

No. 1 OF A GRAND SCHOOL STORY PAPER!

# THE SCHOOL FRIEND

Every  $1\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>D</sup> Thursday

No. 1. Vol. 1.

Three-Halfpence.

Week Ending May 17th, 1919.



**THE ARRIVAL OF BESSIE BUNTER!** (An incident from "The Girls of Cliff House!" Complete in this issue 0.)

# No. 2 ON SALE THURSDAY, MAY 22<sup>ND</sup>!



NO. 2 OF A NEW SCHOOL STORY PAPER!

**THE SCHOOL FRIEND**

Every 12<sup>th</sup> Thursday

May 24th, 1919.

Three-Halfpence.

No. 2.—Vol. 1.

A BOOBY-TRAP FOR BESSIE BUNTER!



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# The Girls of Cliff House!



Number One of a Magnificent New Series of School Stories, introducing Marjorie Hazeldene and Co. and Bessie Bunter.  
BY  
**HILDA RICHARDS.**

## Trouble in the Study.

**B**UNTER!"

"Yes, Bessie Bunter."

"Oh, my goodness!" said Clara Trevlyn.

There were three junior girls in Study No. 7 at Cliff House School.

Marjorie Hazeldene sat in the rocking-chair, looking pretty and graceful, as she always did.

Clara Trevlyn sat on one corner of the table, swinging her feet—a little way she had.

Dolly Jobling was on her knees before the study fire, with a flushed face and untidy hair, stirring a weird-looking compound that bubbled and sizzled in a frying-pan.

"My goodness!" repeated Clara. "Bunter! Bessie Bunter! Surely it isn't a relation of Billy Bunter, that fat boy at Greyfriars?"

Marjorie nodded.

"It's his sister," she said.

"And she's coming to Cliff House?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"To-day."

"Oh, my goodness!" said Miss Clara for the third time.

Dolly Jobling looked up from the frying-pan with a crimson face.

"New kid coming?" she asked.

"Yes; Billy Bunter's sister—Bessie Bunter of that ilk," said Clara, with a sniff. "I only hope she isn't coming into our Form—if she's anything like her brother. And I'm sure she will be. How do you know she's coming, Marjorie?"

"Because I heard Miss Primrose tell Miss Bellew so," answered Marjorie, with a smile. "And the housekeeper's been told to have a bed made ready in our dormitory."

"Oh, dear!"

"So I suppose Bessie Bunter is coming into our Form!"

"Br-r-r!"

"And we shall have to make the best of it," said Marjorie, laughing. "After all, she may not be like her brother Billy."

Clara shook her head with great misgiving.

"It never rains but it pours," she said. "She's sure to be like him. Fat, and shiny, and conceited—I'm sure of it! Dolly, you young duffer, what on earth are you doing with that frying-pan?"

There was a sudden spluttering from the direction of the fire, and Dolly Jobling gave a gasp of dismay.

"I—I'm making toffee! Oh, dear!"

"Not trying to set the chimney on fire?" asked Clara sarcastically.

The weird compound had sizzled over.

Dolly Jobling clutched the pan off the fire, and shrieked as a fresh wave overflowed.

Smoke and blacks and a terrific odour spread through the study.

Marjorie jumped out of the rocking-chair, and Clara slid off the table.

"Dolly, you duffer!"

"Dolly, you goose!"

"Oh, dear!" gasped Dolly. "All your fault for making me look round, with your chatter about a silly new kid! Oh, dear!"

"And that's toffee, is it?" said Clara, staring at the sticky mess in the pan. "I wonder how many times I've told you you can't make toffee? About as often as Miss Bellew has told you you're not to make it in the study!"

"Oh, bother!" said Dolly crossly.

There was a step in the passage, and an olive-checked girl with dancing dark eyes looked in.

It was Barbara Redfern, of the Fourth Form at Cliff House, more familiarly known as Babs.

"Setting the house on fire?" she inquired.

"Rats!" was Clara's reply, a rejoinder more remarkable for emphasis than elegance.

"My dear kid, I looked in to warn you," said Babs, laughing. "The Bull's coming!"

And Babs vanished along the passage, leaving dismay in Study No. 7.

A heavy step was heard from the direction of the stairs.

It belonged to Miss Bullivant, the drill-mistress, who was irreverently termed the Bull by the junior girls.

"Oh, dear!" said Dolly Jobling, standing helpless with the smoking frying-pan in her hand.

"Put it out of sight, you duffer!" said Clara in a tragic whisper. "She'll be here in two ticks!"

"I shall get detention!" wailed Dolly.

"Hide it, you little donkey!"

The heavy step of Miss Bullivant was approaching rapidly.

A somewhat angular form loomed up in the study doorway, and Dolly Jobling, hardly knowing what she did in her alarm, plumped the frying-pan down into the armchair, and stood before it to screen it from view.

Sniff!

It was a most emphatic sniff that Miss Bullivant gave as she entered the study. She peered at the three girls over her glasses, and sniffed again.

"You have been burning something in this room!" she exclaimed.

"B-b-b-burning!" stammered Marjorie.

"The room is full of smoke."

"S-s-smoke!"

"Don't repeat my words in that ridiculous way, Marjorie!" snapped Miss Bullivant.

"Nunno!" gasped Marjorie. "Certainly not!"

Dolly Jobling stood trembling in front of the frying-pan in the chair, while Miss Bullivant peered round the study, blinked at the fire, and then blinked at the three girls.

Miss Bullivant was not popular among the girls of Cliff House.

She had a way of dropping in in the most inopportune places at the most inopportune moments, which the girls described as prowling.

According to Clara, Miss Bullivant was nearly all eyes and ears, and the rest of her was tongue.

"Well?" snapped Miss Bullivant.

"Well?" murmured Marjorie.

"You have been trying to make toffee again!" said Miss Bullivant.

"Oh!"

"You have been forbidden to do so since the chimney was nearly set on fire!"

"Ahem!"

"This is disobedience!" said Miss Bullivant in a terrific voice.

"Oh!"

"Which of you has been making toffee in this study?"

Silence.

"I shall investigate this matter," said Miss Bullivant sternly, "and make a report to Miss Primrose."

"Oh!"

Miss Bullivant advanced towards the armchair, motioning Dolly Jobling aside.

Dolly quaked, and stepped out of the way.

It did not occur to Miss Bullivant to look into the armchair before she sat down. Naturally, it never crossed her mind that a frying-pan full of half-liquid toffee was in the chair.

It was not really an appropriate place for a frying-pan.

And the Bull was short-sighted.

The three juniors stood almost frozen as Miss Bullivant plumped down in the armchair.

Before they could think of uttering a word of warning, the Bull was sitting there, and they gasped—and waited.

They expected to see Miss Bullivant spring into the air—but she didn't.

Evidently the angular lady was still unconscious of the toffee.

"G-g-g-goodness gracious!" stammered Marjorie helplessly.

Miss Bullivant raised an accusing forefinger.

"Now," she said, "I require to know the truth of this matter. You have been making toffee in the study, in disobedience to the express commands of your headmistress!"

The three girls looked rather grim. That was the Bull's unpleasant way of putting it.

Certainly Miss Primrose's instructions had been forgotten, but that was all.

But it was a little habit of the Bull to make the worst of everything, and Marjorie & Co. were no longer sorry that she was sitting in the toffee.

"Was it you, Marjorie?"

"Ahem!"

"That is not an answer, Marjorie Hazeldene."

"It—it was me!" mumbled Dolly Jobling.

"What?"

"M-m-me!"

"You are in the Fourth Form," said Miss Bullivant severely. "But you do not seem to know how to express yourself in English. You should not say it was me."

"I—I didn't say it was you, Miss Bullivant," stammered Dolly. "I—I said it was me."

"I mean, you should say it was I."

"But—but it wasn't you, Miss Bullivant!"

"What?"

"It wasn't you," said Dolly, bewildered. "How could I say it was you when it was me?"

There was the sound of a chuckle in the study, and Miss Bullivant looked round sharply at Marjorie and Clara.

But two perfectly grave and serious faces met her view.

She fixed her eyes sternly upon Dolly Jobling again.

"I fear that this is a deliberate misunderstanding, and intended for impertinence!" she exclaimed. "I am referring to the grammar you used, you foolish girl! You should say, it was I, not it was me. Do you understand?"

"Very well, Miss Bullivant."

"Now, answer my question, and speak correctly this time. Who was it?"

"You, Miss Bullivant," said Dolly meekly.

"Wha-at?"

"You!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" escaped from Clara involuntarily.

Miss Bullivant's cold grey-green eyes glittered over her glasses.

"I might have expected disrespect in this study," she said. "I shall report this to Miss Primrose."

With that, Miss Bullivant rose to her feet, and swept to the door with stately dignity.

A shriek escaped the three girls as she went, for to Miss Bullivant's thick tweed skirt there was clinging a frying-pan—stuck there by congealed toffee.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Marjorie. "Miss Bullivant, please—"

"Not a word!" snapped Miss Bullivant.

"But—"

"Enough!"

And Miss Bullivant swept out of the study, her long, sharp nose high in the air, and the frying-pan clinging to her as she sailed away down the passage.

And from Study No. 7 came an irrepressible shriek:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

### Sticking to it!

"MY word!"

"Oh, dear!" Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn were chatting at the head of the staircase when Miss Bullivant swept by them.

The subject of their conversation was the new girl expected at Cliff House that afternoon—of whom they had heard as well as Marjorie & Co.

But they forgot all about Bessie Bunter as Miss Bullivant swept by.

The sight of a tall and angular and dignified lady with a frying-pan clinging to her skirts was too much for their gravity.

They shrieked.

Miss Bullivant paused, and her sharp eyes glittered at them.

"You, too!" she exclaimed. "This is a plot! I shall report this to Miss Primrose!"

"Oh, dear!" gasped Babs. "I—I didn't mean—"

"You—you see—" stuttered Mabel.

"Enough!"

Miss Bullivant swept down the stairs.

"Oh, Babs!" gasped Mabel.

"Oh, Mabs!" stuttered Barbara.

"We'd better tell her—"

"No fear!" Babs caught Mabs by the arm. "Don't! Didn't she say 'enough'?"

Clang!

Miss Bullivant, in turning the curve of the staircase, swept her skirt against the banisters.

There was a loud clang as the frying-pan collided with the woodwork.

Babs and Mabs suppressed a shriek as Miss Bullivant swung round in amazement at that sudden metallic clang close behind her.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant. "What—what was that?"

She scanned the staircase, and she scanned the banisters, turning completely round in her amazed search for the metallic article that had clanged.

Naturally, she did not find it.

The sight of Miss Bullivant turning round in search of an article that kept behind her all the time was too much for Babs and Mabs.

Miss Bullivant looked a good deal like a dog chasing its own tail.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Babs and Mabs fled, gasping, as the fiery eye of the drill-mistress swept up the staircase.

"Extraordinary!" murmured Miss Bullivant.

She descended the remaining stairs.

Boker, the school-page, was in the hall.

He was a fat, round-faced youth, with round eyes, and his round eyes grew rounder, till they looked like saucers, as Miss Bullivant passed him.

"He, he, he!"

Once more Miss Bullivant spun round.

That sudden cackle from the school-page was astounding. Miss Bullivant was far too terrific a personage to be cackled at by a page.

"Boker!" she exclaimed, transfixing the startled youth with her eye.

"My eye!" gasped Boker.

"You—you—you emitted a disrespectful cachinnation!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant.

"I—I—I didn't!" gasped Boker, in dismay. "Never thought of such a thing, mum—never!"

Boker, as a matter of fact, was in blissful ignorance of what a cachinnation might possibly be.

"You are impertinent, Boker!"

"Oh, mum!"

"I shall report this to Miss Primrose!"

"Oh!"

With a crushing frown Miss Bullivant turned away—and the frying-pan swept into view again as she turned her back on Boker.

It was too much for Boker.

In spite of himself the disrespectful cachinnation burst from him again.

Then, as Miss Bullivant turned, he fled frantically for the lower regions.

"It is a plot—a scheme!" fumed Miss Bullivant. "It is what they call, I believe, a jape, and even the servants are in it! Disgraceful! I shall complain very seriously to Miss Primrose. It is a scheme to subject me to ridicule!"

She swept along the corridor towards the headmistress' study.

In a deep window recess a number of the girls of the Fourth were gathered, chatting while they waited for the bell for afternoon classes.

They looked very prim as Miss Bullivant came by—it was always safest to be prim when the Bull was prowling.

But as Miss Bullivant passed them, and the frying-pan dawned upon their astonished vision, there was a scream.

"Oh!"

"Look!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Girls!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant, turning a flaming eye upon them. "How dare you! I say, how dare—"

Clang!

In whisking hastily round Miss Bullivant's skirt swept against a pedestal upon which stood a bust of the immortal Shakespeare.

Naturally, there was a loud clang as the frying-pan struck it.

The Bull spun round again.

"What—what was that?" she exclaimed. "This—this is some trick! Philippa Derwent—Phyllis Howell, what does this mean? What trick are you playing?"

"Oh, Miss Bullivant—" gasped Philippa.

"I shall report this to Miss Primrose!" exclaimed the Bull. "You shall all be punished severely—most severely! This is a plot!"

"Oh, Miss Bullivant!"

"Pah!"

Miss Bullivant swept on to the headmistress' study, with a thunderous brow.

"Good gracious!" gasped Phyllis Howell. "She—she's going into the Head's study—like that! Where did she pick up that frying-pan?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a flushed and angry face Miss Bullivant swept into the headmistress' study.

Miss Penelope Primrose, the headmistress of Cliff House, gazed at her in mild surprise.

Miss Primrose was a kind and exceedingly calm old lady, beloved by her pupils.

"Dear me, Miss Bullivant!" said the headmistress mildly. "Whatever has happened? You look quite disturbed."

"I have been treated with gross disrespect!" gasped Miss Bullivant.

"Surely not!"

"It is a plot, and I fear that Marjorie Hazeldene is at the bottom of it. It began in her study. I have been laughed at."

"What?"

"Laughed at!" shrieked Miss Bullivant. "Yes, madam, laughed at—by all the girls I have passed in coming here—even by the school page!"

"Dear me!"

"It is a plot—a wicked plot—"

"My dear Miss Bullivant, pray calm yourself! Sit down, I beg—"

The headmistress waved the indignant mistress to a chair.

No Luck for Babs.

**"HUSH!"**  
Babs Redfern whispered mysteriously as she drew Mabel Lynn into the big window recess near the door of the Fourth Form class-room.  
"Nearly time for lessons," said Mabs.  
"It's maths this afternoon, and the Bull is wary. Better get in early."  
"Never mind the Bull now."  
"But—"  
"Hush! It's a wheeze!"  
"Oh, go ahead, then!" said Mabs resignedly.  
The girls of the Fourth were heading for their class-room, some of them still discussing—with smiles—the incident of the frying-pan and the toffee.  
But the prospect in class that afternoon was not exactly attractive for Miss Bullivant was to take the Fourth in

is coming, by train to Ffordale Station—  
"I don't suppose she would walk!" assented Mabs.  
"Don't interrupt! She ought to be met at the station," said Barbara.  
"Being short-sighted, she may lose her way."  
"How do you know she's short-sighted?"  
"Well, I don't know; but I suppose she is, as she's the sister of Billy Bunter, who's as blind as an owl. We can take it for granted that she's short-sighted, and may lose her way," urged Barbara.  
"Therefore, suppose we ask Miss Bellew to let us go to the station and meet her."  
"Oh!"  
"And bring her safely to Cliff House. Then we shall be able to cut maths, and give the Bull a miss this afternoon."

Miss Bullivant sat down, and there was a terrific clang.

CLANG!

Miss Primrose jumped.

"What—what—what was that?" she ejaculated.

"What—what—" stuttered Miss Bullivant. "I do not understand. It is most extraordinary! Perhaps there is something on the chair."

She jumped up, and glared at the chair.

There was nothing on the chair, but as she glared at it the frying-pan came into full view of the headmistress.

Miss Primrose gazed at it as if mesmerised.

Her astounded gaze was still fixed when Miss Bullivant spun round towards her.

"Miss Primrose—"

"Good gracious! Kindly turn round again, Miss Bullivant!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Please be good enough to turn round."

"But why?"

"There is—is something adhering to your dress!" gasped the headmistress.

"It is most extraordinary!"

"Mum-mum-my dress?"

"Yes—some article—a—a cooking utensil, I believe. It certainly seems to resemble a frying-pan."

"A fuf-fuf-fuf-frying-pan!" stuttered Miss Bullivant.

She swept her hand behind her, and her expression was extraordinary as her fingers came in contact with the frying-pan.

She jerked at it, but it did not come away.

The toffee was well set by this time, and it held like glue.

Miss Primrose rose to her feet, put on her pince-nez, and walked round Miss Bullivant, inspecting her, a good deal as if Miss Bullivant was a horse she was thinking of purchasing.

"Bless my soul! It is undoubtedly a frying-pan!" she ejaculated. "This is most extraordinary! For what reason, may I ask, have you attached this cooking utensil to your attire, Miss Bullivant?"

"I—I—I— It is amazing! I had not the remotest idea that it was there, of course," babbled Miss Bullivant. "How it came there is beyond me. This—this is probably why the girls were—were laughing."

"Very probably," said the headmistress drily. "It is extraordinary—very extraordinary indeed! It would be advisable, perhaps, to change your dress, Miss Bullivant."

Miss Bullivant thought so, too.

She fled from the study, and to her own room; and as her door slammed, a loud clang came to the ears of a crowd of delighted juniors on the staircase.

But there was one who did not look delighted.

"She's got my frying-pan!" said Dolly Jobling disconsolately. "I say, Clara, go and ask her for my frying-pan!"

"I don't think!" chuckled Clara.

"You go and ask her, Marjorie!"

"Some other afternoon!" said Marjorie, laughing.

"I say, Babs, will you go and ask Miss Bullivant for my frying-pan?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I think not!"

"Mabel dear, will you—"

"Not for all the gold in the Bank of England!" said Mabel, with a chuckle.

"Go and ask her yourself, Dolly."

To which Dolly Jobling's reply was brief but emphatic.

"No fear!"

And the frying-pan remained un-

claimed.



"You weren't going to have these sardines for tea?" asked Bessie Bunter.  
"No," replied Barbara Redfern. "Good!" said Bessie, proceeding to open the tin. "I'll eat the lot, as you don't want them."

"maths," and it was certain that her temper—never good—would be worse than usual.  
Dolly Jobling was especially apprehensive, wondering whether the Bull had yet discovered to whom the frying-pan belonged.  
"The Bull will be simply withering this afternoon, Mabs," said Barbara.  
"Rather!" assented Mabs.  
"Well, suppose we could get out of class before maths—"  
"We can't."  
"That's where the wheeze comes in," explained Barbara. "I've told you there's a new kid coming this afternoon—"  
"Bless the new kid!" remarked Mabs, with her eye on the door of the class-room. "Miss Bellew will be along in a minute."  
"Then be quiet for a minute," said Babs. "This new kid—Bessie Bunter—"

"Good idea!" said Mabs. "But will Miss Bellew let us off? I don't suppose Bessie Bunter is coming alone."  
"Well, she may be. We can take it for granted that she is."  
"You seem to be taking a lot for granted. Miss Bellew mayn't take it for granted, though."  
"Well, I'm going to put it to her," said Barbara resolutely. "You must back me up. We are simply thinking of the new girl, mind."  
"Are we?"  
"Of course. We are simply concerned about her, and not in the least thinking of getting off lessons. It's merely a case of kind thoughtfulness for others, such as Miss Bellew approves of."  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"The Bull will be ragging the class no end, and we shall be jolly lucky to get out of it."  
"Yes, if—"  
"Oh, bother your 'ifs'!" said Barbara.

"You never say anything but 'if' or 'but.' Let's try to work it, anyhow."

"I'm game!"

"What I'm afraid of is, that Marjorie Hazeldene may have thought of it, and may get in the first word," said Babs. "So we've got to jump up the minute Miss Bellew comes in, and spring it on her. First come, first served, you know."

"Right-ho!" said Mabs. "Move on, Babs, there's Miss Bellew sailing down the corridor!"

The two girls rushed for the classroom.

They were the last in, and they found a buzz of discussion going on in the room.

"N.G!" Katie Smith was saying. "You won't be able to work it, Marjorie."

"I'm going to try!" said Marjorie. "Oh, rather!" said Clara. "You see, the new girl, being a blind owl, she ought to be met at the station and escorted to the school."

"And if Miss Bellew says yes, we shall be gone before the Bull prowls along," chuckled Dolly Jobling.

Babs and Mabs exchanged a glance of utter disgust.

It was evident that Babs' great wheeze had already occurred to Marjorie & Co.

"Look here, Marjorie!" exclaimed Babs warily. "You're not going to meet the new kid. That's my idea."

"What nonsense!" said Clara Trevlyn. "I suggested it to Marjorie as soon as I heard Bessie Bunter was coming."

"I suggested it to Mabs—"

"Too late!" said Marjorie. "But I'll tell you what. You can ask Miss Bellew, if she says no to us."

"If she says no to you, she'll say no to us!" retorted Barbara. "We're going to ask her first."

Clara raised a warning forefinger. "You kids keep off the grass!" she said warningly. "Leave this to your elders and letters!"

"You're not elder! Perhaps you look it, though," added Barbara. "I claim it as my idea."

"Nonsense! It's mine!"

"We want to dodge the Bull!" said Mabs.

"So do we; she bagged that frying-pan in our study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm going to ask," said Barbara determinedly. "You can mingle your voice with mine, if you like."

"Now, look here, Barbara—"

"No fear! It's my wheeze! You back me up, Mabs."

"Rather!" said Mabs.

"Then we'll all speak together!" said Marjorie.

"And Miss Bellew will say no to the lot of you," said Phyllis Howell, laughing.

"Toss up for it!" suggested Dolly Jobling.

"That's not a bad idea," said Babs at once. "Anybody got a penny?"

"But it was our idea first!" exclaimed Clara.

"Oh, be reasonable!" urged Babs. "Here's a penny! Now, then, heads we ask Miss Bellew, tails you ask her! Is it a go?"

"Oh, all right!" said Marjorie. "Anything for a quiet life!"

"Throw it up before Miss Bellew comes in," said Clara. "Let it roll on the floor, where we can all see it."

"Done!"

Babs tossed the penny in the air, and it clicked on the high ceiling of the classroom, and then whizzed to the floor.

There was a rush of the girls to see it when it had fallen.

At the same moment Miss Bellew stepped in at the doorway.

"What is it?"

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"Give it a name!"

"Heads or tails?"

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Miss Bellew, gazing at the scene in amazement.

The Fourth had been too interested in the tossing of the coin to observe the Form-mistress' entrance.

"Heads!" shouted Barbara triumphantly.

"Barbara!" exclaimed Miss Bellew.

"What—what—"

"Oh, cave!" gasped Clara.

The girls rushed for their desks.

On the floor, in the middle of the classroom, the penny remained.

Miss Bellew advanced towards it, with an expression of stony horror upon her face, while the juniors sat palpitating on the forms.

"Goodness gracious! What is this? Barbara Redfern, what is this?"

"It—it—it's a penny!" gasped Babs.

"I am quite aware that this coin is a penny, Barbara. I am inquiring what this means. Are you tossing for money in the class-room, like very bad boys, instead of the well-behaved girls I have believed you to be?" exclaimed Miss Bellew, in her most stately manner.

"Oh, Miss Bellew!"

"Answer me!"

"Nunno!"

"Then what does this mean?"

"We—we were deciding a disputed point," stammered Babs.

"Indeed! I disapprove strongly of deciding a disputed point in such a manner, Barbara. And, pray, what is the point in dispute?"

"Ahem!"

"You may refer it to me," said Miss Bellew, more kindly. "I have told you, my dear girls, to look upon me as a friend as well as a teacher. Tell me the point in dispute, and I will decide it for you."

"Oh, dear!" murmured Clara.

The rivals of the Fourth looked at one another in dismay.

It really was scarcely feasible to acquaint the Form-mistress with the point in dispute.

"Well?" said Miss Bellew. "What is it, Barbara?"

"We—we—we—" stammered Babs.

"Yes?"

"We—we were disputing who—who should do a—a kind action," stammered Babs.

"That is very right and proper," said Miss Bellew approvingly. "Kind hearts are more than coronets, as you have learned from your study of the works of Tennyson in the literature class. And who, Barbara, was to be the recipient of this kind action?"

"A—a perfect stranger, Miss Bellew."

"Dear me! You were disputing with Marjorie as to which of you should perform a kind action towards a perfect stranger?"

"Ye-es."

"I am very glad to see a rivalry in doing good among my girls," said Miss Bellew. "I do not approve of your method of settling the dispute, but I shall pass over that. Who is this stranger you refer to?"

"The—the new kid—"

"What?"

"I—I mean the new girl, Bessie Bunter," gasped Barbara.

"Oh, you are planning some kind action to make the new girl feel at home when she arrives at Cliff House? Very good. And what form, Barbara, was this action to take?"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Babs.

"What did you say, Barbara?"

"We—we were thinking of meeting her at the station, and bringing her to the school."

"Oh!" said Miss Bellew.

"She is so very, very short-sighted, that she may miss her way," murmured Babs. "So—so we thought—"

"We—we thought—" murmured Marjorie.

Miss Bellew's face was not quite so approving now. Perhaps she had begun to be suspicious.

"You could not meet Bessie Bunter at the station, Barbara, without missing your lessons this afternoon," she said.

"We—we are willing to do that, Miss Bellew—"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed, Miss Bellew, for the sake of—of kindness to a stranger—to a new girl who is very, very short-sighted."

"Had you no other motive, Barbara?"

"Ahem!"

"Did you wish to meet the new girl solely for her own sake, or for the sake of obtaining an extra holiday from classes?"

"Ahem!"

Barbara sat crimson.

Mabel kept her eyes fixed on her desk.

Later on, she intended to remark to Babs: "I told you so!"

For the present, she made no remark. She was only anxious not to catch Miss Bellew's eye.

"Barbara! Can you give me your word that you were actuated solely by consideration for the new girl?"

"I—I—I—"

"Yes, or no, Barbara?"

"Nunno!" gasped Babs.

"That is truthful, at all events," said Miss Bellew, with a slight smile. "We will let the matter drop here. As it happens, it is already decided. Marjorie, Miss Primrose desires you to go to the station and meet the new girl, as she is travelling alone. You will take Clara with you. You will leave after the first lesson, as the train comes in at three-fifteen."

"Yes, Miss Bellew!" gasped Marjorie. Dolly Jobling jumped up.

"Please, Miss Bellew—"

"Well?"

"Did Miss Primrose say I was to go, too?"

"She did not, Dorothy."

"Oh!"

"You may sit down."

Dolly sat down, crushed.

The lesson began, and as soon as Miss Bellew's attention was engaged elsewhere, Mabs leaned towards her chum, and whispered:

"I told you so, Babs!"

"Fathead!" was Babs' reply.

"Oh!" said Mabs, taken aback. "But I really told you so—"

"Dry up!"

And as Miss Bellew's eye was travelling round, Mabs indignantly dried up.

At the end of the lessons, Marjorie and Clara, with sweet smiles, left the classroom, Barbara making them a grimace as they went.

With cheery faces, the chums of the Fourth went for their hats, leaving the rest of the Form to face the Bull for the next lesson.

### The New Junior.

A FAT face, adorned with a very large pair of spectacles, blinked out of a first-class carriage-window as the train stopped in Friardale Station.

Bessie Bunter had arrived. The new girl blinked out on the platform, and then blinked round the carriage.

There was a cage on the seat beside her, and in the cage was a fat green parrot with an evil red eye.

Bessie Bunter gathered up the cage in one fat hand and a baggy umbrella in the other.

With both hands full, she blinked at the door, which was rather difficult to negotiate under the circumstances.

She put her head out of the window and squeaked:

"Porter!"

The old Friardale porter was trundling a trolley, with a box on it, from the guard's van.

It was Bessie Bunter's box, and it was a large one.

"Porter!"

The trolley was making a noise as it trundled, and perhaps the porter did not hear.

Perhaps, like the celebrated Dying Gladiator, he heard, but he heeded not.

The trolley trundled on, and Bessie Bunter's plump face grew pink with wrath as she blinked from the carriage window.

Two girls across the platform looked towards her, and Clara caught Marjorie's arms and squeezed it.

"Didn't I say so?" she demanded.

"Eh? What did you say?" asked Marjorie Hazeldene, whose eyes were fixed on the fat vision in the train.

"Didn't I say she was like Billy Bunter of Greyfriars?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Might be his merry twin!" said Clara. "Fat—"

"Plump!" said Marjorie.

"Shiny—"

"Well, perhaps a little shiny."

"Greedy—"

"Oh, Clara!"

"Conceited—"

"You really don't know—"

"Yes, I do!" said Clara decidedly.

"And look at her plait!"

"What is the matter with her plait?"

"What isn't the matter with it?" was Clara's reply. "Look at her hat!"

"It isn't a pretty hat!" admitted Marjorie.

"Pretty! It's a hat the Gorgon might wear to match her features."

"Oh, Clara!"

"And her voice—"

"But, really—"

"She isn't getting out!" said Clara.

"The best thing we can do is to leave her in the train, Marjorie. The train goes on to Redclyffe. There's a boys' school at Redclyffe. That would suit her ever so much better than Cliff House."

"But—"

"Or shall we get her to change for Canterbury?" said Clara reflectively.

"At Canterbury she might be quite lost and never heard of again. It's quite a big place."

Marjorie laughed.

"She seems to want somebody to let her out," she remarked. "Let's go and open the door for her."

Clara Trevlyn held on to her chum's arm.

"Don't!" she answered.

"But, really—"

"Why can't she let herself out?" demanded Clara. "Lazy! Like Billy Bunter! Listen! She's squeaking again!"

"Porter!" shrieked Bessie Bunter.

"Open this door! I will report you!"

"They're a long time starting 'this train!" complained Clara. "Why don't they get a move on?"

"It stays here three minutes," said Marjorie, laughing.

"Then it oughtn't! It's a waste of time! If they'd only buck up, the Bunter girl would get landed at Redclyffe."

"Come on, Clara—"

"Rats!"

Clara Trevlyn had evidently conceived a considerable prejudice against Bessie Bunter

Probably it was founded upon her acquaintance with Billy Bunter of Greyfriars.

And certainly Bessie Bunter bore a remarkable resemblance to her brother Billy.

Indeed, if Billy Bunter had dressed in girl's attire, with the addition of a cable-like plait, he would have looked exactly as Bessie looked.

"Clara dear," murmured Marjorie, "let's be decent to her! After all, we don't know her yet! We've got off maths and drill to come and meet her."

Clara uttered a sound resembling a snort.

"I'm going to make the best of her, anyway," said Marjorie. "I'm going to

"Jump out!" exclaimed Clara. "The guard will come and stuff you in again in two ticks!"

"Bother the guard! Take this cage!" "Oh, my word!" exclaimed Clara, as the cage was handed out.

"Don't drop it!"

"Eh?"

"Be careful!"

"Oh!"

"Mind he doesn't nip your finger—though it will serve you right if he does, if you don't take care!"

"My word!"

"Take this broly!"

Bessie Bunter shoved the baggy umbrella towards Marjorie, who took it in sheer astonishment.



"What is that tabby cat doing in this study?" said Clara Trevlyn, brandishing the poker. "Yarrah! I'm not a tabby cat!" muttered Bessie Bunter. "I'm a—yoop!—girl! Help!"

be kind, Clara. She's a stranger here, and it's up to us—"

"Porter!"

"Well, perhaps it is up to us, in a way," admitted Clara, who was quite a good-hearted girl, in spite of her wilful and emphatic manners and customs. "We'll give her a chance, Marjorie, as you're so soft-hearted and soft-headed. We'll let her out—"

"Porter!"

The ancient porter was trundling off in the distance now, still unheeding, though certainly he must have heard.

Perhaps he did not see any reason why an active girl shouldn't open the carriage door for herself.

Perhaps he read in Bessie Bunter's look, or voice, that there was no tip to be expected in that quarter.

It really looked as if Bessie Bunter would be carried on to the next station, for the guard was already slamming doors along the train.

Marjorie ran across the platform and pulled the door open.

Bessie Bunter blinked at her.

"That beastly porter—" she gasped.

"Jump out!"

"I'll report him to the stationmaster!"

Then the fat young lady prepared to descend from the train.

"Urry up there!" shouted the guard.

Bessie Bunter paused in the act of descending to turn her big spectacles on the guard.

"Are you addressing me?" she demanded.

"I ham!" answered the guard, with aspirated emphasis.

"Then don't be impertinent!"

"Hay?"

"I shall report you if you are impertinent!"

"My heye!" said the guard.

"For goodness' sake jump out!" exclaimed Clara.

Bessie Bunter hopped out at last. She gave the guard a withering blink as that official slammed the door with a terrific slam.

The guard scuttled along the train with muttered ejaculations, which were apparently expressive of his opinion of silly schoolgirls.

"Well—" began Clara.

"Don't drop that cage."

"Eh?"

"Be careful with it."

"Well—"

Marjorie and Clara surveyed the newcomer as the train glided out of the station.

On the ground that Bessie Bunter was probably like her brother Billy, whom they knew, they had thought that they knew what to expect.

But Bessie Bunter had succeeded in surprising them.

She did not even know them yet—so far as she was aware, they were simply two obliging strangers.

And she was treating them as if they were servants specially paid to serve her lofty will and pleasure.

Gratitude for service rendered did not appear to enter into Bessie Bunter's thoughts at all.

"I shall report that guard," she snapped. "And the porter! Have you got that cage safe? For goodness' sake be careful with it, can't you? I never saw anybody so clumsy."

Clara opened her lips for an indignant reply. But she did not utter it.

What she uttered was a terrified shriek. "Yoooooooooop!"

Crash!  
The cage went rolling on the platform, and Clara stuck her finger into her mouth, and sucked it frantically.

Bessie Bunter shrieked, too, and dived to the rescue of the cage.

Marjorie stood transfixed, while Clara fairly danced on the platform, uttering a remarkable series of ejaculations.

"Yow-ow-ow-wow-wow-wow!"

### Nice Girl!

"CLARA!"

"Yow-ow-wow!"  
"You clumsy duffer!"  
shrieked Bessie Bunter, retrieving the cage as it rolled. "I know you'd drop it! I said you would!"

"He bit my finger!" shrieked Clara.

"Serve you right!"

"What?"  
"Didn't I warn you? Now you've frightened him!" exclaimed Bessie Bunter indignantly. "Look at him ruffling his feathers!"

"My finger—"  
"Bother your silly finger! Look at Polly!"

"Bother Polly! Look at my finger!" wailed Clara. "He's nipped it, the horrid thing! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"Oh, do be quiet! Poor Polly!" said Bessie Bunter soothingly. "Poor old Polly! Polly want sugar? Poor Polly!"

"Oh, dear! Ow!"  
The parrot, probably started by its sudden tumble, had set up an unmelodious screeching.

Bessie Bunter soothed it with a voice which was not much more melodious than Polly's own.

"Well," said Marjorie, recovering her breath, "I think—"

"Tie up my finger for me!" wailed Clara.

"Yes, dear."  
Marjorie deftly bound a handkerchief round the damaged finger.

Meanwhile Clara looked daggers at the new junior.

But the latter did not heed.  
All her attention was given to the green, fat parrot.

"I wish," murmured Clara, in a low, concentrated voice—"I wish I was a boy, and she were another boy! Then I'd wipe up the platform with her!"

"Oh, Clara!" murmured Marjorie.

"I've a jolly good mind to pull her hair, anyhow!"

"Oh dear!"

"The fat little duffer—"

"Hush!"

Bessie Bunter turned to them with an enquiring blink through her big glasses.

"Do you know where Cliff House is?" she asked.

"We belong to Cliff House School," answered Marjorie. "We came here to meet your train—if you are Bessie Bunter."

"I'm Bessie Bunter! I suppose you haven't seen my brother here?"

"No!"

"I wrote him to meet me here."

"Perhaps he couldn't get off lessons," suggested Marjorie mildly. "It's not a half-holiday to-day, you know!"

"Well, he ought to have got off; he could have got off by saying I was coming. He's selfish!" said Bessie Bunter.

"So's my young brother, Sammy. I'm the only one in our family who isn't selfish!"

"Oh!"

"He knew I should want a snack after my journey, and he wasn't going to risk having to stand treat," said Bessie Bunter.

"I know him!"

"But—"

"I tell you I know him! Did the headmistress send you girls to meet me here?"

"Yes!"

"What's your name?" asked Bessie Bunter.

"Marjorie Hazeldene."

"Oh, I know your name; Billy's mentioned you at home. He told me he's very friendly with you!"

"The horrid, fibbing little bounder!" exclaimed Marjorie, crimson with anger.

"I'll ask Bob Cherry to thrash him!"

"And what's your name?"

"Clara Trevlyn. Has your beautiful brother said anything about me?" asked Clara, with a gleaming eye.

"If he has, I won't ask Bob Cherry to thrash him—I'll thrash him myself!"

"Oh, he's mentioned you," said Bessie carelessly. "He says you're a tomboy!"

Clara clenched her hands.

It was perhaps fortunate that Billy Bunter had not come to the station to meet his charming sister on her arrival.

There would really have been danger of a case of assault and battery.

"A—a—a tomboy!" breathed Clara.

"Yes; he says you've got feet as big as a boy's!"

"He—he—I—I—Oh—"

Clara stammered.

"And your hair is always untidy—"

"Hadn't we be better be getting out of the station?" asked Marjorie hastily, feeling that it was time to interrupt these revelations.

"I should think so," answered Bessie Bunter. "You're wasting time, hanging about here, chattering!"

"Oh!"

Marjorie led the way from the platform, still carrying Bessie Bunter's baggy umbrella.

Bessie herself carried the cage, apparently not caring to trust Polly in Clara's hands again.

Outside the station she halted.

"Is it far to Cliff House?" she asked.

"Only about a mile."

"How are we going to get there, then?"

"Walk!" snapped Clara.

"I'm jolly well not going to walk a mile, I know that! I suppose there's a cab, or something?"

"Like to telephone to Courtfield for a taxi?" asked Clara sarcastically.

"Yes; that's a good idea. I'm accustomed to having proper comforts in travelling," said Bessie Bunter loftily.

"How long would it take for a taxi to get here?"

"About an hour, I suppose. And the man would charge about a pound."

"Well, it's no good being wealthy,

excepting to spend money on making oneself comfortable, is it?"

"I—I suppose not, but—"

"If you can't afford taxis, I suppose that's no reason why I shouldn't have one?"

"Not at all, but—"

"Then don't argue. What time do you have tea at Cliff House?"

"Five o'clock in Hall; but we often have tea in our studies," said Marjorie.

"And now it's only half-past three. I'm hungry!"

"The housekeeper will give you a piece of cake."

Bessie Bunter sniffed.

"What's the good of a piece of cake to me? Didn't you hear me say I was hungry?"

"Yes, but—"

"Isn't there somewhere where we can get something to eat?" demanded Bessie Bunter, blinking along the old High Street of Friardale.

"Yes, there's Uncle Clegg's shop, but—"

"Then let's get there, for goodness' sake; I'm simply famished. I haven't had anything since lunch, excepting some sandwiches, and a pork-pie, and some nuts and bananas, and a cake, and some biscuits."

"Then you must be in a state of famine!" said Clara, with deep sarcasm.

"Exactly! I say, you girls, come along, and show me the place. It's my treat, you know. I've got no end of tin. Order anything you like, and leave it to me. Come along!"

Clara's severe face relaxed a little.

Bessie Bunter seemed to have her good points, after all.

The walk in the clear sharp air from the sea had in fact made both Marjorie and Clara willing to anticipate tea.

They were not famished like Bessie Bunter, though they had had nothing since lunch, but they were quite prepared to do justice to the good things in the village tuckshop.

"Well, that's not a bad idea," said Clara, thawing. "You needn't bother about your box; that will be sent on all right."

"We'll take it with us in the taxi," said Bessie Bunter. "I'm not trusting that box out of my sight. There's food in it."

"Oh, I see!"

"Telephone for the taxi, one of you, and we can get a snack at the shop while it's coming along."

"But it will be awfully expensive," urged Marjorie dubiously. "It will have to come miles from Courtfield."

Bessie Bunter waved a fat hand.

"Never mind that; it makes no difference to me."

"Oh, all right, if you really—"

"Just telephone, and get it over," said Bessie Bunter. "And for goodness' sake buck up, unless you want to see me faint from hunger in the street!"

"Not for worlds!" said Clara, laughing. "I'll 'phone through to Courtfield in two ticks."

There was a telephone call-office at hand, and Clara ran in to ring up the cab-rank at Courtfield.

Bessie Bunter gave directions about her box while she was so occupied.

The new girl's fat face was pink and indignant when she joined Marjorie and Clara outside the station again.

"That porter is quite cheeky!" she said. "He seems to want me to pay him."

"It's usual to tip the porter," murmured Marjorie.

"I don't see it. The man's paid by his employers, isn't he?"

"Yes, but—"

"If he wants higher wages, he can go on strike, I suppose?"



"Ye-es, but—"

"He won't get any money out of me," said Bessie Bunter decidedly. "I don't believe in throwing money away. Now, where's that shop?"

Marjorie and Clara silently piloted the new girl to Uncle Clegg's little shop in the High Street.

### Something Like a Snack.

**B**ESSIE BUNTER blinked round her as she stepped down into the little shop, there being a step from the street into Mr. Clegg's dusky little establishment.

The new girl nearly stumbled over the step, as her big glasses did not seem to assist her vision much; but Marjorie caught her arm, and saved a catastrophe. "Ow!" ejaculated Bessie Bunter.

"There's a step," explained Marjorie.

"I can see that. Do you think I'm blind?"

"But you were falling over."

"No reason why you should pinch my arm."

"I didn't pinch—I mean, I didn't mean—"

"Well, whether you meant it or not, you did," grunted Bessie Bunter. "Do give a girl room to move!"

Bessie Bunter rolled in.

Uncle Clegg came out of his little parlour at the tinkle of the shop bell.

The old gentleman peered rather curiously at Bessie Bunter.

He noticed at once her resemblance to Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School.

His crusty old face melted into a grin of welcome at the sight of Marjorie Hazeldene.

Bessie Bunter perched herself on a high stool at the counter.

"Now, give your orders, girls," she announced. "My treat. Anything you like. I'll begin on these ham-patties."

Bessie Bunter removed a purse from her wrist, and slapped it on the counter, and there was a heavy clinking as she did so.

It sounded as if Bessie Bunter was remarkably well supplied with coin of the realm.

Indeed, that loud and prosperous jingle had a softening effect upon crusty old Mr. Clegg, and he became very polite and attentive to Bessie Bunter.

There was quite an array of good things to choose from, and Marjorie and Clara selected jam-tarts.

But Bessie Bunter evidently required something more solid to begin with.

She laid a foundation, as it were, with ham-patties. It was quite a solid foundation.

Then she continued with a sultana-cake, and followed it up with a seed-cake, washing down the same with ginger-beer galore.

By the time Marjorie and Clara had disposed of tarts and cream-puffs, Bessie Bunter had made remarkable progress.

Her stowage capacity was evidently very great, and she had a great rapidity in stowing.

Marjorie and Clara watched her as if fascinated as she finished the second cake.

Uncle Clegg was looking quite serious. He did not want a catastrophe in his shop, and a good customer taken away on the ambulance to the Cottage Hospital.

"Now I think I'll try some pastry," said Bessie Bunter.

"Oh!" said Clara.

"Are those tarts good?"

"Tip-top!"

"Have some more; it's my treat."

"Well, perhaps one more," said Clara.

"I'm going to try them."

Bessie Bunter tried the tarts—one and then another, and then a third—with a critical expression on her face.

Then she nodded.

"They're good!" she announced. "I'll have some."

And she had some!

"I—I say, you—you won't want any tea at Cliff House, at this rate," murmured Marjorie.

"Didn't you say tea isn't till five o'clock?"

"Yes."

"Well, I shall be ready for tea at five."

"Oh!"

"These tarts are quite good," said Bessie Bunter. "I shall often come to this shop. I don't think I'll have any more, though."

"I shouldn't," agreed Marjorie anxiously.

"Because those cream-puffs look good—"

"Oh!"

"And I mustn't overdo it," said Bessie Bunter, with a shake of the head. "I don't want to spoil my appetite for tea."

"Oh, dear!"

Marjorie and Clara seemed to be mesmerised, as Bessie Bunter started cheerily on the cream-puffs.

To their minds she seemed to be in danger, not only of spoiling her appetite for tea, but her digestion for ever and ever.

But Bessie Bunter was evidently an adept at this sort of thing.

The cream-puffs disappeared at a great rate.

The fat face was looking rather shiny, and the new girl seemed to find a little difficulty in breathing.

Otherwise, she came up smiling, as it were.

"I feel better now," she announced.

"D-d-do you?" gasped Clara.

"Yes, much. Have you given Polly any sugar?"

"Polly? No!"

"You might have," said Bessie Bunter reproachfully. "Fancy sitting down and feeding yourself, and not giving poor Polly a thought! I call it selfish!"

And, with that crushing rejoinder, Bessie Bunter proceeded to feed the evil-eyed parrot with lumps of sugar.

"Now say 'thank you,' Polly!" she commanded.

"Can he talk?" asked Marjorie, with some interest.

"Can he talk?" repeated Bessie Bunter scornfully. "He can talk your head off! He can say anything he likes."

"Make him talk," said Clara, with interest.

Bessie Bunter held up a fat finger.

"Talk, Polly!" she ordered.

The parrot blinked at her.

"Polly wants sugar! What an ugly old gentleman!"

Uncle Clegg, behind the counter, gave a convulsive start. He was the only old gentleman in the shop.

He was not beautiful certainly, but the parrot's remark could not be called polite.

"What an untidy girl!" went on Polly. "Tell Clara to comb her hair! That ribbon doesn't suit her. Ha, ha, ha!"

Clara gasped.

"Say something to Marjorie, Polly," said Bessie Bunter, with a fat grin.

"What a face!" said Polly. "Oh, my eye!"

"G-g-goodness gracious!" ejaculated Marjorie faintly, staring at the uncanny bird.

"It—it can't be the parrot speaking!" gasped Clara. "The horrid bird couldn't say such things!"

"Screech!" came from the evil-eyed parrot.

There was a puffing and snorting in the rugged High Street, and a taxi-cab went careering by towards the station.

"Hallo, that's our cab!" exclaimed Bessie Bunter. "Time we got along! You girls finished?"

"Yes, thanks."

"Then I'll settle up. How much, please?"

Uncle Clegg had been making a calculation with a stump of pencil on a fragment of sugar-wrapping paper. He announced:

"Fifteen shillings!"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Clara; and Marjorie looked almost alarmed.

Fifteen shillings was a goodly sum for a snack in the village tuckshop.

If Bessie Bunter could stand expenditure on that scale she certainly was a wealthy girl.

Bessie Bunter opened her bag, which clinked as she opened it.

All that was revealed to view, however, was a bunch of keys.

The new girl gave a dramatic start.

"Goodness gracious!" she exclaimed.

"What's the matter?"

"I've left my money at home!"

"Oh!"

### Spool!

**M**ARJORIE and Clara looked at one another, and they looked at Bessie Bunter.

The new girl blinked carefully through her purse-bag, as if in search of a possible Treasury note or two that might have been overlooked.

But only a rather soiled handkerchief came to light, in addition to the bunch of keys.

Uncle Clegg's face assumed a grim expression.

He did not care who settled his little bill; but his expression showed that it had to be settled by somebody, or there would be trouble.

"Isn't it awkward?" exclaimed Bessie Bunter, blinking at the dismayed chums of Cliff House.

"It—it is!" gasped Clara. "How are you going to pay fifteen shillings if you haven't got any money?"

"Oh, that's all right! I expect there will be a remittance waiting for me at Cliff House as soon as I get there."

"But—but now?" stammered Marjorie.

"You can lend me the money to settle, and I'll hand the sum over to you as soon as we reach the school," said Bessie Bunter indifferently.

"Oh!"

"And—and there's the taxi-cab!" gasped Marjorie.

"That's all right. Don't I keep on telling you that I'm expecting a remittance? Lend me fifteen shillings, one of you."

Marjorie and Clara exchanged eloquent glances.

Shillings were not so plentiful with them as they appeared to be with Bessie Bunter.

"I—I suppose we're in for it," muttered Clara resignedly; and she opened her little purse and produced a half-crown and a sixpence.

Marjorie searched through her little bag.

She had a ten-shilling note and a sixpence and some coppers.

She breathed more freely when she found it was possible to make up the required sum.

Bessie Bunter was already rolling to the door, cage in hand.

Apparently she regarded the settling of the bill as a trifling detail not worth worrying about.

Marjorie and Clara laid the money on the counter.

Marjorie had threepence-halfpenny left, which she slid back into her purse.

Clara Trevlyn gave her an eloquent look.

"Spoofed!" she said, in a tragic whisper.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Spoofed!" repeated Clara, with conviction. "And it serves us right. She knew there was no money in her purse."

"Oh, Clara!"

"That's why she made the keys jingle on the counter."

"Oh!"

"Billy Bunter over again!" breathed Clara. "And we might have known. We ought to have known."

"Hush!"

"Oh, come on!" grunted Clara. "She can't make us pay the taxi-cab fare, anyway, as we haven't got any more money."

The chums of Cliff House followed Bessie Bunter from the shop.

The taxi was waiting outside the station, and Bessie Bunter's box was lying on the pavement.

The porter was not to be seen.

The driver touched his hat to the three girls.

"You young ladies—" he began.

"That's right," said Bessie Bunter at once. "We're going to Cliff House. Tell the porter to put the box on."

The porter persisted in remaining invisible, and the taxi-man lifted the box to the cab.

He staggered a little under it. It was a large box, and it was weighty.

However, it was safely landed; and the three girls took their seats in the cab, and the taxi-man climbed into his seat.

Bessie Bunter sat down, with the cage on the seat beside her, filling it.

The two pull-down seats were left for Marjorie and Clara.

However, as Bessie Bunter was paying for the taxi, she had a right to please herself, and her thoughts did not appear to wander in the direction of courtesy.

The taxi buzzed off down the street.

"I—I say, there's fourteen shillings on the meter already!" murmured Clara Trevlyn in hushed tones.

"I dare say the man came the longest way round," sniffed Bessie Bunter.

"They always do."

"Not always, surely?" murmured Marjorie.

"Yes, always. I know 'em! I dare say you haven't used as many taxis as I have, though," added Bessie Bunter loftily.

"We pay for what we use," remarked Clara caustically. "I don't see how you're going to pay this man, if you've left your money at home."

"I expect my remittance will be waiting for me."

"Suppose it isn't?"

"Well, of course, there may have been some delay in the post," admitted Bessie Bunter cautiously. "In that case, I shall ask one of you to lend me the money. Only till to-morrow, of course."

"Not much good asking me," said Clara.

"If you mean to say that you wouldn't lend me a pound or so—"

"I mean to say that I haven't any pounds to lend. Stony!" said Clara cheerfully.

"Well, Marjorie can lend me—"

"I've only got threepence-halfpenny left," remarked Marjorie.

"I didn't know poor girls were taken in at Cliff House," said Bessie Bunter

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 1.

crushingly. "I thought I should meet people of my own class there."

"You won't do that," said Clara, with a gleam in her eyes. "You're the first of your sort that's ever come to Cliff House. Up till now it's been an entirely decent school."

Bessie Bunter's reply was a snort.

The taxi buzzed on through the country lanes, and the meter went on registering at a really alarming rate.

Bessie Bunter's fat face was rather thoughtful now.

It was certain that the taxi-man would want a pound, at least, by the time Cliff House School was reached, and that he would decline to be satisfied with Marjorie's threepence-halfpenny, or Bessie Bunter's bunch of keys.

It was rather a problem for the new girl to think out.

"Miss Primrose will pay the man, and send the bill to your father," said Marjorie at last, comfortingly.

"Do you think my father will pay a pound for me for a cab?" exclaimed Bessie angrily.

## OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY!



No. 1.  
BARBARA REDFERN

"Eabs."

"But—"

"Of course he won't!"

"But the money you've left at home," said Marjorie. "That can be sent on to you, and then—"

"Oh, nonsense!"

It dawned upon Marjorie that Bessie Bunter hadn't left any money at home.

The contents of her purse had doubtless been expended during her journey on refreshments for her inner Bessie.

"Well, it will have to go to your pater," said Clara.

"Bosh! Are you sure you can't lend me the money?"

"Quite."

"Couldn't you borrow it of some friend at the school? I suppose you've got friends there?"

"I can see myself doing it!" grinned Clara, while Marjorie smiled faintly, and shook her head.

The chums could not quite imagine themselves borrowing money up and

down the Fourth at Cliff House to pay a large fee for a quite unnecessary taxi.

"Then there's only one thing to be done," whispered Bessie.

"What's that?"

"Dodge."

"Eh?"

"We'll tell him to stop, because we're going to get out and gather some flowers," breathed Bessie Bunter.

"See?"

"G-g-g-gather flowers!" stammered Clara.

"Yes; and we'll dodge out of sight—"

"D-d-dodge out of sight?"

"And walk the rest of the way—"

"Eh?"

"And he can go and eat coke," said Bessie Bunter. "If he comes on to Cliff House to make any ridiculous claims, we'll deny that we've ever seen him before."

"What!"

"Miss Primrose will believe us, of course. You leave the talking to me, and simply corroborate what I say. See?"

Marjorie and Clara looked at the cheerful new girl dumbfounded.

They could not find their voices for a moment or two.

"You needn't bother about the man," added the new girl calmly. "I dare say he's dishonest. I'm down on dishonest people."

"You—you—you—" stammered Marjorie.

"You rascal!" gasped Clara, finding her voice at last. "You fat rascal!"

"What?"

"You'll do nothing of the sort! And if you tell Miss Primrose any fibs, I'll give you away on the spot!" shrieked Clara. "You—you horrid, scheming, swindling—"

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed Bessie Bunter indignantly. "Just because I'm trying to get you out of a scrape!"

"Us?"

"Certainly! You telephoned for the taxi, didn't you?"

"I? Oh, yes."

"Well, you're responsible, ain't you?"

"I?" babbled Clara.

"Of course you are! If you don't choose to do the sensible thing, you can settle with the man yourself," said Bessie Bunter warmly. "In fact, after this utter thanklessness—"

"This what?"

"Ingratitude—that's the word, ingratitude! After this ingratitude, I refuse to say a word or stir a finger to help you out of your scrape. You've got yourself into it, and now you can get out of it by yourself. Don't say it's my fault, that's all."

And Bessie Bunter leaned back in her seat, blinking at the astounded chums over her glasses, with an expression of indignation and wrath.

"Why, you—you—you—" stammered Clara helplessly.

Bessie Bunter waved a fat hand to her. "Don't talk to me! I'm fed up! If there's anything I can't stand, it's ingratitude."

The taxi buzzed on, while Marjorie and Clara sat in silence and regarded their companion with stony stares.

They were speechless.

### The Little Bill.

"WHAT'S she like?"

Babs and Mabs asked that question simultaneously as Marjorie and Clara came into the junior girls' Common-room.

Lessons were over at Cliff House School by the time the taxi from Friar-dale drew up outside the School House.

Marjorie was looking much less sunny than usual, and Clara Trevlyn was wearing a decidedly cross expression as the two girls came into the Common-room.

They did not look as if they had enjoyed their afternoon off.

"Like!" repeated Clara. "Like—like— Oh, dear! Imagine everything that's fat, and unpleasant, and horrid, and—she's like that."

"Exactly!" assented Marjorie.

Babs laughed.

"You don't seem to have had a gorgeous afternoon, after all," she remarked. "You should have let us go."

"I wish we had!" said Clara. "I say, Marjorie, the taxi-man's still waiting. That horrid little spoofer hasn't paid!"

She must be well-off, to come in a taxi!" exclaimed Dolly Jobling. "There aren't any taxis nearer than Courtfield."

"Oh, it hasn't cost her anything!" sniffed Clara. "She don't mean to pay the man, you see. She wanted us to help her swindle him."

"Oh, dear!" said Dolly.

"She's in Miss Primrose's study now," continued Clara. "I wonder what will happen when the man gets tired of waiting?"

There was a rush of the juniors to the window which overlooked the drive from the gates.

The taxi was there, and the taxi-man.

The latter had a growing expression of impatience and wrath upon his weather-beaten face. And the taxi-meter was still ticking.

"It's mounting up," said Clara cheerfully. "It was over a pound when we got out. Hallo, there's the Bull!"

Miss Bullivant appeared on the steps of the School House, and entered into negotiations with the taxi-man.

Finally, that gentleman climbed on his cab and buzzed away to the gates.

He did not wear a pleased expression.

Miss Bullivant had apparently considered that his charge was high enough without the addition of a tip.

"Hallo, here's one of the heads!" murmured Babs, as a tall member of the Sixth came into the room.

The Sixth Form of Cliff House were few in number, but great in importance.

They were all monitresses, and held great authority over the junior girls.

Towards the juniors they were lofty, authoritative, and standoffish.

It was Stella Stone, the head of the Sixth, who came into the Common-room, and she frowned as she heard Barbara's remark.

"Marjorie! Clara!" called out the monitress.

"Adsum!" said Clara cheerfully.

"You are both to go to Miss Primrose's study at once!"

"What's the row?" asked Clara.

But Stella Stone declined to answer that frivolous question. She turned loftily and walked away.

"You're in for it, kids!" said Babs consolingly. "The Bull has been ragging Dolly this afternoon about the toffee and the frying-pan. Now you're going to get your whack!"

"Br-r-r!" said Clara.

The chums of the Fourth proceeded to the headmistress' study, not in a happy mood.

Whether it was the Bull on the rampage, or whether they were wanted in connection with the taxi-man, they did not know. But in either case, the prospect was not pleasing.

They found Bessie Bunter in the headmistress' study, and were glad to see that the Bull was not there. It was not the affair of the toffee, after all.

Miss Primrose was looking very severe over her spectacles.

"Clara!"

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

"According to the statement I have just heard, you are responsible for the payment of the cabman. The sum is one pound three shillings and sixpence. I have sent out the money, and the man is gone. Clara, what induced you to be guilty of such inexcusable extravagance?"

Clara bit her lip hard.

Bessie Bunter blinked at her quite cheerfully.

The fact that Clara had telephoned for the cab seemed to relieve the plump junior of any feeling of responsibility in the matter.

"It was Bessie Bunter—" began Clara hotly. "She wanted the taxi, and

"Not at all. There was nothing whatever said about responsibility," said the new girl. "The word wasn't even mentioned."

"Good gracious!" murmured the headmistress. "You appear to be very obtuse. On whose account was the cab called?"

"On account of the distance from the station here," explained Bessie Bunter.

Miss Primrose stared at her over her glasses.

"Will you answer my question directly?" she exclaimed. "Was it at your direct request that Clara telephoned for the cab?"

Thus driven into a corner, as it were, Bessie Bunter blinked at Miss Primrose, and blinked at Marjorie and Clara.



"You have been burning something in this room!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant, peering at the three girls over her glasses. "B-b-b-burning!" stammered Marjorie Hazeldene. "Yes," said the drill-mistress. "The room is full of smoke!"

I telephoned for her. Of course, we shouldn't have had it otherwise."

"Dear me! You did not tell me this, Bessie."

"Oh, really, Clara!" exclaimed Bessie Bunter warmly. "You can't deny that I pointed out to you that it would come awfully expensive."

"What?" gasped Clara.

"Especially as the man had to come all the way from Courtfield," added Bessie Bunter calmly.

"But you—you—"

"Did you ask Clara to telephone for the cab, Bessie?" asked Miss Primrose severely.

"I—I may have said something of the kind, in—in a general sort of way," said Bessie Bunter cautiously.

"What? Did you, or did you not, assume the responsibility for calling the cabman?" exclaimed the headmistress.

"The—the fact is——" she began cautiously.

"Well?"

"I—I'd rather let the whole matter drop, if you don't mind!"

"What?"

"I'm sure Clara meant well," said Bessie Bunter. "I'm quite sure of that. So—so, if you don't mind, I'd rather say nothing more at all about the matter."

"Good gracious!" said Miss Primrose. "I conclude, then, that you did ask Clara to telephone for the taxi-cab, and that you are responsible."

"Not at all! There was nothing said about anybody being responsible. Clara will bear me out in that."

"But it was understood that you were responsible."

"I can't help what Clara understood!" said Bessie Bunter in an aggrieved tone.

"It's not my fault if she is rather dense, is it?"

"I shall send the account to your father, Bessie!"

"Oh, dear! I—I say, couldn't it be left till my remittance comes?" asked Bessie Bunter. "I'm expecting a remittance—"

"The matter is closed!" said the headmistress, with a wave of the hand. "You may go! Marjorie, take Bessie to Miss Bellew's study!"

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

The three girls left the presence of the headmistress.

Bessie Bunter's fat face wore an expression of suppressed indignation.

"So that's the headmistress!" she exclaimed, when the trio were in the corridor.

"That's the headmistress!" assented Marjorie.

"I don't think much of her! I say, you girls, my pater won't pay that bill, you know! He will be wild!"

"You should have thought of that before!" said Clara grimly.

"You should have thought of it, you mean!" said Bessie Bunter warmly. "I told you in the cab—I told you distinctly—that you could get out of the scrape yourself. Now you've planted it on me! Do you call that honourable?"

"Oh, you're a silly duffer!" said Clara. And she walked away, having had quite enough of Bessie Bunter.

"This way, Bessie!" said Marjorie mildly. And she led the new junior to Miss Bellew's study.

Bessie Bunter lingered a moment to speak to the parrot, which was left in its cage in the hall, and to give the evil-eyed bird a lump of sugar; and then followed her.

And Marjorie was glad enough to hand her over to Miss Bellew and leave her there.

#### Tea in Study No. 4!

"MAKE up a bit of a fire, Mabs!"

"The wood's all gone."

"Find some more."

"Where am I to find any wood, I'd like to know?"

"Use your head, my dear!" answered Barbara sweetly.

To which Mabel Lynn made the ancient and classic response:

"Rats!"

There was a feast toward in Study No. 4 in the Fourth.

That study was shared by Babs and Mabs.

Babs and Mabs prided themselves upon the fact that Study No. 4 was "top study," a distinction that was also claimed for Study No. 7 by Marjorie & Co.

It was quite a nice study, with a big window that looked out over the hockey-field.

At the present moment the atmosphere in the study was a little clouded, owing to the fact that cooking was going on.

Many of the junior girls had tea in their studies, which made it necessary for them to do the cooking themselves. But they did not mind that—in fact, they rather enjoyed it.

But the cookery that took place in the junior studies did not much resemble that which was learned in the cookery class.

Funds, as it happened, were ample in Study No. 4 just at present, and it "ran," as Babs expressed it, to ham and eggs.

Mabs was cooking the ham and eggs; but there was a fuel shortage, and some delay in the cooking.

The cooking went on by instalments whenever the fire blazed up under the frying-pan, and had a rest whenever the fire died down.

This was not at all in accordance with the valuable instructions given in the cookery class; but in the cookery class no instruction was given as to what was to be done when fuel ran out.

Mabs had used up all the old exercise-books she could find, and had added, surreptitiously, some fretwork belonging to Barbara.

She was now contemplating a big, gilt-edged volume of Shakespeare, a prize received by Babs for distinguishing herself in English literature.

"I suppose that's really no good!" remarked Mabs thoughtfully. "I think that would finish it, Babs."

"What would?" asked Babs.

"That Shakespeare! You don't mind?"

Barbara rushed across the study just in time to save the immortal William from finishing the cooking of the ham and eggs.

"My prize!" she exclaimed indignantly.

"Well, we can't have the eggs half-done!"

"You duffer!"

"If you like half-done eggs, Barbara, you can have them!" said Mabs resignedly. "Besides, it's nonsense! You know it's nonsense!"

"You'd better tell Miss Bellew that Shakespeare is nonsense!" said Barbara.

"There are some good things in Shakespeare," said Mabs patronisingly.

"He had a lot of sense, for a man. But I was reading that very book the other day—a silly play called 'The Taming of the Shrew.' Suppose we tear that one out?"

"Suppose we don't!" was Barbara's suggestion.

"It's awful tosh!" said Mabs.

"Granted!" said Barbara. "If I had Shakespeare here I would box his ears for his impudence! But you're not burning my prize! And while you're talking about Shakespeare the fire's going out!"

"And the eggs aren't done!"

Tap!

"Come in!" sang out Barbara cheerily, as the knock came at the study door.

The next moment she jumped as the door opened and gave her a view of Miss Bellew.

"Oh!" gasped Barbara.

Poor Babs' face was crimson; but Miss Bellew did not seem to have noted the peculiar mode of address.

She gave the chums of No. 4 a kind nod, and signed to someone in the passage to follow her in.

Bessie Bunter, cage in hand, rolled into the study.

"Bessie is going to share your study, Barbara and Mabel," said Miss Bellew.

"I am sure you will make her very welcome."

"Oh!" gasped Barbara again. This time it was a still more dismayed "Oh!"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Mabel.

Miss Bellew, who had the valuable gift of being deaf when it was judicious not to hear, took no heed.

"These are your study-friends, Bessie," she said. "Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn. I am sure you will all be very good friends."

Bessie Bunter blinked at Babs and Mabs.

"You appear to be cooking something," said Miss Bellew.

"We—we're getting tea," stammered Barbara.

"Then Bessie has come just in time," said Miss Bellew. "I will now leave you together."

And the mistress of the Fourth retired. Bessie Bunter blinked round the study, and set down the parrot's cage on a sofa.

There was a screech from the parrot.

"Oh!" ejaculated Barbara. "Does it often make a row like that?"

"A what?" demanded the fat junior.

"Row!"

"You've got no ear!" said Bessie Bunter disdainfully. "Polly's got a most musical voice!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Call that cooking?" continued Bessie Bunter, with a contemptuous blink at the ham and eggs. "I'll cook for you, if you like—I'm a dab at cooking! I'll do all the cooking in the study, if you like."

"Will you?" said Mabs.

"Certainly! You find things to cook, and I'll cook them fast enough!" said Bessie Bunter. "I hope we shall get on all right in this study. You'll find me quite nice, so long as I'm treated well. I'm popular wherever I go!"

"Are you really?" exclaimed Babs in astonishment.

"Yes, I am! Marjorie wanted me in her study, but I didn't care for Clara—too boisterous," said Bessie Bunter. "It's lucky you've got tea going in here; I seem to have got in late for tea in Hall. I've had nothing since I came but a slice of cake. Leave that to me!"

Bessie Bunter took possession of the frying-pan.

"You want a fire to cook with!" she said sarcastically.

"The coal's run out," said Babs.

"Get some from another study, then!"

"Well, that's not a bad idea," said Babs, glancing from the window. "There's Marjorie and Clara and Dolly in the quad. Run along to No. 7 and bag their coals, Mabs!"

"Right-ho!" said Mabs.

She hurried from the study, and returned in a few minutes with a basket full of wood and coal.

Evidently there had been a good supply in Study No. 7.

"Leave it to me!" said Bessie Bunter.

Babs and Mabs were quite willing to leave it to her. She proved an adept at building a fire and cooking ham and eggs.

Quite a savoury scent spread through the study.

"I say, you girls!" said Bessie Bunter, turning a fat and ruddy face from the fire. "This lot is for tea, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Good! But what are you going to have?"

"Eh? We're going to have ham and eggs, of course," said Barbara.

"Trot them out, then, and I'll cook them for you."

Barbara looked fixedly at the new junior.

"That's the lot!" she said.

"There's only six eggs here, and four rashers," said Bessie Bunter, blinking at her. "I can eat that lot quite easily."

"Not easily, I think," remarked Babs.

"Because I sha'n't let you."

Sniff from Bessie Bunter.

"If you're going to be mean about food I don't think we shall get on in this study," she said. "If there's one thing I can't stand it's greediness."

"Well, my word!" said Barbara.

The ham and eggs were dished up. Mabs had cut bread-and-butter galore.

Bessie Bunter helped herself first.

She placed four eggs and two rashers on her plate, a proceeding that was watched with stony eyes by Babs and Mabs.

Their eyes met.

Mabs' lips came together, and formed a murmured word that sounded remarkably like "Pig."

But Bessie Bunter did not seem to hear.

She started.

Barbara and Mabel started, too.

They felt that there was no time to

lose; it was a case of the race to the swift.

Bessie Bunter was finished first, however, and she cast a hungry glance over the table.

Then she stepped to the study cupboard, and her fat face brightened.

"You didn't say you had sardines!" she exclaimed.

"They're for to-morrow."

"And a tin of pineapple—"

"That's for supper."

"Where do you keep your tin opener?"

"Look here—"

"All right: here it is! I'll open the tins for you."

"Look here, Bessie Bunter—"

"Leave it to me, my dear. I don't mind doing anything to oblige you, as you're my study-friends."

Babs and Mabs seemed to be stricken dumb as the new girl opened the tins.

Bessie Bunter proceeded to devour the sardines at a great rate.

"You weren't going to have these for tea?" she asked.

"Nunno!"

"Then I'll finish the lot, as you don't want them."

And she did.

"Make it ten shillings, and then I'll hand you the remittance when it comes. It will be for exactly ten shillings."

"But—but I've only five—"

Grunt from Bessie Bunter.

"I'll make five do," she said. "I dare say I can get enough for that to last me till supper."

"I will lend you a shilling if you like," said Barbara, after due consideration.

"If you're going to be mean—"

"Certainly not!" said Babs.

"If you can't trust me with five shillings, Barbara Redfern—"

"I'll tell you what," said Barbara.

"I'll give you the five shillings, if you'll change into some other study."

"I suppose that's a joke," said Bessie Bunter, blinking at her.

"Not at all."

"Of course, I don't want to stay here," said Bessie Bunter. "I never could stand mean and suspicious people. I can't accept the money, excepting as a loan, however. That's got to be understood."

"Just as you like."

"It's a go, then."

Bessie Bunter rolled out of the study with Barbara's five shillings.

"Cheap at the price!" said Babs, with a gasp of relief. "Did you ever—"

"Oh, I say!" interjected Dolly Jobling.

"Or playing the goat in any other way—as she so often does!" continued Clara.

"Such as putting frying-pans in chairs for short-sighted Bulls to sit on."

"That was an awful accident," said Dolly Jobling sadly.

"The Bull gave me the pointer in class afterwards. She'd found out that it was here that she picked up the frying-pan. And she's confiscated the pan, and the toffee, too."

"Well, the toffee wouldn't have amounted to much, after its adventures," said Clara.

"But it was our frying-pan—the property of the whole study. The study ought to argue with the Bull about it."

"You can argue for me," remarked Dolly.

"I'm tired of the Bull. I say, do you know what study they've put the Bunter girl in?"

"Haven't a notion. Thank goodness it's not this one!"

"Well, they couldn't very well put her in here, as we're three already," remarked Marjorie.

"Most likely Babs and Mabs will have her, as they're only two. They're welcome!"

"They are—they is!" said Clara emphatically.

"I'm good-tempered, but



Bessie Bunter held up a fat finger. "Talk, Polly!" she ordered. The parrot blinked at her. "Polly wants sugar! What an ugly old gentleman!" Uncle Clegg, behind the counter, gave a convulsive start.

"You girls care for pineapple?" she asked, a few moments later.

"Yes. As it's opened—"

"I'll help you, then."

Bessie Bunter helped Babs and Mabs to pineapple. She gave them a small slice each.

Then she began on the pineapple herself, watched with frozen looks by Babs and Mabs.

"I feel better now," she announced.

"I was feeling awfully faint when I came in. I say, is there a shop anywhere near here where you buy food?"

"Yes; Auntie Jones keeps a little shop, inside the gates, where we buy things," said Babs. "But surely—"

"I don't want to complain," said Bessie Bunter; "I dare say you've done your best to be hospitable. But I'm accustomed to having something substantial for my tea."

"Oh!"

The worst of it is, that I left my money at home, and my remittance hasn't arrived. I suppose you could lend me a few shillings till the post comes in."

"I—I dare say I could!" gasped Barbara.

"Hardly ever!" said Mabs, laughing.

"To think of having that horrid little pig planted on us!"

"Awful!"

"I think I'd have made it five pounds if I could have!" said Babs.

"Thank goodness we've got rid of her. Marjorie's welcome to the beauty, if she likes. What a relief!"

"Hear, hear!" said Mabs heartily.

But Study No. 4 was rejoicing a little too soon, as it was destined to discover.

### The Limit.

"I WONDER," remarked Clara Trevlyn, with an air of deep thought—"I wonder what silly duffer invented evening preparation?"

Clara plumped her books on the study table as she made that observation.

"Oh, cheer up!" said Marjorie. "We don't have to prepare in the school-room, like the girls in the Third, anyway."

"That's one comfort!" admitted Clara.

"We have our study to ourselves, and it's quite tolerable when Dolly isn't trying to make toffee—"

I should draw the line at the Bunter girl. If she was put in here I feel certain that I should squash her. I feel—Hullo!"

The door opened, and a fat face and a pair of large spectacles glimmered into the study.

Bessie Bunter had arrived.

Marjorie & Co. looked at her in surprise as she rolled in and placed the parrot's cage on the table.

There was a loud and unmusical squawk from the red-eyed bird.

"Well?" said Clara, with significant inquiry.

"Had your tea?" asked Bessie Bunter.

"Long ago."

"Going to have any supper?"

"Yes—later."

"All right! I'll help you do any cooking—"

"There won't be any cooking. Supper is bread and cheese, downstairs."

"Still, you could have some supper in the study if you liked, couldn't you?"

"Are you going to stand a spread, the same as you did at Uncle Clegg's?" inquired Clara sardonically.

"Well, I shouldn't mind, only my remittance hasn't come yet. I've had a

snack at the school shop, though. That Auntie Jones, who keeps your school shop, is rather a cat."

"She's a dear!" exclaimed Marjorie warmly.

"Suspicious, I call her," answered Bessie Bunter. "She actually refused to let my bill stand over till my remittance came. It only came to four-and-elevenpence, but she was suspicious. I hate suspicious people."

"So you paid her?" asked Dolly Jobling.

"Well, I had to, as she said she would complain to Miss Primrose."

"You've found some money since you got here, then?" said Clara.

Bessie Bunter did not seem to hear that. She blinked round the study, with a somewhat disparaging eye.

"Three of you in here already?" she asked.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"Blessed if I see how there's room for four!"

"There isn't!" said Clara pointedly.

"Perhaps one of you could change out, though," said Bessie Bunter thoughtfully.

"I don't want to be crowded."

Marjorie gave a little gasp of dismay.

"Have—have you been sent here?" she ejaculated.

"What do you think I've come for, if I haven't?" answered the new girl. "I suppose I've got to make the best of it. Mind, you'll have to be careful with my parrot!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Clara. "It's really too bad of Miss Primrose to plant that horrid bounder here."

"Are you calling me a bounder?" demanded the new girl.

"Yes."

"I suppose that's what you call good manners, after I stood you a treat at the village shop, and a taxi-ride to school! It's my own fault, for being generous. I never get any gratitude."

"My word!" said Clara. "Of all the—"

"So you're going to belong to this study?" asked the dismayed Marjorie.

"Yes."

"I won't stand it!" exclaimed Clara.

"I'll go to Miss Primrose. I'll protest—I'll—I'll—"

"Worse for me than for you," grunted Bessie Bunter.

"How do you make that out?"

"Well, you've got me for a study-friend, and I've got you," said the fat girl cheerfully. "It comes harder on me than on you, I should think."

"Well, of all the impudence—"

"What are you doing with those books?" asked Bessie Bunter.

"Prep!"

"Oh, that's what Miss Bellow said I needn't do, as it's my first day here! I'll take a snooze in the armchair, I think," said Bessie Bunter. "Don't make a row and wake me."

The fat junior plumped down in the study armchair, and put her feet on the fender, and closed her fat eyelids.

Marjorie & Co. looked eloquently at one another.

The very worst of all possible happenings had happened; Bessie Bunter was planted on Study No. 7.

In one afternoon, the chums of the Fourth had found her intolerable.

How were they going to stand her every day—for a whole term?

There was only one answer to that question, according to Clara. They weren't!

"It's too bad!" breathed Clara. "I'm not going to stand it! After looking us at the shop, and spoofing us with the taxi, and—and being a horrid little mix in every imaginable way—oh, dear!"

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 1.

Bessie Bunter's eyes opened behind her big glasses.

"You're talking!" she snapped.

"Well, mustn't we talk?" demanded Clara belligerently.

"I told you I was going to take a nap. How can I snooze if you're talking all the time? Don't be a chatterbox!"

"Why, I—I—I—"

"Do be quiet!"

Bessie Bunter's eyes closed again.

Clara looked fixedly at the fat face, and her hand closed on the inkpot.

Marjorie caught hold of her wrist, however, and gently but firmly detached her grasp.

There was silence in the study for a few minutes.

It was broken by a sound that resembled a steam-hooter in energetic action.

Snore!

SNO-O-O-RRRE!

Bessie Bunter was asleep.

That fact was advertised to anyone within a dozen feet of the study-door.

"Well——" said Clara.

Snore!

"Shall I pinch her?" asked Dolly Jobling.

"Squash her, please!" said Clara, with a smile. "Put the hearthrug over her head, and sit on it!"

The door opened, and two bright faces looked in. Babs and Mabs glanced at Bessie Bunter, and chortled.

"My word!" said Babs. "I thought you kids must be playing with a foghorn, or something."

"The Sleeping Beauty!" chuckled Mabs. "I say, this study will have to buy a muzzle for her! It's quite alarming!"

"Wouldn't you like her in your study?" asked Clara imploringly.

"Ha, ha! No thanks!"

"Take her into your quarters, and we'll let you call No. 4 top study for the rest of the term."

"My dear girl, we'd rather be bottom study for a dozen terms!"

And Babs and Mabs withdrew, chortling.

Snore!

"Marjorie"—Clara's voice was a tragic whisper—"it's too bad! It's not to be stood! We're not going to have that duffer in this study!"

"But if Miss Primrose——"

"She can ask to be changed out."

Marjorie shook her head.

"She won't!" she answered hopelessly.

"We'll make her!"

"How?"

"What about setting fire to her plait?"

"Clara!"

"Well, perhaps that would be rather drastic. What price giving her a study ragging?"

"She wouldn't go."

Clara knitted her brows.

"I'm going to think it out," she said.

"She's got to go. She's got to change into another study before she settles down here. I'm going to have a big think."

"There's prep——"

"Blow prep!"

Prep was accordingly "blowed," and Clara wrinkled her brows deeply in a great effort of thought.

A little later she raised her head, and turned her dancing eyes upon her friends.

"I've got it!" she breathed.

"What?"

"The idea—the wheeze—the stunt!"

chuckled Clara. "Lend me your ears, as we say in the Shakespeare class. Listen, my infants!"

Marjorie and Dolly bent their heads eagerly across the table, and Clara whispered, while from the armchair the deep and steady snore still resounded.

"Oh, dear!" ejaculated Marjorie. "My word!" said Dolly Jobling. Clara's wheeze had evidently startled her friends, whatever it was!

### Something Like a Scheme.

**B**ESSIE BUNTER opened her eyes, and yawned. She set her glasses straight on her fat little nose, and blinked round the study accusingly.

"Somebody joggled my chair!" she said.

"Hush!"

"What?"

"Hush!" said Dolly Jobling mysteriously.

Bessie Bunter sat upright in astonishment. She became aware of the fact that something very unusual was proceeding in Study No. 7.

Clara had taken the poker from the grate. She was making what appeared to be an attempt to bite a piece off the end.

"Wha-at——" began Bessie Bunter.

"Hush!" whispered Dolly, from behind the armchair. "Don't draw her attention."

"Eh? Why not?"

"Because it may excite her. She's harmless at present."

"H-h-harmless!" stuttered Bessie Bunter.

"Yes; she's all right if she's not excited. But if she should get dangerous——"

"D-d-dangerous?"

"She's between us and the door!" said Dolly, in a thrilling whisper. "For goodness' sake, be quiet!"

Dolly Jobling was behind the armchair, holding on to the back, and trembling so much that she shook the chair.

Marjorie seemed to be trying to efface herself behind the window-curtains.

Bessie Bunter blinked at one, and then at the other, and then at Clara Trevlyn, in horror.

Clara was still making determined efforts to bite a piece off the poker.

"This is awfully hard toffee," said Clara plaintively.

"Tut-tut-toffee!" stammered Bessie Bunter.

Clara spun round on her.

"See if you can bite a piece off!" she exclaimed, shoving the poker towards the new junior—so close that Bessie Bunter rolled back in alarm.

"Bub-bub-bite it!" stuttered Bessie Bunter.

"Yes, bite it."

"Bite the poker?" howled the new junior.

"Poker! What do you mean? Don't you know a stick of toffee when you see one?" demanded Clara scornfully.

"Tut-tut-toffee! It—it's a poker."

"Oh, you're not sane!" said Clara.

"Bite it, I tell you."

"I—I can't! I say, you girls——"

"Where are you going?" shouted Clara suddenly, spinning round as Dolly Jobling made for the door.

"I—I wasn't going out!" shrieked Dolly.

"Come back."

Dolly Jobling obediently came back, trembling in every limb.

"Be calm, Clara dear!" she pleaded.

"Be calm! You know the doctor said you were to be calm, and then the fit of madness would pass."

"Oh!" gasped Bessie Bunter. "Oh, dear!"

Marjorie came out of the curtains, and made a rush for the door.

"Stop!" howled Clara.

Marjorie did not stop. She tore the door open, and ran into the passage.

Clara rushed in pursuit.

Crash!

The poker landed on the door a moment after Marjorie was gone.

Bessie Bunter shrieked.

Clara slammed the door, and turned the key in the lock.

Then she spun round on Dolly Jobling and Bessie Bunter, brandishing the poker.

Bessie Bunter rolled out of the armchair, and clutched Dolly by the arm.

"Keep her off!" she shrieked. "Yow-ow-ow! I didn't know there was a mad girl in this study! Help!"

"Hush!" gasped Dolly. "If you excite her—"

Crash!

The brandished poker caught a picture on the wall, and there was a terrific smash.

Bessie Bunter yelled.

"Yaroooh! Help! Fire! Help!"

"Stand aside, Dolly Jobling!" shouted Clara, flourishing the poker, "Let me get at her!"

"Clara, calm yourself! You know the doctor—"

"Get out of the way! What is that tabby cat doing in this study?" shrieked Clara. "I'm going to drive it out."

"Yaroooh! I'm not a tabby cat!" shrieked Bessie Bunter. "I'm a—yoop!—girl! Help!"

"I say you're a tabby cat!"

"Yow-ow! I'm not! Keep off!"

Bessie Bunter held on tighter to Dolly.

There was another terrific crash as the poker landed on the armchair.

"Let go, Bessie!" panted Dolly Jobling. "Don't contradict her. Let her have her way. The doctor says—"

"Yaroooh!"

"Are you a tabby cat?" demanded Clara ferociously, swinging the poker over the fat junior's head.

Bessie Bunter ducked wildly.

"Yes," she gasped. "Oh, yes! Yes, certainly! Oh! Ah! Help!"

"Didn't I say she was?" exclaimed Clara. "Now, I'm going to drive her out of the room. Cats are not allowed in the studies."

"Yaroooh! I'm not a cat!"

"What?"

"I—I mean—I meant to say I am a cat—a tabby cat!" shrieked Bessie Bunter. "Oh, yes! Certainly! Of course! Ow-w-w-w!"

"Out you go!"

"Yaroooh! Help!"

Dolly Jobling rushed for the door as the poker smote the armchair again with a terrific crash.

She tore the door open and fled.

"Don't leave me with her!" shrieked Bessie Bunter. "Help! She's mad! Fire! Oh, dear! Help!"

Crash!

The poker crashed on the armchair again, and slipped to the floor.

Clara made a dive after it, and Bessie Bunter made a dive for the doorway.

"Stop!" shouted Clara. "Wait till I get hold of this poker!"

Bessie Bunter did not stop.

She did not even wait to take her parrot. She jumped out of the doorway and fled, with her plait streaming behind, for her life.

Crash! came from the study.

"Come back!"

But Bessie Bunter was gone.

Bessie Bunter fixed her quarters in Study No. 4, after all. Wild horses would not have dragged her back to No. 7, after her terrible experiences there.

But she would have been less alarmed, probably, had she looked into the study five minutes after her exit.

Marjorie and Clara and Dolly were there, in great spirits, shrieking with merriment.

There was no sign of lunacy about Clara now. She had recovered as soon as the new junior was gone.

The chums of the Fourth had joined hands, and were executing a triumphal dance in the middle of the study. It was a joyful celebration of the departure of the new girl at Cliff House.

THE END.

(Another long complete story of the Girls of Cliff House, entitled "The Rivals of the Fourth!" in No. 2 of "The School Friend," on sale Thursday next. Order your copy in advance to avoid disappointment.)



## Your Editor's Corner.



Write to me as often as you like, and let me know what you think of "The School Friend." All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope, may be sure of receiving a prompt reply by post. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The School Friend,' The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My Dear Readers,—The production of the first issue of a new paper is a task that takes many weeks to complete. An editor is naturally anxious to make his paper as attractive and pleasing as possible, but even when the proofs of his first issue have been finally passed for press, his anxiety is usually by no means at an end. For the question that is uppermost in his mind is: Will the paper prove a success?

Candidly, I may say that I have never had any doubts on this score in regard to the SCHOOL FRIEND. When the idea for this paper first entered my mind I was confident that it would prove a big success, and now, when I am about to pass the last page for press, I am more confident than ever that the SCHOOL FRIEND will meet with a tremendous reception.

The reason for my confidence is not hard to find. In the case of many new papers one perceives at once that they are very similar to papers already on the market. This cannot be said of the SCHOOL FRIEND. It is a paper of an entirely new type, and cannot be compared with papers published in past years. Essentially, the SCHOOL FRIEND will appeal chiefly to the girl at school the girl whose tastes have not previously been catered for. But, all the same, girls who have left school will be drawn towards the SCHOOL FRIEND, and I shall be surprised—and, moreover, disappointed—if many thousands of boys do not become regular readers of this splendid new paper.

### CHARACTERS YOU WILL LIKE.

Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevlyn, and Dolly Jobling will, I am sure, endear

themselves to the hearts of all of you; and as each number of the SCHOOL FRIEND appears, and you read more and more about the adventures of the girls of Cliff House, you will come to regard Babs and Mabs and their friends in the Fourth Form with feelings of the deepest affection. You will also like Bessie Bunter, not so much, perhaps, for her good qualities—one has to confess that so far these have not been very much in evidence—but for her amusing ways—ways that are bound to send you into roars of laughter when you read about them.

### "THE RIVALS OF THE FOURTH!"

By Hilda Richards.

This is the title of next Thursday's story of the girls of Cliff House. This tale will deal with the election for Form captain. Marjorie Hazeldene is one candidate, Barbara Redfern is the other. Any election creates excitement, and the election at Cliff House will prove no exception to the rule.

The rival candidates undertake the canvassing for votes with great determination and enthusiasm, and when it is discovered that the result will practically depend on Bessie Bunter's vote, the excitement reaches fever-pitch. Each candidate makes an attempt to secure Bessie's vote, but, in spite of the fact that their attempts are both ingenious and amusing, they do not find it easy to extract a promise from Bessie. It is not until the very hour of the election that the new girl makes up her mind, and then—well, I wonder whether you can guess for which candidate Bessie Bunter votes?

There will, of course, be another splen-

did long instalment of our magnificent new adventure serial,

### "THE GIRL CRUSOES!"

By Julia Storm.

in next Thursday's issue of the SCHOOL FRIEND. You have, I am sure, all enjoyed reading of the exciting experiences of Hilda, Pat, and Joe on the stranded ship, and are looking forward to reading of their adventures on Diamond Island, which will commence in next Thursday's instalment. That you will enjoy the second instalment, I have not the slightest doubt.

I want you all to write and tell me your candid opinions of my new paper. I want to know whether you have enjoyed reading "The Girls of Cliff House," and the opening instalment of "The Girl Crusoes," and also whether the drawings are to your liking, and whether you are pleased with our striking cover design. I shall have the greatest pleasure in sending a prompt reply to every reader who writes to me.

In conclusion, I wish to ask you to tell all your companions about the SCHOOL FRIEND, and to persuade them to become regular readers of my new paper. Also, I should be glad if you would all place regular orders for the SCHOOL FRIEND with your newsagents. In view of the fact that this paper is of an entirely new type, there is sure to be a big demand for No. 2, and I should be very disappointed if any one of you failed to secure a copy of next Thursday's issue. By ordering in advance you will not only ensure obtaining your copies, but you will greatly oblige

Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR.  
THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 1.