Will you explain your statement, sir?” rapped Mr. Smedley.  
 “Certainly! But I must remark that that is hardly the tone I expected you to take, sir,” said the offended Prout. “I repeat that I am acquainted with your name—“  
 “My name is Eustace Smedley!”  
 “Quite so, sir!” said Mr. Prout. “That is why I am acquainted with it, naturally.”  
 Mr. Smedley stared at him.  
 “Probably you do not remember that I have seen you before.” went on Mr. Prout.  
 “Certainly I do not.”  
 “Yet it is a fact, sir.”  
 Mr. Snedley sat down again. His momentary excitement had passed. But his hard, keen eyes seemed to bore into Prout.  
 “I have asked you, when and where.” he said.  
 “When you were quite a small boy.” said Prout. “Quite possibly you do not recall it. Yet I should have expected my name to be somewhat familiar to you. Surely your uncle must have mentioned it in your hearing!”  
 “My—my uncle?”  
 “Your uncle, Charles Smedley, who was at Oxford with me.” said Prout.  
 “Oh!”  
 “it is some years sia nce I have seen him.” said Prout. “but I truly hope that he has not forgotten so old a friend. ”  
 “ I—I understand. And—and you really saw me when I was a small boy?” asked Mr. Smedley, with a very peculiar look in his eyes.  
 “That is so.” said Mr. Prout. “one I heard that of Mr. Snedley was coming here, in the place of poor Quelch, I wondered whether it might be my old friend of college days. I learned, however, that it was his nephew, Eustace.”  
 “I—I see!”  
 “for that reason, sir.” Said Mr. Prout, with dignity, I desired to take an opportunity of welcoming you to Greyfriars school, sir!”  
 “That was exceedingly kind of you, sir!” Mr. Smedley was his polite self again now. “I am delighted to meet you, Mr. Prout! And now that you remind me of it, I certainly recall hearing my uncle mention your name many times.” He smiled genially. No doubt I have changed very much since you saw me as a small boy, sir.”  
 “Naturally.” said Prout. “you were very like your tongue for, as a small boy, but I see no like this now. As a small boy, too, you had blue eyes.”  
 Mr. Smedley’s eyes were a deep brown—almost black.  
 “It is not uncommon for children to have blue eyes, that afterwards change to brown..” he remarked.  
 “Not at all.” agreed Mr. Prout. Some of Prout’s plump geniality was gone. Smedley had surprised him, and rather offended him. Still, Prout tried to be as genial as before. “Your uncle, sir, was my friend, many years ago, and I shall be happy to place myself at your service in any possible way. Advice and assistance from an older colleague may be useful to you.”  
 “I shall be very glad, sir!”  
 Prout smiled again. It was Prout’s way to barge in with advice and assistance to colleagues who not only did not need it, but disliked it very much indeed. Apparently, Smedley was going to be an easier victim than the other beaks at Greyfriars.   
 And I trust, sir, that your uncle may give you a look-in while you are here, and that I may have the pleasure of seeing him again.” said Prout.  
 “Oh! Very possibly! Quite!”  
 “It is some years—in fact, many years—since I’ve seen him.” said Prout. “is he still in Scotland?”  
 “In—in Scotland? Exactly!”  
 “And the book?”  
 “The—the book?”  
 “How is it progressing?”  
 Mr. Smedley blinked at Prout.  
 “Has he published it yet?” asked Prout. “I presume not, or certainly he would have sent me a copy.”  
 “No doubt! I mean, you are right, sir—he has not yet—not yet completed, I believe.” said Mr. Smedley. He rose from his chair. “Another time, Mr. Prout, I shall be delighted to have a —a chat, but if you will excuse me at the present moment—I am somewhat fatigued— a long journey—”  
 “Oh! Quite so!” said Mr. Prout, offended again.  
 Having intended to enjoy a a long, long chat with Mr. Smedley, correct was not pleased at being cut short in this abrupt manner. And, without being unduly suspicious, Prout could not help suspecting that Eustace Smedley had invented that fatigue to get out of the chat.  
 “Another time, sir—“  
 “Oh, certainly!” said Prout stiffly.  
 He placed his plump hands on the arms of the chair to rise. He gave the usual heave to lift his ponderous weight.  
 But this time it did not have the usual result.  
 Mr. Prout half-rose, and then an unexpected jerked behind for him pulled him back into the chair again. He sat down suddenly and heavily.  
 “Upon my word!” ejaculated Prout.  
 He heaved up again. Again came that sharp jerk! Utterly astonished at finding himself unable to get out of the chair, correct stared round, absurdly like a kitten trying to look at its tail.  
 “What—what—“ he ejaculated.  
 “Is anything the matter, sir?” asked Mr. Smedley, who was watching Prout’s antics with mingled surprise and impatience.  
 “Something is certainly the matter!” gasped Prout. “My—my gown—it appears to be adhering to the seat of the chair—--”  
 “Really, sir—”  
 “Really, Mr. Smedley, it is very odd that there should be something of a sticky, adhesive nature in the seat of this chair!”  
 Mr. Prout planted his feet firmly on the floor and made an effect. But by that time the gum, the glue, and the liquid cement had said hard and fast. The tail of his gown was as firmly fixed to the seat of the chair as if it had been riveted there. Prout’s effort dragged the chair along on its castors, and in amazement he staggered two or three paces, dragging the chair after him.  
 “Bless my soul!” gasped Prout. “What—what—what—”  
 “What on earth—” exclaimed Mr. Smedley.  
 Prout twisted round, staring at the stuck tail of his gown, again absurdly suggestive of a kitten chasing its tail!  
 His face was crimson.  
 Little did the master of the Fifth realise that two juniors had gone out into the school grounds and were peerng in through the study window to watch the effect of the gum.  
 “Mr. Smedley! What does this mean?” hooted Mr. Prout. “I repeat, sir, what does this mean? My gown is stuck—”  
 “Nonsense, sir! How can it be stuck?” said the new master.  
 “It is stuck to the chair, sir!” roared Prout. “I am a prisoner in this armchair! I desire to know, sir, what this means? What foolish trick is this?”  
 “Trick, sir?”  
 “Gun, sir, or glue, sir, or some such adhesive substance, sir, has been placed in this chair, sir!” bawled Prout. “I am sticking to it, sir—I cannot get out of this chair, sir! Upon my word!”  
 Mr. Prout made another wild effort.  
 The armchair was lifted on two of its legs. As it crashed down again, there was a tearing, rending sound.  
 Something had to go! The gum, glue, and cement held fast, and it was Mr. Prout’s gown that went!  
 “My—my gown—” gasped Prout.  
 “This—this is extraordinary!” exclaimed Mr. Smedley. “I quite fail to understand—“  
 “It is more than extraordinary, sir!” bawled Mr. Prout. “It is outrageous, sir!—it as an unprecedented outrage, sir! Such gross carelessness, sir—such amazing carelessness and slovenliness, sir—I have never heard of such a thing, sir! Gum, sir, gum spilled in the seat of a chair, sir, in which anyone might have sat—gum, sir—gum—“  
 Mr. Prout give another wrench. There was another rending sound, and the gown parted in twain and the Fifth-Form master was free. Gasping with his exertions, Prout stared at the section of his gown that remained adhering to the seat of the armchair, and at the tail of Prout’s gown! Prout, in a tailless gown, rather like a Manx cat, rolled away to his study. He snorted and fumed as he went, sorry that he had taken the trouble to look in on a man who was so careless as to spill gum in the seat of an armchair.  
  
 **THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.   
  
 The Bounder’s Choice!**  
“ONE for you, Smithy!” said Bob Cherry.  
 It was break the following morning.  
 That morning the Remove had had their first experience of their new Form-muster.  
 Billy Bunter had eyed him very uneasily through his big spectacles.  
 So far, Bunter, much to his surprise and relief, had heard nothing of that remarkable jape in the new master’s study.  
 Mr. Smedley certainly did not look like a man to be “japed” with impunity. As Prout had seen Bunter in the study, in Smedley’s absence, the fat Owl had expected the chopper to come down. But it had not come down. He was beginning to hope that he was going to hear no more about it.  
 In break, some of the Remove gathered to look for letters. Billy Bunter turned up, in the hope that his celebrated postal order had arrived at last! Hope springs eternal in the human breast! But once more the Owl of the Remove was doomed to disappointment! There was no letter for Bunter—it seemed that that his titled relationsm had forgotten him again!   
 There was a letter for Herbert Vernon-Smith, and bob cherry to feet down from the rack, and tossed it to the Bounder.  
 “Thanks!”  
 Vernon-Smith got the letter, and walked out into the quad with it, unopened, in his hand.  
 It was addressed to him in his father’s handwriting, and it was not uncommon for Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith to enclose a handsome tip when he wrote to his son. But Smithy did not seem to be in no hurry to open the letter. There was a frown on his face as he went into the quad was his chum Redwing. The latter glanced once or twice at the letter in his hand, and at the Bounder..  
 “That’s from your pater, isn’t it, Smithy?” he asked.  
 “Yes!” grunted Smithy.   
 “Well, aren’t you going to read it, old fellow?”  
 The Bounder grunted again.  
 “Only another dashed sermon.” he growled. “I used to be glad to get letters from the pater. But now—goodness knows what may be in it!”  
 “Its all right, old chap, since it blew over about your getting bunked. Your father must have been glad about that—in fact, I know he was.”   
 “I’m not so jolly sure!” grunted Smithy. “I hardly know him these days—and I’m blessed if I know what to expect in his letter!”  
 “Read it and see.” suggested Redwing.  
 The Bounder hesitated. But he nodded and slit the envelope at last. Redwing saw the relief dawn in his face as he read.  
 “All right?” he asked, with a smile.  
 “Read it!” said the Bounder.  
 He passed the letter to his chum. It ran;  
  
 *“Dear Herbert,—I am satisfied, since my last interview with you, that it really is your intention to pull yourself together, and make good at your school. At the same time, a word of warning will not be out of place. My resolution is irrevocably fixed, and if, after all the warnings you have had, you should be expelled from Greyfriars, I shall carry out my intention of disinheriting you and adapting your cousin, Lucius Teggers, in your place. Lucius has taken his disappointment extremely well, enhancing my good opinion of him.  
 “He has written to say that he is delighted to learn that we are now reconciled, and hopes very earnestly that the warning you have had will keep you on the straight path. I should let you to meet this excellent young man; but at present, I understand, he is away from his place of business. There may be an opportunity later.  
 “During your Form-master’s absence, you will have the advantage of making a fresh start, with a new master unprejudiced against you; and I shall be very eager to hear his first report.  
 “Remember, my boy, how much is at stake, and let there be no more reckless folly. You have every chance now to make good, and if you throw it away, it will be a severe blow to me; but the consequences will be on your own head.  
 “You’re affectionate father,  
 “S. Vernon-Smith.”*  
  
 It was an unusually long letter for the millionaire to write. It was more affectionate in tone than Smithy had expected. But Mr. Vernon-Smith’s grim resolution was unmistakable. Smithy had his chance; and if he felt he was done for, not only in school, but at home.  
 “Well, that’s all right, Smithy.” Said Tom, handing the letter back to the Bounder. “Thank goodness it’s all ended so well! You’ve nothing more to fear.”  
 “So long as I toe the line!” said the Bounder sarcastically.  
 “Well, you can do that, old fellow.”  
 “I’ve got to, anyhow! Quelch is away, anyhow—and he always had a down on me! I may get on better with the new man—I’m going to try. I wonder what sort of a blighter that man Teggers is.”  
 “Weil, as he’s your cousin, you ought to know something about it—“  
 “ I’ve never seen him—I’ve half a dozen cousins I’ve never seen! All I know of him is that he’s junior partner in the firm of Leggett & Teggers—the school agency people. The pater seems to think a lot of him—“  
 “The man seems decent, from what your father says in this letter.”  
 “Um! I fancy he couldn’t have been pleased after having his hopes raised when he heard that I was getting another run!”  
 “He seems to have taken it well.”  
 “Um! I wonder what he’s like!” said the Bounder thoughtfully. “I suppose Smedley has seen him.”  
 “Smedley?” repeated Tom.  
 “Our new beak! He was sent here from Leggett & Teggers. He must have seen Teggers when he was engaged to take Quelch’s place here.”  
 “I suppose he must!” agreed Tom. “Queer that he should have seen your cousin when you haven’t yourself.”  
 “I’ve hardly heard of him till a week ago—and the pater never gave him a thought till he got this bee in his bonnet about giving me the boot if I was sacked here” said the Bounder bitterly. “By gad! The man must be wild with the pater—dangling such a prospect before his nose like a carrot before a donkey and then jerking it away again! If I get bunked he’s to take the family name and inherit in my place—blow him! I fancy he must be keen on news that I’ve come a mucker. ”  
 “Oh, rot!” said Tom. “Not if he’s a decent man, and your father seems to think so.”  
 “He knows precious little of him, except his reputation as a good businessman. I fancy the man would be glad enough to butt in and spoil my chances here if he could.”  
 Tom Redwing laughed.  
 “Well, he couldn’t if he wanted to, old man! Leggett & Teggers have nothing to do with Greyfriars, except to send along a temporary beak when one is wanted! You’ll never see Teggers here.”  
 “Hardly!” agreed the Bounder. “All the same, I jolly sure he’d dish me if he could!” He crumpled the letter and thrust it into his pocket. “It’s all right with the pater—so long as I don’t get his back up again! I’ve got to be careful.”  
 Vernon-Smith gave a discontented grunt. Being careful and giving up his usual reckless and mutinous ways was not an attractive prospect to him. But he had to make up his obstinate mind to it; there was too much at stake now for Smithy to venture to play the fool.  
 The bell rang for third school; and the Remove went in. Mr. Smedley was at the door of the Remove-room ready for them billy Bunter gave him an uneasy blink, but the new master took no special notice of him. Once more Bunter was relieved.  
 Third lesson in the Remove was Latin prose, and papers were distributed to the juniors. Wharton, as head boy, took the papers from Mr. Smedley and passeb them along the form. He had rather wondered whether, after the talk in the study the previous day, Mr. Smedley would think of looking for another head boy, more according to his own ideas. But the new master seemed to have forgotten that talk. Having seen the form started at work on the left and papers, Mr. Smedley glanced at his wrist-watch.”  
 “Wharton!”  
 “Yes, sir!”  
 “I shall have to see the Head shortly. I shall leave you in charge of the class for a time.”   
 “Very well, sir!”  
 “You will see that order is kept here and that no one leaves the Form-room!” said Mr. Smedley. “I shall hold you responsible.”  
 “Very well, sir!” repeated Wharton.  
 “A few minutes later the new master went out, and the Remove were left to themselves. Skinner gave a low chuckle as the door closed after him.  
 “Gammon!” he remarked.  
 “Eh, what do you mean?” asked Wharton.  
 “Our new beak’s a slacker!” said Skinner. “He’s jolly well taking it easy.”  
 “He said he’s going to see the Head!” said Redwing.  
 “Gammon!” repeated Skinner, with a grin. “The Head’s taking the Sixth.”  
 “Lascelles may be taking the Sixth in maths.” said Nugent.  
 “Lascelles is taking the Fifth in third school at maths,” answered Skinner, “and I happen to know that the Head is taking the Sixth in Greek, because I heard Loder grousing about it to Walker, see?”  
 “I say, you fellows—”  
 “He’s not going to see the Head!” grinned Skinner. “He’s gone off to his study for a quiet smoke! Wow, if he takes it easy we can take it easy, too.”  
 “Yes, rather!” said Billy Bunter promptly.   
 “If you’re right, Skinner, the man’s a bit of a worm.” remarked Bob Cherry. “I say, what about a game of footer to pass the time while he’s slacking? We can use a dick for a footer.”  
 “Fathead!” said Harry Wharton. “I’m left to keep order here! And Smedley meant that, whether he was gammoning about seeing the Head or not. Keep your places, you duffers!”  
 The Removites kept their places. But there was little work done in the Form- room during the absence of a new master. While the cat was away, the mice would play and the Lower Fourth found a cheery buzz of conversation much more entertaining than Latin prose papers.   
  
  
 **THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Putting Paid to Prout!**  
  
MR. SMEDLEY, the new master of the Remove, stepped quietly into study No. 4 in the Remove passage tree and  
 Every study in that passage, of course, was deserted during class like all the other studies in the school.  
 There was nobody in the Remove passage when the new master arrived there; no eye to see him enter Vernon-Smith’s study.  
 He closed the door quietly after him and stood looking around the room.  
 His face, always a little hard in outline, had set harder. There was a cold, ruthless glint in his hard eyes.  
 The observations on suspicious Skinner, being aware that the new beak could not possibly have gone to see the Head, as Dr. Locke was deep in Greek with the Sixth Form, had concluded that he was “slacking.” But the new master was not slacking!  
 He was, in fact, giving his attention to the real task that had brought him to Greyfriars School; which was not teaching the Remove! That was only, camouflage.  
 The Bounder had told Redwing that his cousin Lucius Teggers would, if he could, “dish” him at Greyfriars. That view was founded on Smithy’s cynical distrust of human nature.  
 But certainly it had not occurred to the Bounder, Keen and suspicious as he was, that Lucius Teggers was actually taking measures to dish him.  
 It was the absence of Mr. Quelch that had given the plotter his opportunity.  
 It had, in fact, been easy.  
 Mr. Teggers, acting for Legget & Teggers, had recommended Mr. Smedley as a temporary master. Mr. Smedley had been engaged on his recommendation. And Mr. Teggers had coolly dispatched the young man to a post in Canada and borrowed his name and arrived at Greyfriars in his place!  
 Personally, both were totally unknown there! It was impossible four to take RE to be discovered or suspected, unless he met someone who knew Smedley by sight.  
 No one at Greyfriars had ever seen the young tutor; though Teggers had now learned, to his deep annoyance, that Mr. Prout had known the young man’s uncle, and seen Smedley himself as a small boy.  
 The new master had immediately resolved to keep Prout at a safe distance, even at the cost of a quarrel with that ponderous gentleman, if necessary. He did not want chats about Prout’s old friend Smedley at Oxford, of whom he knew absolutely nothing—though the genuine Smedley, of course, must have known all about him.  
 The plotter hoped, and expected, that his stay at the school need not last very long. Knowing what he did of Vernon-Smith, he had no doubt but the young rascal could very easily be caught out.  
 From what he had heard of him, the boy was a thorough young rascal, who had escaped expulsion by the narrowest of margins, and deserved it over and over again.   
 Lucius Teggers, in the name of Eustace Smedley, was there to see that the young rascal got what he deserved!  
 Mr. Smedley—to give him the name he had borrowed—state in the middle of the room, scanning it on all sides.  
 The Bounder’s study was well furnished—extensively so. The new master noted that, with a bitter eye.  
 His own schooldays had been hard and penurious; only five OK for a scholarship had he been able to reach the University at all—and on leaving Oxford he had been glad to get an assistant mastership in a small school before he became a partner in Legget & Teggers.  
 That, whoever, he had reason to be glad of now, as it enabled him to play his part at Greyfriars as a Form-master.  
 Having surveyed the study for a few minutes, he proceeded to action.  
 The study was shared by two fellows—Vernon-Smith and Redwing. But it was easy to pick out the possessions of the millionaire’s son from those of the sailorman’s son. There was no doubt that the handsome and expensive oak desk belonged to Vernon-Smith.  
 That desk was locked; but the plotter had come to Greyfriars prepared for little difficulties. A bunch of keys appeared in his hand, and he tried them, one after another, on the desk.  
 The guess opened at last, and the man with the borrowed name proceeded to search through it.  
 He had little doubt, or, rather, no doubt, that he has signed in that locoed guess ample evidence that the scapegrace of this school has not changed since he had been allowed to stay on. He did not believe that a leopard could change his spots, on an Ethiopian his skin.  
 Once he was sure, once he had discovered evidence, all was easy! Smokes, racing-papers, playing-cards, correspondence from disreputable characters outside the school—he had little doubt of finding some, or all, of these! He did not intend, of course, to reveal the fact that he had made a surreptitious search of the schoolboy’s study. But once he was sure, it would be an easy matter to cause an official search to be made by the headmaster. He has to be sure first.  
 Little did the Bounder, sitting in the Remove Form Room, dream of what was happening in his study! Certainly had he been able to guess who “Mr. Smedley” really was, the Bounder would have been more careful of what he left in that locked desk.  
 Tramp, tramp, tramp!  
 The man at the desk started suddenly and turned his head and listened! It was a tramp of heavy footsteps in the Remove passage.  
 He gritted his teeth.  
 With boys and master’s occupied in the Form-rooms for an hour to come, he had taken it for granted that he would be perfectly safe in paying that secret visit to Vernon-Smith’s study. But he already knew that heavy, elephantine tread! It was the portly tread of Prout, the master of the Fifth.  
 It came steadily up the passage from the stairs.  
 What the Fifth-Form master could possibly be doing in the Remove passage was a mystery to the new Remove-master. He knew you, too, that the Fifth were in their Form-room, and not sure I supposed that Prout and was with his Form.  
 Evidently, however, Prout wasn’t!  
 Swiftly the new master closed and relocked Vernon-Smith’s desk. Prout was coming up the passage. It was surely unlikely that he would open a study door. But the plotter dared not take the risk of being seen standing at an open desk in a boy’s study! That sort of thing was not “done” at Greyfriars. Neither did you desire anyone in the school to suspect that he had any special interest in Herbert Vernon-Smith’s study.  
 He stepped silently and swiftly to the door, and stood listening. His search of the Bounder’s desk had been stopped, almost before it had begun.  
 The heavy tread came closer and closer—and passed! Prout went ponderously on past Study No. 4.  
 But a minute or two later the heavy tread was heard returning. Prout was coming back.  
 He could not possibly be coming to Vernon-Smith’s study. But the hidden man’s heart beat very unpleasantly as he listened.  
 “Mr. Smedley!”  
 Prout was calling.  
 Had Prout seen the expression on the face of the man he called, Prout would have jumped!  
 “Mr. Smedley!” came the portly, fruity voice again. “Are you here, sir?”   
 The man in the story ground his teeth. Prout knew that he was up in the Remove passage evidently.  
 Receiving no answer to his call, the Fifth-Form master went back towards the landing at the end of the passage with elephantine tread  
 “Mr. Smedley” silentl  
 He opened the study door and peered out. He had a view of Prout’s portly back as he went  
 Prout, of course had no eyes in the back of his head. So he did not see Mr. Smedley step swiftly from the study and draw the door shut after him.  
 While Plout, portly and ponderous, marched on towards the landing at one end of the Remove passage, Mr. Smedley, light-footed and swift, stepped silently to the box- room stair at the other end.  
 He disappeared silently up that stair, before the Fifth-Form master reached the landing, stopped and turned.  
 “Mr. Smedley!” Prout was calling again.  
 Out of sight on the box room stair, the new master waited with beating heart. If Prout went, he could return to Vernon-Smith’s study and resume his secret search there. He waited for Prout to go.  
 But Prout did not go!  
 Back he came along the Remove passage with his heavy tread that made the stout oak planks of the floor creak  
 The man on the box room stair gritted his teeth.  
 Prout was not going! Evidently he knew that Smedley was somewhere about, and was looking for him! It did not matter if he found him, so long as it was not in a study —especially Vernon-Smith’s study. Mr. Smedley drew a deep breath and walk down the box-room stair, as if he had just come from the box-room above.  
 “Oh, here you are, Mr. Smedley!” exclaimed Prout, sighting him as he emerged into the Remove passage from the staircase  
 There was no sign in the new master’s face of his bitter irritation. He nodded politely to Prout.  
 “Yes.” he said. “Here I am! I thought I heard someone call while I was in the box-room—”  
 “A little exploring, what?” smiled Prout.  
 “Precisely!” Mr. Smedley walked down the passage, Prout turning and rolling at his side. “I must now, however, return to my Form-room.”  
 “I will walk with you.” said Prout amiably. “My own Form is with Mr. Lascelles at present, and I am at liberty. Seeing you in the passages from a distance a short while ago, I supposed you were at liberty also.”  
 “For a few minutes only, sir.”  
 The new master understood now. Some other beak was taking the Fifth, and Prout was at liberty—no doubt looking for some victim upon whom to inflict one of his interminable chats! Evidently he had seen Mr. Smedley come upstairs, and had followed him up for that chat! Mr. Smedley had not the slightest intention of gratifying him. He was only anxious to get rid of Prout.  
 “I am glad of this opportunity of speaking to you again, my dear fellow.” said Prout. “I fear what I was somewhat upset in your study last evening. I fear that I expressed myself with—ahem—some vigour! As quotes  
 “You did, sir! said Mr. Smedley.  
 “I regret it!” said Prout. “I was naturally disconcerted—it was a most disagreeable experience, sir! I was annoyed! I admit it! I fancied, sir, that that adhesive substance had been carelessly spilt in the chair—”  
 “You said so, sir! Quotes  
 “But on reflection, sir.” said Prout, “on reflection, I realised that that was an error, sir! I have no doubt, on reflection, that that adhesive substance had been intentionally placed in your armchair, sir, by a foolish practical joker—and it was intended for you to sit in!”  
 “Indeed!”  
 “I feel assured of it, sir, and I apologise for any undue heat in my remarks at the time! I think I can, in fact, name the boy who played the trick—whom I found in your study when I went there—a boy named Bunter—”  
 “You found Bunter in my study?  
 “Exactly, sir; and I advise you to question him. I have little doubt that you will discover that he was the culprit.”  
 “Probably!” said Mr. Smedley.  
 By this time the two masters had reached the Form-room passage. Mr. Smedley was making for the Remove room.  
 “Then you are not at liberty now, sir?” asked Prout. “Seeing you about, I concluded that your Form was with another master. I should be glad, sir, to resume the agreeable conversation that was interrupted last evening—to hear all you can tell me about my old friend Charles Smedley—”  
 “I am not at liberty, sir.” interrupted the new master. “I have left my Form in charge of my head boy, and therefore—”  
 “My dear sir!” said Prout. This was a chance for Prout to barge in with sage advice. He never neglected such a chance. “Let me advise you—”   
 “Really, Mr. Prout—”  
 “I have already said, sir, that as an older and more experienced colleague, my advice and assistance of wholly at your disposal.” said Mr. Prout, benevolently. “You are new here, Mr. Smedley—you are a young man—quite! Quite! My advice—”   
 “Really, sir—”  
 “My advice to you, Mr. Smedley is not to leave your Form, during a school, to himself!” said Mr. Prout. “It is injudicious! The headmaster would be far from pleased! Especially with regard to the Remove— a somewhat unruly Form! My advice—“  
 The new master stopped, and looked the Fifth-Form beak full in the face.  
 “Mr. Prout! When I require your advice, I will ask you for it!” he said, in a very distinct voice.  
 Mr. Prout fairly jumped.  
 “What?” he ejaculated. “What?”  
 “I have spoken plainly, I think, sir!” said the new Remove master. “I will ask for your advice one I feel myself in need of that. Until then, sir, kindly do not take the trouble of bestowing it upon me.”  
 Prout merely gaped!  
 Never had he been so utterly taken aback.  
 Many members of the Greyfriars staff had felt inclined at times to tell Prout to mind his own business! But Mr. Smedley was the first member who had ever done so! And he had done it unmistakably!  
 Prout was still gaping, like a fish out of water, when Mr. Smedley opened the door of the Remove room, went in, and shut it after him.  
 Prout, rooted to the floor, stood gaping at the shut door.  
 “Upon my word!” gasped Prout, at last.  
 His plump face crimsoned.  
 “Puppy!” said Prout, addressing space. “By Jove! Puppy!”  
 Prout rolled away, crimson with indignation. He had intended to be very kind, and very friendly, to the young man! Now he had taken a deep dislike to him, and his feelings were neither kind nor friendly. Which, if Prout could only have guessed it, was exactly what the new master wanted! He was safe now from Prout’s chats about his old friend, Eustace Smedley’s uncle! He was safe from being found out by Prout!  
 Prout, of course, did not guess anything of the sort! He bristled with indignation! During the day, he confided to the other members of the staff, one after another, his opinion of the new man who had come in Quelch’s place. Under that opinion was summed up in the expressive word “Puppy!”  
  
 **THE NINTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Down on Smithy!**   
“TAISEZ-VOUS!”  
 Bang!   
 “Zat zere be silence!”  
 Thump!  
 It was the French class—as per usual. Monsieur Charpentier sighed deeply. Hardly any fellow in and No. 10 class-room meant any harm. It was the unthinking vivacity of youth! But it was hard luck on Mossoo!  
 There was a French class that afternoon for the Remove; and there were enjoying it in their own way. A few studious fellows, like Mark Linley or Toddy, did some work. Lazy fellows, like Billy Bunter or Lord Mauleverer, did nothing. Mischievous fellows like Skinner, did mischief. Noisy Fellows, like Bolsover major, made a row.   
 Perhaps the Remove were a little more free and easy than usual, as their Form- master was away, and there was no danger of Quelch’s gimlet-eye gleaming in on their proceedings.  
 Often—very often indeed—there were sounds of disturbances in Mossoo’s class-room. He was used to it. His pupils were used to it. It was rather the rule than the exception.  
 Skinner dropped a desk lid with a terrific bang. Answering lids came from different directions, with a series of bangs. Then Bolsover major dropped a book—and in picking it up, hooked a fellow by the leg, and brought him sprawling to the floor. Scrambling up, the floored fellow grasped two or three others, dragging them out of their seats. They were only too willing to be dragged.  
 “Zat you be quiet viz yourselfs!” squealed Monsieur Charpentier. “Take ze place! At vunce, you take him, you Smeet—”  
 “Not my fault, sir.” said the Bounder. “A fellow pulled me out, sir—”  
 “You, Skinnair—”  
 “Not my fault, sir.” said Skinner. “A fellow pulled me, and I caught hold of Smithy, sir!”  
 “Take ze place, all of you!” exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier. “I vill keep ze order in zis class, or I will know ze reason vy not! Next time zere is vun noise, I send ze mauvais garcon to ze Head!”  
 That threat reduced the juniors to order for a little while. French grammar preceded on its way.  
 But only for a little while. Herbert Vernon-Smith, contrary to his usual custom, said correct in his place, and gave some attention to Mossoo and French. Generally the Bounder was the leader in a rag. Now Smithy was resisting the temptation to rag. He was not likely to stand out, if it started, but at all events, he was not starting it himself.  
 Opportunity came to the restive juniors when Mossoo wanted the blackboard moved. From the way the juniors jumped up to help, it might have been supposed that they were the most obliging fellows in the world.  
 “Let me help you, sir!” exclaimed Skinner, first in the field.  
 “Let me, sir!” exclaimed Bolsover major.  
 “Let me, sir! exclaimed a dozen other fellows.  
 Quite an army rushed out to move the blackboard.  
 “Zank you, zank you, mes garcons!” said Monsieur Charpentier. “But be careful—zat board he go to fall—zat he not tumble ovair—prenez garde! Ciel! Mon Dieu!”  
 Crash!  
 Over went that easel and blackboard with a terrific crash! Perhaps it was a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth! Or perhaps the young rascals meant it to go over! Anyhol, over it went  
 “Mon Dieu!” gasped the hapless French master. “Zat is careless—zat is too clumsy! Take up zat backboard at vunce viz you.”  
 “Yes, sir! Oh, certainly, sir! Bear a hand, you men!”  
 “Don’t barge, Bolsover! You’re always barging!”  
 “Who’s barging?”  
 “You jolly well are!”  
 “Look here, you ass—”  
 “Look here, you fathead—”  
 Bolsover major shoved Skinner, schooner shoved Bolsover major. The black- board, half up, crashed down again. Mossoo almost danced with excitement and wrath. Along with the backward, three or four fellows sprawled on the floor, barged over by other fellows. It was quite a game.  
 This, in the opinion of the juniors, was better than French! It was much more amusing than French.  
 “Here, lets get that blackboard up!” shouted the Bounder. He could resist the temptation no longer.  
 “Smeet! Zat you be quiet, Smeet, vill—”  
 “I’m only helpin’, sir! You’re in the way, Skinner! Gerrout of the way, you tick! Gerrout!”  
 Skinner, shoved by the Bounder, sprawled over Bolsover major. Vernon-Smith grasped the easel, and it to drop from the floor. Perhaps, by chance, it escaped from his hands, and crashed over on the desks. There was a yell from Billy Bunter, as the easel crashed on the back of his bullet head.  
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 “Yarooh! I say, you fellows—”  
 “Smeet!” shrieked Monsieur Charpentier.  
 “It’s all right, sir! Quite an accident, sir! Lend a hand, Cherry—don’t slack there! Lend a hand, Bull!”   
 Half the class gathered round the easel, and dragged it off the desks. They swung it around, and Mossoo hopped like a kangaroo, just escaping having his legs swept from under him as it swept round.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Mes garcons! Bad Boys! Smeet! Sherry! Mon Dieu! Zat you touch it not no more!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 The door of No. 10 class-room opened.  
 “Cave!” yelled Hazeldene. He rushed back to his place. There was a general scamper. It was the rather tall figure of the new master of the Remove that stood in the doorway.  
 “Oh, my hat! The beak!” gasped Bob Cherry.  
 “I say, you fellows—”  
 “Oh, yes, sir!”  
 “What does this riot mean?” rapped the new master.  
 Vernon-Smith stared at him. It had been rather a riot in the French class-room, that was certain. But the Bounder was no more guilty than the rest of the raggers. Indeed, for once he had been less active than the rest. There was no reason for picking him out  
 But Mr. Smedley’s eyes were fixed on him grimly.  
 “Answer me, Vernon-Smith!” he rapped.  
 “We were helpin’ set up the blackboard, sir.” said the Bounder coolly.   
 “I will not allow you to tell me untruths, Vernon-Smith! It is clear that you were the ring-leader in this riot. I have heard that such is generally the case, and I am not surprised. I shall take you to your headmaster.”  
 The Bounder set his lips sullenly.  
 “Follow me, Vernon-Smith!” snapped Mr. Smedley.  
 “Mais, monsieur!” ejaculated the French master. “Je crois! I zink zat Smeet is no  
vorze zan ze ozzers, sair.”  
 “As the boy’s Form-master, sir I am the judge of that.” said Mr. Smedley. “I know what I have seen with my own eyes. Vernon-Smith, follow me immediately!”  
 With a black brow and glinting eyes the Bounder followed him. The door shut on them both.  
 “Oh, my hat!” murmured Bob. “The new beak’s got a down on Smithy, and no mistake! What the dickens—”  
 Harry Wharton knitted his brows. He remembered what Smithy had said—that the new beak had appeared disappointed, when the culprit at the Three Fishers turned out not to be the Bounder. Wharton had put that down to Smithy’s fancy at the time, but his talk with Mr. Smedley in the study had rather changed his ideas on the subject. Now he could have no further doubt.  
 Skinner and Bolsover and two or three other fellows had taken a more prominent part in the rag in the French class than Smithy had taken, yet he was selected to be marched off to the Head. Already in deep disgrace with his headmaster, Smithy was to be taken before him for judgment; the others were passed over.  
 That the new beak had a “down” on Smithy was clear, though the reason for it was hard to seek. The only conclusion Wharton could come to was that, having learned of Smithy’s reckless and mutinous reputation, the new master had taken a deep prejudice against him. He had not even caned Smithy himself as Quelch would have done; he preferred to report him to the Head.  
 “The man’s rather a rotter!” Wharton muttered to Nugent.  
 “He doesn’t like Smithy, that’s a cert!” said Frank.  
 “Silence in ze class!” said Monsieur Charpentier mildly.  
 There was no more ragging. One fellow being taken to the headmaster was warning enough. The blackboard was set up without any more accidents, anb the lesson preceded in very unusual quietude.  
 It was ten minutes before Vernon-Smith came back.  
 His face was set when he took his place.  
 “I say, Smithy, had it bad?” whispered Billy Bunter.  
 The Bounder did not answer.  
 “I say, Smithy—”  
 “Buntair! You speak viz yourself, I zink  
 “Oh, no, sir! I only said to Smithy that—”  
 “Take feefty lines of ze Henriade, Buntair!”  
 “Oh, lor’!”  
 Bunter, as usual, wanted to know. But he did not ask any more questions in class.  
 When the juniors were dismissed, however, he grabbed Vernon-Smith’s arm in the passage.  
 “I say, Smithy, you’re looking frightfully sick!” said the fat Owl. “Did you have it bad from the Beak? Yarooh!”  
 A savage shove caused Bunter to topple over and sit down suddenly and hard. He roared as he smote the floor; and the Bounder, scowling, tramped on and left him roaring.  
  
 **THE TENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Taking a Tip!**  
  
HARRY WHARTON dropped into study No. 4 in the Remove after tea that day.  
 He found the Bounder in his blackest temper, and Tom Redwing looking worried. Vernon-Smith’s eyes turned on the captain of the Remove with a far from amiable look.  
 “What the thump do you want?” he snapped.  
 Wharton coloured.  
 “I came to speak to you, Smithy—”  
 “Weil, don’t!”  
 “Smithy—” murmered Redwing.  
 “Oh, cheese it!” snapped the Bounder.  
 Evidently, in his present frame of mind Herbert Vernon-Smith had no politeness to waste on anybody.  
 Harry Wharton did not leave the study, however. He closed the door and turned again to look at the Bounder, who scowled at him.  
 “There is something I think I ought to tell you, Smithy.” he said quietly. “if you can’t be several, I’ll leave it to a noble time. But you’d better hear it.”  
 “Oh, get it off your chest!” said the Bounder ungraciously. “If it’s pi-jaw, though, you can bottle it up and take it away with you.”  
 “It isn’t. It’s about a new beak.” said Harry.  
 Vernon-Smith’s eyes flamed.  
 “The rotter!” he said, between his teeth. “I’ll level up with him, somehow. What’ s he down on me for, I’d like to know? What have I done to him?”  
 “I can’t quite make that out.” said Harry slowly. “the only thing I can think of is that he’s heard all about you, and means to make it clear that you’ve got to toe the line while he’s got the Remove.  
 “I’ll show him!” muttered the Bounder. “If you’ve got anything to say in his favour, don’t say it to me, or you’ll go out of this study on your neck.”   
 “Oh, don’t be on ass!” said Harry impatiently. “I want to put you on your guard. You’ve had the narrowest escape from the sack that a fellow ever had without going—”  
 “No bizney of yours!”  
 Wharton breathed hard. Really, the Bounder was not an easy fellow to befriend. But the captain of the Remove had come there with something to say, after thinking the matter out carefully, and he was going to say it.  
 “You’d better listen to me, Vernon-Smith.” he said. “It’s no bizney of mine what you do, and if you ask for the sack again, it’s your own look out. I only want to warn you that if you play the goat you will be mailed, as safe as houses. Smedley is watching you.”  
 “Don’t I know that?” sneered the Bounder. He made it pretty clear this afternoon.”  
 “I’m going to make it clearer. You know I was called into his study for a jaw with him yesterday. What do you think he wanted?”  
 “How the dooce should I know? I don’t—or care, either!”   
 “ I’m going to tell you, all the same. He wanted me, as head boy, to keep an eye on you, and report to him if you kicked over the traces.”  
 “Oh, great gad”  
 “The awful toad!” exclaimed Redwing. “What did you say to him, Wharton?”  
 “I told him that a head boy’s business was not to be a spy and a tell-tale.” answered Harry  
 The Bounder burst into a laugh.  
 “Good for you!” he exclaimed. “My hat! What an outsider the man is! So he’s specially out to catch me, is he? As quotes  
 “It looks like it. To be quite candid, Smithy, I’m not surprised that he doesn’t want you in his Form—if he stared all about you. You’ve said yourself that Quelch would have liked to get shut of you, and Smedley seems to feel the same. I’m giving you the tip, to put you on your guard. He won’t find any sneaks in the Remove, I hope; but a man who’s ready to use such methods is pretty dangerous. You’ve got nothing to fear, so long as you play the game.”  
 “I knew there was pi-jaw comin’. Quotes  
 “That’s not pi-jaw, Smithy, that’s common sense.” said the captain of the Remove quietly. “Play the game, and you’re as safe as any other man in the Remove. Play the fool, and that man will catch you, as he starts to do. You won’t get another chance from the Head.”  
 “Think I don’t know that?” sneered the Bounder.  
 “Better remember it, then. You can’t afford to take chances now. If you’ve got anything about you, or in this study, that’s against the rules, take my tip and get rid of it. We get a Head’s inspection sometimes, when everything has to be turned out.”   
 “Once in a blue moon—”  
 “Well, if you won’t take a tip, you won’t!” said Harry. “I thought I ought to let you know. That’s all.”  
 And, with that, the captain of the Remove left the study, and shut the door after him with rather a bang.  
 Vernon-Smith sneered; but the sneering expression died off his face and was replaced by a very thoughtful look.  
 “My hat!” he said, after a long silence. “If the man put the Head up to inspecting the study all of a sudden; and from what he said to Wharton it looks as if he’d like to catch me out, and—”  
 He whistled softly.  
 “If you’ve got anything here, Smithy—” said Tom anxiously.  
 “If.” sneered the Bounder.  
 He went to his desk and unlocked it. He had not uttered a word of thanks to Wharton for his warning. But it had not been lost on him. If the new beak’s was anxious to catch him out, Smithy was not going to make the path easy for him.  
 From various recesses in the desk Vernon-Smith made quite a curious collection. Redwing watched him in silence.  
 There was a box of cigarettes, a copy of the “Racing Tipster,” a pack of cards, a cigarette holder, and a list of racehorses in the Bounder’s own hand. Tom Redwing’s face became almost pale as he looked at that collection.  
 “You ass, Smithy!” he believed. “You utter ass! If you can’t be decent, you might at least have a little sense! If that man got the Head to make a search in the study—and you can see that Wharton since he might—”   
 Without replying, the Bounder made a double handful of the articles he had sorted out of the desk, crossed to the fire, and dropped the whole lot into the flames.  
 “Oh, good!” gasped Redwing.  
 In silence the Bounder stirred the fire together. There was enough evidence there to get any fellow sacked from Greyfriars! In a few minutes it vanished from existence.  
 “That’s that!” said the Bounder at last.  
 Tom redwing breathed more freely.  
 “Thank goodness for that!” he said. “If there’s a Head’s inspection now, Smithy, you’re all right; and you owe it to Wharton.”  
 The Bounder was not aware how much he owed to Wharton—or to Mr. Prout, as a matter of fact. Those dangerous articles, now destroyed, would certainly have been discovered in his desk that morning had not Prout interrupted a new master.  
 And, but for Wharton’s tip, on which Smithy had so promptly acted they would have been discovered in his desk that morning had not Prout interrupted the new master.  
 And, but for Wharton’s tip, on which Smithy had so promptly acted, they would have been discovered that night. If the bounder, in the remove dormitory that night, was dreaming, he certainly did not dream of what was happening in Study No. 4 in the Remove.  
 Midnight was chiming out over Greyfriars, and the whole school was deep in slumber, won the light off an electric torch gleamed in Vernon-Smith’s study.  
 There was the faintest of sounds as Mr. Smedley, alias Lucius Teggers, unlocked the Bounder’s desk with a key on his bunch.  
 Safe now from interruption at the “witching hour of night,” the Bounder’s rival for a millionaire’s fortune groped through the desk; searching every drawer, every recess, and searching in vain.  
 There was nothing in that desk—now—that the Bounder would have objected to his headmaster seeing!  
 The man gave up the search at last, and relocked the desk. Then he extended the search further through the study.  
 But there was nothing to reward him.  
 He gave it up at last, shut off the electric torch, and left the study—puzzled and disappointed!  
 Had he discovered what he had confidently expected to discover, there would have been a Head’s inspection the following day—he could have contrived that easily enough.  
 Now he dismissed the idea! There was nothing for the Head to find!  
 Quietly the Bounder’s enemy crept back to his room. It looked as if Lucius Teggers’ task at Greyfriars would be a longer one than he had anticipated. They scapegrace of the school was not to be caught tripping so easily as he had supposed would be the case. He had to bide his time—and watch and wait!  
 Little did the Bounder of Greyfriars dream heard much depended upon his keeping to his resolution to “go straight,” and play the game! At the first false step he was a last man, and it was as well for Herbert Vernon-Smith that he had resolved that his reform should be sincere.  
  
 **THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Sneak Wanted!**Did you beast the waxier  
“BUNTER—”  
 “Here I am, old chap!”  
 “You’re wanted!”  
 “Is it a feed? As quotes  
 “No, ass! Smedley wants you in his study.”  
 “Oh lor’!” ejaculated Billy Bunter, in dismay.  
 Bob Cherry, having delivered the Form-masters message, went on his way, whistling. The fat Owl of the Remove blinked after him. Then he rushed after Bob, and caught him by the arm.  
 “I say, old chap! D-d-did the beast look waxy?” gasped Bunter.  
 “Didn’t notice.” answered Bob.  
 “Well, you might have noticed, you silly ass!” exclaimed Bunter. “I—I say,d-d-do you think it’s about the gum!”  
 Bob Cherry grinned. He had forgotten about that exploit of Billy Bunter’s and Billy Bunter himself had almost forgotten it. But a summons to his Form-master’s study reminded Bunter of it.  
 Smedley, fortunately, hadn’t sat in the gum! But Prout had! Bunter had, naturally, expected a “row” about it! But two or three days had passed since, and there had been no row. Bunter was quite prepared to dismiss the matter from his fat mind. He hoped that Smedley had done the same! Now, however, it looked as if Smedley hadn’t! His home of woes and move the home of the oak was ou the room to end of the of the essence of Mr. and your own of this a home room homes of homes now is that the house of the store and the can send a lot of home season euros frozen loss of four Fellows in some fashion some sauces and form was up to two moves the room homes are all user has a smaller areas of the home th th th this divisive and < was the fourth of Bolsover the move from the online from sell a house of the citizens of water a strong as the of vo know of no flavor and and timeless rows and rows of a and all along the way for Toronto and you how long is the use of the time you feel as of the home of homer and 5000 a year and were home haul a home and move the time the room homes  
 “Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!” snapped Bunter. “The man’s of beast, you know! Look how he got me into a row his first day here! If it’s about the gum—”  
 “Cheer up, old fat head!” said Bob encouragingly. “If it was that, he would have dropped on you long ago, I should think. He can’t know it was you.”  
 “Well, that old ass Prout saw me in the study, when he sat in it!” said Bunter uneasily. “Still, I’ve noticed that he’s not very friendly with Smedley, and he may not have mentioned it. I saw them in the quad today—and Prout fairly glared at him, and walked on without speaking. Perhaps he never told him, after all.”  
 And Billy Bunter, encouraged by that hope, proceeded to his Form-master’s study, still feeling rather uneasy and apprehensive, however.  
 Mr. Smedley was seated by his study window, looking out into the spring sunshine in the quad. Classes were over, and there were a good many fellows in the quadrangle. Among them were Herbert Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing, and the new master’s sharp, narrow eyes were fixed on the former. But he turned from the window as the fat Owl of the Remove rolled uneasily in.  
 “You—you—you sent for me, sir!” stammered Bunter, with an apprehensive blink through his big spectacles.  
 “Yes, Bunter! You may shut the door!”  
 Bunter shut the door rather hopefully. This preliminary looked more like a “jaw” then a caning. Bunter did not mind a jaw. He was prepared to listen in silence, or to deny everything and anything, or to express deep regret for anything and everything. Bunter was an accommodating fellow. All he was particular about, was not to be whopped  
 The keen, narrow eyes read his uneasy, fat face. During the days he had now been with the Remove, the man with a borrowed name had studied the various members of his Form.  
 He had realised, quite clearly, that he had made a false move in attempting to make use of his head boy to serve his own. Wharton was not the fellow to be made use of in that way. But all the fellows in the Form were not like Wharton—Bunter, perhaps, least of all.  
 “I think, Bunter, that it was you who played an absurd and disrespectful trick in this study my first evening here.” said Mr. Smedley.  
 Bunter jumped! So it was that!  
 “Oh, no, sir!” he answered at once. “I wasn’t here, sir! Space never entered the study, sir!”  
 “Oh, lor’!”  
 “Now, Bunter—”  
 “Mr. Prout must have been mistaken, sir!” gasped Bunter. “He—he often makes mistakes, sir! I—I don’t think he could have seen me here, sir,—because—because I was in my own study at the time, sir. Space besides, I only came here to ask you about a book, sir—I told Mr. Prout, sir.”  
 “You placed gum in this armchair, and Mr. Prout unfortunately sat in it.” said Mr. Smedley. “He was very much annoyed—very much indeed! I am sorry that it is my duty to punish you severely, Bunter!”  
 “So—so—so am I, sir!” groaned Bunter. “But—but it was days ago, sir! I—I thought you had forgotten all about it, sir! And-and I never did it!”  
 “I have been considering, Bunter, whether I could overlook your action.” said Mr. Smedley. “I am reluctant to use severe measures.”  
 Bunter shared his feelings to the full; in fact, he was more reluctant than Mr. Smedley!  
 “Oh! Thank you, sir!” gasped Bunter. “M-a-a-ay I go now, sir?” he edged towards the door.  
 “Remain where you are, Bunter!”  
 “Oh! Yes! Certainly, sir!”  
 “I shall not punish you as you deserve now, Bunter. If your future conduct is satisfactory, I shall pass over the matter.”  
 “There is another matter to which I must play fair. It is a very serious matter. I have reason to believe that some boy in the Remove breaks a very strict rule of the school by leaving the House after lights out.”  
 “Not me, sir!” gasped Bunter. “I—I wouldn’t!”  
 “Then which boy is it?”  
 “-I—I don’t know, sir!” stuttered Bunter. “I don’t know of anybody, except—”  
 “Except whom?  
 “ Oh! Nobody, sir!”  
 “You are prevaricating, Bunter!” exclaimed new master, with a knitting of the brows that made the fat Owl jump.  
 “Oh, no, sir!” gasped Bunter in alarm. “I—I don’t know anything about Smithy, sir—I don’t, really!”  
 “Do you mean Vernon-Smith?”  
 “N-n-no, sir! I—I mean, yes, sir! Oh, dear!” stammered Bunter.  
 “You are aware that Vernon-Smith breaks school bounds?”  
 “Everybody only knows what he was bunked for, sir—I mean sacked—that is, expelled—”  
 “I am not alluding to that! I mean, since that date!” snapped the new master. “You are aware—”  
 “N-no, sir! Oh, no! May I go now, sir?” gasped Bunter. “I’ve got some French to do for Mossoo, sir.”  
 “Never mind that now.” said Mr. Smedley grimly. “You will tell me at once, Bunter, what you know regarding Vernon-Smith.”  
 “Oh lor’!” groaned Bunter. “I—I say, sir, Smithy would jolly well kick me—”  
 “But—but the fellows would all be down on a fellow who sneaked, sir.” groaned Bunter “I—I—--“  
 “The source of my information would never be mentioned, Bunter.”  
 Billy Bunter blinked at him. It had not been difficult for the new master to observe that Bunter was a Peeping Tom and an incurable tattler. Whether he was a sneak also, he did not yet know, but he hoped for the best—or rather, the worst!   
 “Now, Bunter—--“  
 “I—I—--“ stammered the wretched Owl. He had one eye on the new master and the other on the cane!  
 “Tell me what you know at once, Bunter!” snapped the new beak.  
 “N-n-nothing, sir!” gasped Bunter.  
 “Very well.” said Mr. Smedley, kicking up the screen. “I shall now cane you, Bunter, for having placed the gun in my armchair—”  
 “Oh lor’!” gasped Bunter.  
 “You may bend over!  
 Had Billy Bunter been aware of any recent transgressions on the part of the Bounder it was very probable that the information would have been extracted from him by the new master’s peculiar methods. As the matter stood, Bunter was aware of nothing of the kind, as there was nothing of the kind to be aware of.  
 But the fat Owl was not going to be caned if he could help it.  
 He quite understood how the matter lay now; if he sneaked about smithy his gumming exploit was to be forgiven; if not, he would get the whopping that was his due.  
 Billy Bunter was obtuse—but there was a vein of slyness in him as. in many obtuse people. And his habitual resource, in times of difficulty, was fibbing!  
 This beast wanted to know something about Smithy! Bunter knew nothing! But he had his fat imagination to draw upon! He drew upon it!  
 “I—I—I say, sir—” gasped Bunter.  
 “You are wasting my time, Bunter.” said the new beak. “if you have anything to tell me—“ he swished the cane.  
 “Oh! Yes! Lots!” gasped Bunter. “Lots and lots, sir! The—the—the fact is, sir, I—I know all about it.”  
 Mr. Smedley laid down the cane again.  
 “Go on!” he said.  
 “The—the fact is, sir—stammered Bunter.  
 “Yes, yes?”  
 “The—the fact is—“Bunter was trying to gain time as he had not yet decided what the “fact” was. All he was certain about was that he did not want to be whopped for gumming the armchair. “The—the actual fact, I—I—I think—I mean, I know—know for a fact—an actual fact, that—that—--”  
 “Yes?”  
 “I—I know it for a—a fact, sir—--”  
 “What do you know for a fact?”  
 “I—I—--“Bunter had to decide on his facts without further delay. It was neck or nothing! “Smithy—you—you won’t let him know I said so, sir—--”  
 “Certainly not! Go on.”  
 “He—he—he’s—he’s going to—to—to—--”  
 “Two break bounds?” the hard eyes glinted.  
 “N-n-n-n-no—yes, sir!” gasped Bunter.  
 “Tonight?”  
 “Oh! Yes, sir!” gasped the fat Owl. He would have made the same answer had the enquirer named any other night. Luckily for Bunter, Mr. Smedley was not aware of that.  
 “You are certain of this, Bunter?”  
 “Oh! Quite! Absolutely certain, sir.” groaned Bunter. “Of course, he—he might change his mind! But—I—I think—I—I mean, I know—--”  
 “Very well, Bunter! In the circumstances I shall say nothing more about your foolish trick in this study.”  
 “T-t-thank you, sir!”  
 “And you need not do the lines I gave you in class this morning!” added Mr. Smedley graciously.  
 “Oh, good! I—I mean, thank you, sir!” gasped Bunter. “M-a-a-ay I go now, sir?”  
 “You may go, Bunter!”  
 Bunter went—gladly!  
 Mr. Smedley, alias Lucius Teggers, turned to the window again and looked into the quad with a cold, hard smile on his face and watched the Bounder strolling with his chum.  
 If his conscience troubled him, he soothed it with the reflection that Herbert Vernon-Smith was an unscrupulous young rascal, who richly deserved to be expelled from the school, and who, indeed, would have been expelled had he not hoodwinked his headmaster.  
 But the plotter’s conscience, probably, did not require much soothing.  
 At all events, the information he had dragged from the wretched Bunter placed the young rascal in his hands! The sneak, for his own sake, would not let it be known that he had given the scapegrace away. The Bounder would leave his dormitory that night, after lights out, and after he was gone—after the man with the borrowed name was quite sure that he had gone—  
 He smiled, a cat-like smile!  
 As he sat looking into the quad he reflected very pleasantly on the prospect, some day, of handling Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith’s millions!  
 Probably his reflections would not have been so pleasant, had he been able to follow the subsequent proceedings of the Owl of the Remove.  
  
 **THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.  
   
 Tea in Study No.1!**  
  
“I SAY, you fellows”  
 “Where will you have it?” inquired Bob Cherry genially as he picked up a loaf from the tea table in Study No. 1 in the Remove.  
 “Oh, really, Cherry—”  
 “Stand steady!” said Bob, taking aim. “Bet you I can get you all right on the waistcoat from here! But don’t move!”  
 “Beast!”  
 Bunter did move!  
 He moved so quickly that the loaf missed him by a yard!  
 “Look here, you beast!” roared Bunter indignantly. “I’ve come here to—”  
 “We know that, fathead! remarked Frank Nugent. “Waiting for you to go, old fat frump!”  
 “Oh, really, Nugent—“Bunter rolled in, with a wary eye on the cheery Bob. “I say, you fellows, is that chair for me?” There were six chairs round the table and only the Famous Five were present till billy Bunter barged in.  
 “That’s for Smithy.” said Harry Wharton. “Reddy’s going to tea with Wingate, and Smithy is coming here.”   
 “Well, you don’t want Smithy.” argued Bunter.” I suppose you’d rather have me to tea than Smithy.”  
 “The supportfulness is a ridiculous error, my fat and esteemed Bunter.” grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “Oh, really, Inky! I say, you fellows, I’ve got something to tell you—“  
 “Go and tell the chaps in your own study!” suggested Johnny Bull.  
 “Beast! Look here, you don’t want that tick, Smithy.” said Bunter. “He’s rather a rotter, and I say—--Yarooh!”  
 A finger and thumb fastened on William George Bunter’s fat ear from behind. He spun around with a howl and blinked at Herbert Vernon-Smith.   
 “Ha, ha, ha!” roared the Famous Five. Smithy had arrived in the study at a rather unfortunate moment for the fat Owl.  
 “Ow! Leggo, Smithy, you beast!” roared Bunter. “I didn’t hear you coming, you beast—--I mean yaroooop!”  
 The Bounder’s finger and thumb compressed like a vice on the fat ear, and the Owl of the Remove yelped with anguish.  
 “Ow! Beast! Wow! Leggo!—I wasn’t saying— Whoooop!   
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Whose a rotter?” inquired Vernon-Smith genially.  
 “Ow! I was only jog-jig-joking!” yelled Bunter. “Can’t a jig-jog-joke? Leggo!”   
 “”H ,ha, ha!”  
 “Leggo, you beast! Serve you jolly well right if I did what Smedley’s asked me to do!” howled Bunter. “Where would you be then, I’d like to know”  
 “Eh—what?”  
 The Bounder released the fat ear. Billy Bunter rubbed it, and glared at him great wrath.  
 “Beast! I jolly well won’t tell you now!” he snorted. “I was going to tell these fellows, and you, too, to give you the tip! Now I won’! Wow!”  
 “What has Smedley asked you to do, Bunter?” asked Harry Wharton, staring at the fat Owl. He had not forgotten his own job with Smedley.  
 “Find out!” snorted the offended Owl.  
 “Shove that box to the table, Franky! Bunter was staying to tea!” said the captain of the Remove.  
 “Oh, all right!” said Bunter promptly. “I don’t mind staying, old chap, as you’re so pressing.”  
 Under Bunter sat down. He blinked appreciatively at a dish smoking-hot sausages on the table.  
 “Good!” he said. “I like sosses!” Bunter helped himself to the whole contents of the dish. “What are you fellows going to have?”  
 “Oh crikey!” gasped Bob Cherry.  
 “We’re going to have sosses!” roared Johnny Bull.  
 And he seized Bunter’s plate before the fat Owl could commence operations.  
 “Oh, really, Bull—”  
 There were eight sosses, and Johnny shoved them out, one each for the six and two for Bunter. Bunter grunted.  
 “If there’s anything I can’t stand, it’s a fellow being greedy at a spread!” he remarked. “Still, I’m getting used to it with you fellows! All right! I can fill up on the cake!”  
 Bunter’s two sosses went down almost like oysters, and he started filling up on the cake, while the other fellows were still on the first course. And from the rate at which Bunter proceeded, it did not look as if there would be much of the second course left for the rest.  
 “Well, what about Smedley?” asked the Bounder impatiently.  
 “I say, you fellows, that man Smedley is a tick!” said Bunter. “He’s a toad—a rank outsider! Goodness knows where he was brought up! I say, he’s let me off for gumming Prout, and he’s let me of my lines. Guess why?”  
 “Well, why?” asked Wharton quietly.  
 “He thinks I’m going to sneak.” said Bunter. “Me, you know! I shouldn’t be so surprised if he wanted one of you fellows to do it! But me!”  
 “You fat chump!”  
 “Oh, really, Cherry—”  
 “Cough it up!” snapped the Bounder.  
 “You’re jolly well for it, Smithy, if that beast Bunter can catch you!” grinned Billy Bunter. “He jolly well knows you break bounds after lights out! Of course, everybody knows that, since you were bunked he’s been asking me about it.”  
 The chums of the Remove stared at Bunter. The Bounder scowled blackly  
 “And what did you say?” asked Harry.  
 “I said he was a sneaking, low down rotter!” answered Bunter.  
 “You said that to Smedley? gasped Bob Cherry.  
 “Well, he didn’t hear me.” exclaimed Bunter. “I said it after I was safe out of the study.”  
 “You blithering idiot!”  
 “Look here—”  
 “I wonder what the Head would think if he knew the man’s methods?” said Wharton, his lip curling. “He wouldn’t stay here along, I fancy! I wish we had Quelch back!”  
 “He won’t find any sneaks in the Remove!” said Frank. “Even Bunter wouldn’t—”  
 “Why, you cheeky beast!” ejaculated Bunter. “Look here, Nugent—”  
 “Did you tell Smedley you wouldn’t do it?” asked Harry.  
 “Catch me!” grinned Bunter. “I didn’t want to be whopped! If he thinks I’m going to sneak about Smithy, let him! I don’t mind what he thinks! But, I say, you fellows, what do you think of the beast? Ain’t he the limit?”  
 “Are bit over the limit, I think!” said Johnny Bull, with a snort. “and I suppose he thinks Smithy oughtn’t to be here, and—”  
 “Thanks!” sneered the Bounder.  
 “But that’s no excuse for him, setting a fellow to spy and sneak!” said Johnny. “The man’s a rotter!  
 “ Absolute outsider!” said Bunter. “I stuffed him all right! Mind you jolly well don’t break bounds tonight, Smithy! You’ll get copped if you do! He’ll be jolly well on the watch, as he thinks you’re going to!”  
 “Why should he think so, fathead?” grunted the Bounder.  
 “Eh—because I told him!”  
 “You told him?” gasped Vernon-Smith.  
 “Well, I had to tell him something.” explained Bunter. “he was going to whop me for gumming Prout if I hadn’t stuffed him. Now I he’s let me off, he can’t rake it up again, can he?”  
 “You’ve told him lies about me!” exclaimed Vernon-Smith, staring blankly at the fat Owl.  
 “Oh, really, Smithy, that’s rather a rotten way to put it!” said Bunter. “What was a fellow to do? He was frightfully keen to find out if you were playing the goat; nothing else would satisfy him. I had to tell him something, and nothing else would do, so I told him that. See? I say, you fellows, is there any more cake?”  
 “Well, my hat!” said the Bounder.  
 “You blithering, burbling bandersnatch!” gasped Bob Cherry. “Mean to say that you made Smedley believe that Smithy is going out tonight?”  
 “what does it matter if smithy nose and go?” said Bunter. “I’ve warned him not to go, haven’t I? I tell you, I had to tell the beast something! I say, he’s easier to stop and Quelch. That’s one good thing. Did you say there was another cake, Wharton?”  
 “No, you cormorant!  
 “I don’t call this much of a feed!” said Bunter. “I say, that man Smedley will be coming up to the dorm to night! He, he, he! He will think Smithy was scared and changed his mind about going, you know, when he finds him in bed there. He, he, he! He can’t rake it up about the gum again, can he? What do you think, Wharton?”  
 “I think you ought to be jolly well kicked!”  
 The thinkfulness is terrific!”  
 “Beast!” Bunter rose from the table he had done the major part in clearing. “Sorry I can’t stop! I’ve got to see Mauly!”  
 Bunter rolled out of study No. 1. He left the Bounder with are black look on his face, and the other fellows looking very serious. After Bunter was going there was a discussion—or, rather, a council of war—in that study.  
 Of the new master’s motives the juniors, of course, knew nothing. They could hold I suppose that he had a “down” on the black sheep of the Remove, and was anxious to relieve the school of his presence. But they had their own opinion of his methods—up very strong opinion. Sneaking and spying were not good enough for Greyfriars, and it was agreed unanimously a button that fact ought to be made clear to the new beak. And when the Bounder propounded a scheme for making it clear, he had, for once, the hearty support of the Famous Five.  
  
 **THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 An Alarm in the Night!**   
WINGATE of the Sixth saw lights out for the Remove that night. The prefect’s so nothing to excite his suspicions that there was anything “on” in the Remove dormitory.  
 After he had put out the light and gone there was the usual buzz of talk from bed to bed to the Fellows dropped off to sleep, with Billy Bunter’s deep snore to lull them to repose  
 But there were seven fellows who did not close their eyes—the Famous Five, Redwing, and Herbert Vernon-Smith. They were staying awake, in anticipation of what was to come. And when ten o’clock timed out, and the other fellows were fast asleep, Bob Cherry slipped quietly from his bed, and Harry Wharton followed.  
 From a recess in the big cupboard at the end of the dormitory are large, flat cardboard box was taken. That box had once contained shirts. Now it contained soot, carefully scraped from study chimneys after prep, and surreptitiously conveyed to the dormitory. It was crammed with soot to the brim.  
 “Careful, old man!” murmered Wharton. “Don’t get any on you! I shouldn’t wonder if there’s a row about this!”  
 Bob chuckled softly. It was quite probable that there would be a “row” about what was going to happen that night in the Remove quarters.  
 Silently Wharton turned the door-handle and opened the door a few inches. Standing on a chair, Bob placed the flat box on the top of the door, resting on the lintel over the doorway.  
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 Anyone who entered the dormitory that night was booked for a surprise.  
 Hardly a sound had been made. The chair was lifted back to its place, and the two juniors tiptoed back to bed.  
 Then they waited.  
 There was no doubt in the minds that the new bead would barge in. They waited cheerfully for him to “barge.”  
 Minutes followed minute! The minutes seemed long to the wakeful juniors. But they waited patiently. What was going to happen was really worth waiting for.  
 Faintly on the March wind came the chime of the half-hour. It was half-past ten. Still there was no sound, save the steady snore of Billy Bunter, which, like the little brook in the poem, went on forever.  
 Harry Wharton & Co. were getting fearfully sleepy by this time. They wished that Smedley would buck up.  
 But he seemed to be giving the scapegrace plenty of time to get clear. He wanted to be absolutely certain that Vernon-Smith’s was, indeed, gone when he “barged” in to discover him absent.  
 But there was a sound at last.  
 It was the sound of a soft footstep in the corner outside—the soft tread of a stealthy man in slippers.  
 That faint s und stopped at the doorway.  
 Seven wakeful juniors felt their hearts thump! It was coming now! Second followed second—seeming like long minutes.  
 Perhaps the man outside was surprised to find the door ajar. Probably he took it as proof that someone had left the dormitory.  
 It seemed that he was listening; but, if so, he heard nothing but the rumble of Bunter’s snoring.  
 Then suddenly it happened! The door was pushed open from without, the new master feeling for the switch inside to turn on the light as he stepped in. But his fingers never reached the switch.  
 Crash!  
 Swoosh!  
 “Gurrrrrrggh!”  
 A horrible, suffocated gurgle was heard.  
 “Urrrggh! Wurrggh! Murrggh! Wurrggh!”  
 In the doorway, still in the dark, a figure was spluttering in clouds of soot! Soot swamped over the new beak. It covered his head, his hair, his face, his clothes; it floated round him in clouds. He was clad in soot as in a garment. He lived, and breathed, and had his being in soot!  
 “Good gad! Groooh! What— Urrrggh! Wurrggh!” wild splutters and splutters came from the staggering figure.  
 Seven listening juniors suppressed their chuckles. But they suppressed them carefully. It was not their cue to wake.  
 But other fellows woke! A man staggering and spluttering, gurgling and gasping and guggling in the doorway was bound to wake the sleepers.  
 A dozen fellows sat up in bed with startled exclamations. Only Bunter’s snore went on. Every other fellow was awakened.  
 “What the thump—” exclaimed Peter Todd. “Who’s that?”  
 “What the dooce?” came a yawn from Lord Mauleverer.  
 “What’s that row?” gasped Bolsover major.   
 “Urrrrrggh!” came from the darkness. “Gurrrggg! Wurrrggg! What—  
what— Gurrrggh! Grooogh!”  
 “What the bickens—if”  
 “Is the house on fire?”  
 “Who’s that?”  
 “Urrrggh! Wurrggh! Grooogh! Oooosh! At-choooh! Chooop!” Wild spluttering and gurgling and sneezing answered from the dark.  
 Peter Todd jumped out of bed and struck a match. In the flickering light all eyes turned on a horrible figure staggering just within the dormitory.  
 He was quite unrecognisable>  
 Seven Fellows knew who he was, but the rest had not the faintest idea. All they could see was a blackened figure staggering just within the dormitory.  
 “Who—who— What is it?” gasped Toddy.  
 “Is it a burglar?” gasped Skinner, as the match went out. “I say, look out!”  
 “It’s somebody—”  
 “Burglars!” roared Bob Cherry, waking up all of a sudden! That suggestion from the startled Skinner was enough for Bob! If a blackened, unrecognizable figure barged into the dormitory in the middle of the night, fellows were entitled to take hi bugle m for a burglar if they liked. Bob fairly jumped at the idea!  
 “Burglars!” he bawled. “Turn out, you men! Burglars! Get your pillows—bolsters! Go for him! Burglars!”  
 Someone switched on the light. There was a flood of illumination. Of the some Fellows, who own bolster in hand, rushed out this fall and figure.  
 Terrific swipes descended on it, on all sides.  
 “Burglars! Give him jip!” roared Johnny Bull.  
 “Burglars! Help! Whop him!”  
 “Jump on him!”  
 Swipe, swipe, swipe!  
 “Urrrgh! Yooop! Whoop! Gurrggh! Stoppit! I—I— uUrrgh! Groogh!”  
came frantically from the sooty, suffocated man sprawling under the swiping pillows and bolsters.  
 Mr. Smedley tried to speak, but he was choking with soot, and pillows and bolsters were crashing on him right and left. He rolled into the passage, spluttering and squirming and gurgling  
 The terrific din rang through the House. Startled voices were heard calling from downstairs; doors opened; lights flashed on. The deep, fruity voice of Mr. Prout was heard;   
 “what—what is that uproar? What?”  
 “Burglars!” roared Bob Cherry.   
 “Urrrgh! Groogh! Wurrgggh!”  
 In the passage the sooty man scrambled frantically to his feet. Pillows and bolsters swiped at him, and he fairly turned and ran  
 “After him!” roared Bob Cherry. “Burglars! After him!”  
 “Stop him!”  
 “Stop thief!”   
 “Don’t let him get away!”   
 “Great gad!” ejaculated Mr. Prout  
 He reached the landing and switched on the light, just in time to see a blackened figure bolting out of the dormitory passage, with a mob of yelling juniors in pursuit. Who it was, what it was, Mr. Prout did not know; he stared at it petrified.  
 “Stop him!”  
 “Burglars!”  
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The roar from the passage enlightened Mr. Prout! He leaped in the way of the running figure, and grasped at it manfully. Prout was a stout fellow—not only in circumference. He jumped at the blackened figure and grasped it, and they went over together on the landing. Clouds of soot scattered over Prout, and he gasped and spluttered. But he held on, like the stout fellow he was.  
 “Surrender, you scroundrel!” gasped Prout. “I have you—rascal. I have you! Surrender!”  
 “Oh crikey!” gasped Bob Cherry.  
 “I have him!” gasped Prout. “Do not be alarmed, my boys, I have caught the scroundrel! I have him safe! A negro, I think—a ruffianly negro!”  
 “Oh crumbs!”  
 “Prout’s got him!” gasped Johnny Bull. “Prout’s got the burglar!”  
 “Oh scissors!”  
 The “burglar” was stirring frantically in Prout’s grasp. Probably he would soon have accounted for the stout Prout. But there was plenty of help at hand for Prout. The Removites piled in at once. Hands grasped the burglar, sooty as he was, on all sides, and Bob Cherry thoughtfully bumped a pillow on his face as he strove wildly to speak.  
 There was no hurry, so far as Bob could see, for the “burglar” to explain who he was. Horrible gurgles and guggles came from the hapless man.  
 “Secure him!” gasped Prout. “Hold him! He dares to resist! Hold his hands! Hold him wherever you can—”  
 “Yes, rather, sir!”  
 “We’ve got him!”  
 There was no doubt that they had “got” him! A couple of dozen hands were on him, grasping his arms, and his wrists, his ears, his hair, his ankles, and even his nose. Never had a burglar been so thoroughly and effectually secured. Prout had him down on the landing, and was lodged on him, meaning on his chest. And Prout’s weight was no trifle.  
 “Urrggh! Gurrggh! I—I—“  
 Bob Cherry’s pillow interrupted the hapless man and he gurgled.  
 Three or four other masters, and some of the Sixth Form prefects were on the scene by this time. And the stately figure came rustling up the stairs and Dr. Locke appeared. Seldom had there been such excitement in the House at such an hour of the night. The chums of the Remove had intended to “jape” the new beak; but the jape was assuming proportions of which they had never dreamed.  
 “What—what is this it?” ejaculated the Head, as he stared at the starting scene on the big landing.  
 “A burglar, sir! gasped Mr. Prout. “A burglar—a savage and desperate negro, sir. But, fortunately, I have him safe!”  
 And from the savage and desperate negro came a hideous gurgle, and  
 “Gurrrrrggh!”  
   
 **THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Not a Burglar!**“HOLD him!” yelled Bob Cherry.  
 The “burglar” was struggling again. But with Mr. Prout sitting on his chest and a dozen pairs of hands grasping him, he struggled in vain.  
 “Bless my soul!” gasped the Head. “Secure him! Most—extraordinary! Wingate, Gwynne, Loder— see that he does not escape”  
 “I have been safe, sir!” gasped Prout. “He will not escape me easily. Keep still, scoundrel! Surrender, rascal! Someone had better telephone for the police to take him in charge—”  
 “Oh crikey!” muttered Bob Cherry.  
 “Urrggh! Gurrggh! I—I—I—”  
 Again, a swiping pillow interrupted the wretched man. “Ow! Urrrggh!”  
 “Cherry! Stand back!” said the Head. “You have him safe, Mr. Prout?”  
 “Quite, sir!”  
 “What a desperate looking ruffian!” said Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth. “But he is not, I think, a negro.” Capper peered at the prisoner. “I think his face is blackened—probably for disguise—“  
 “It is soot” said Wingate of the Sixth. “The man seems to be smothered with soot!”  
 “Soot!” exclaimed the Head period  
 “The sootfulness is terrific!” murmered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “Dear me! It certainly is soot” exclaimed Dr. Locke. He sniffed, and then he sneezed. “Undoubtedly the man is covered—smothered—with soot! This is—is extraordinary!”  
 “A cunning disguise, sir!” said Mr. Prout. “I certainly took him for a negro. A cunning disguise! But his identity will be revealed. No doubt he is well known to the police.”  
 “Probably—probably!” assented the Head.  
 “Urrrgh! Gurrrggh! Wurrrggh!” came in an agonized gurgle from the wretched man. “Let me speak! Urrrggh!”  
 “A rope!” exclaimed Mr. Prout. “Someone fetch a rope! A box rope will do. Unfortunately, there are no handcuffs in the school. But a box-rope—--”  
 “Urrrggh! I—I—--“  
 “He must be bound hand and foot until the police arrive—--”   
 “I—I—-- Urrrgh! I—I—--”  
 “Silence, scroundrel! You need to say nothing until the officers of the law take you in charge. A box-rope—”   
 “Gurrrgh! Fool—”  
 “What? What?” ejaculated Prout.  
 “Fool! Release me!” The new beak had the use of his voice at last. “will you release me at once?”  
 “What? Certainly not! I am not likely to release you, you desperate rascal! A box-rope!” bawled Prout.  
 “Fool! Idiot! I am not a burglar!” shrieked the hapless man. “Will you can use me, you old fool!”  
 “Upon my word—--”  
 “Dr. Locke! Will you—”  
 “Bless my soul! The man’s voice seems familiar!” said the Head. “Who—who is he? Keep him secure, Mr. Prout, but let him speak. Who are you?”  
 “I have him safe, sir. But a box-rope—”  
 “I am not a burglar!” shrieked the blackened man frantically. “Get off! Release me! I am Mr. Smedley!”  
 “What?” stuttered the Head blankly period  
 “Mr. Smedley!” repeated Prout. “Upon my word, how dare you make such an impudent statement? Rascal!”  
 “Release me! I—--”  
 “I shall do nothing of the kind! A box-rope—--”  
 “One moment, Mr. Prout!” gasped Dr. Locke. “I seem to recognise the man’s voice. I—I think it is Mr. Smedley!”  
 “It is certainly Mr. Smedley, sir!” said Wingate, in utter wonder. “He is black with soot, but it is Mr. Smedley, sir!”  
 “Pray release him, Mr. Prout!” said the Head. “It is certainly Mr. Smedley, though why he should have acted in this extraordinary manner is beyond my comprehension. No doubt he will explain at once. Pray release him.”  
 Rather grudgingly Prout removed his plump knees from the prisoners chest. Gasping and spluttering, the new master of the Remove dragged himself to his feet. Under its thick coating of soot, his face was crimson with rage.  
 “Will you let me speak?” howled Mr. Smedley. “I have been the victim of a trick, Dr. Locke—a trap was laid for me—”  
 “Oh!” ejaculated the Head.  
 “What is called, sir, a booby trap!” spluttered Mr. Smedley. “A box of soot, sir, was placed on top of the door of the Remove dormitory—”  
 “Bless my soul”  
 “It fell on my head, sir, as I opened the door of that dormitory!” gasped Mr. Smedley. “I was—was smothered, sir! The foolish boys took me for burglar, sir, not recognising me—--”  
 “No wonder, sir!” boomed Prout. “No wonder! What were the boys to think, sir, suddenly awakened at this hour, sir, by a man with a black face—--”   
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Silence! Silence! The boys must have been very much alarmed, Mr. Smedley— really, it was more than enough to alarm them. They could not possibly have known who you were!”  
 “We hadn’t the faintest idea, sir!” said Peter Todd. “We never dreamed that it was Mr. Smedley, sir! At least I know I didn’t.”  
 “I thought it was a burglar, sir.” said Skinner. “What was a fellow to think, sir?”  
 “Quite so, quite so!” said the Head. “Quite so! I do not blame you for the mistake! Certainly, you are not to blame. Someone, however, must have laid the trap of which Mr. Smedley speaks—  
 ” And I can name him, sir!” gasped Mr. Smedley.. “That truck was late for me, sir, by an incorrigible young rascal in my Form, sir, who has gone out of bounds!”  
 “What?” exclaimed the Head.   
 “I had reason to believe, sir, that the boy intended to leave the house after lights out, and I visited the dormitory to a sitting whether he was absent.” gasped Mr. Smedley. “I have no doubt, sir, that he left this dastardly trap behind him, in case the dormitory was visited during his absence from the House.”  
 “Oh, my hat” murmured Bob Cherry.  
 The chums of the Remove exchanged glances, and grinned. That was, no doubt, a natural conclusion for Smedley to come to, believing as he did that Vernon-Smith was out of bounds.  
 Smithy suppressed a chuckle as he stared at Mr. Smedley’s sooty back. The Form-master, facing the Head, had his back to the mob of juniors, and did not see the Bounder—it had not even occurred to him that Vernon-Smith was there with the rest.  
 “A boy in your Form out of bounds at this hour of the night, Mr. Smedley!” exclaimed the Head, aghast period  
 “Yes, sir! The boy Vernon-Smith!”  
 The new beak almost gritted the name through his teeth. “And there is no doubt in my mind that when he went he left this dastardly trap—”  
 “Vernon-Smith!” repeated the Head blankly.  
 Looking past the sooty, gasping Form-master, he could see the bounder among the Removites. In his pajamas, Vernon-Smith did not look as if he had been out of bounds!  
 “Yes, sir! That incorrigible young rascal, Vernon-Smith—”  
 “Bless my soul! You are not telling me that Vernon-Smith is out of school bounds, Mr. Smedley—”  
 “Certainly I am, sir!”  
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 “But—but—but—” stuttered the amazed headmaster.  
 “There is no doubt about it, sir, and—”  
 “But—but the boy is standing just behind you, sir!” almost shrieked Dr. Locke.  
 “Wha-a-at”  
 The sooty Form-master spun round like a humming top. His eyes almost popped through the soot at the sight of Herbert Vernon-Smith. He blinked at him as if he could not believe his eyes—as indeed he hardly could!  
 “Vernon-Smith is here, Mr. Smedley!” said Dr. Locke, rather grimly.  
 “Oh! Ah! He—he—he appears to—be here!” stuttered the new master blankly. “He—he—he must have returned—”  
 “Have you been out of the dormitory since lights-out, Vernon-Smith?” demanded the Head.  
 “No, sir—not till this row started.” said the Bounder meekly “IK and with the other fellows after the burglar—I mean, after Mr. Smedley—”  
 “Wharton!”  
 “Yes, sir!”  
 “Was Vernon-Smith in the dormitory when this—this alarm was given?”  
 “Certainly, sir!” answered Harry. “I saw him get out of bed when the light was put on.”  
 “I saw him too, sir!” said Bob Cherry.  
 “And I, sir!” said Nugent.  
 “The sawfulness was terrific, esteemed sir!”  
 “Smithy certainly hasn’t been out of the dormitory till now, sir!” added the captain of the Remove. “He came out with the rest of us.”  
 “I am satisfied that he has not.” said the Head. “I am perfectly satisfied. Mr. Smedley, it is plain that you were acting under a misapprehension.”  
 “I—I—I thought—--”  
 “It would be as well, sir, to be certain before making so very positive a statement!” said the headmaster tartly. “Boys, go back to your dormitory at once. Wingate, will you see the Remove to their dormitory? Mr. Smedley, you are in a shocking state—shocking! This must be inquired into to-morrow—, sir, I recommend you—“  
 Mr. Smedley did not wait to hear what the Head recommended; he hurried away, heading for the nearest bath-room. Prout was snorting; the other beaks smiling; the prefect’s grinning; the Removites chortling! And the sooty, blackened, dishevelled plotter was glad to get out of sight. He left a sooty trail as he went.  
  
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 In the Remove dormitory there were explosive chuckles and chortles for a long time before the juniors settled down to sleep again.  
 They expected an inquiry into the affair of the booby-trap on the morrow. But there was no inquiry. For reasons of his own, the new master let the matter drop. Perhaps he disliked the idea of his peculiar methods coming to the knowledge of the headmaster. On reflection, he considered it judicious to let the whole matter fall into oblivion—and it did. In that strange contest for Mr. Vernon-Smith’s millions Smithy had won the first round.  
 But if the Bounder fancied that the new beak had done with him, he was very much mistaken. The man with a borrowed name was very far from having done with him yet.  
THE END.