

# Coker comes a Cropper!



*Who's the biggest blunderer at Greyfriars? We award that doubtful honour (with more brickbats than bouquets!) to Horace James Coker, and in this very amusing story you will learn why!*

By  
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*(of the Greyfriars Remove Form)*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

ON THE WARPATH!

"It's a cert!"

"Hem!"

"A stone certainty!" said Horace Coker of the Fifth at Greyfriars. "Whether he likes it or not, Blundell will have to put me down for this match!"

"Hum!"

"Not that he'll like it!" went on Coker bitterly. "If there's one thing more certain than anything else, it is that Blundell will never get any enjoyment in giving me my place in the Form Eleven. If it rested solely with him, I don't suppose I ever would

get it. But fortunately there's such a thing as public opinion!"

"Um!"

"Public opinion's a thing that even Blundell fears," said Coker darkly. "And after my brilliant display in the trial game last week, there's not much doubt about the trend of public opinion. Public opinion demands I shall get my place in the Form Eleven for the match against the Sixth!"

"Hem!"

"Even the meanest intelligence can now see the point I've been trying to drive home all this season," said Coker. "You chaps yourselves can see it, can't you?"

"Look here, Coker——"

"What's kept me out of the Form Eleven is the same thing that's kept me out of the First Eleven—jealousy. But jealousy cuts no ice when every man in the Form wants me in the team!"

"Hum!"

"Can't you fellows do anything but say 'Hem!' and 'Hum!'?" demanded Coker wrathfully. "Standing there like a couple of moulting owls, coughing and spluttering every time I say anything! Nothing wrong in what I've been saying, is there?"

"Well, old chap——"

"I suppose you're not going to deny that I'm the best all-round footer player in the Fifth?"

"Well, really, old man——"

"Or that Blundell is a chuckle-headed chump for having kept me out of the Form team so long?"

"To tell you the truth, old bean——"

"Or that my exclusion from the Form team in the past has been nothing short of a crying scandal and a shame?"

"Hem! If you put it like that, old chap——"

"I suppose you're not going to deny that I played better in the trial game than ever before?"

"Well, no!"

"Not at all, old man!"

"You played better in the trial game than we've ever seen you play, Coker, old chap!"

"Much better, old bean!"

Potter and Greene were rather relieved at finding one assertion from Coker which they could wholeheartedly support. They could quite truthfully say that Coker had played better in the trial game than ever before. That was not saying much, for, as they were both well aware, Coker's best was a long way behind

the form expected of a senior player.

Coker, in blissful ignorance of his faithful followers' mental reservation, relaxed a little at their enthusiastic agreement.

"Well, I'm glad you fellows have got enough sense to see that!" he said, with a nod. "It was there for everybody to see, anyway, and that's why I'm so jolly sure Blundell will have to put me down to play against the Sixth."

"Team should be posted by this time," remarked Potter, with a glance at the study clock.

"Just what I was thinking," Coker said. "We'll trot down and have a look. As I say, it's a stone certainty that Blundell's put my name down; but if, by any freakish chance, he hasn't, I'll——"

Coker left the sentence unfinished; but there was a look in his eyes that boded ill for the captain of the Fifth if that remote contingency did happen.

The three Fifth-Formers rose and quitted their study. Coker looked grim and determined. Potter and Greene looked a little uneasy. There was no doubt that Coker had set his heart on playing for the Fifth, and if he failed to achieve that ambition trouble would follow as surely as day-time followed the night.

There was a large crowd round the notice-board as they came into the Hall, and the buzz of talk swelled to a roar as Coker appeared.

"Here he comes!"

"Break it gently, you chaps, in case it gives him too much of a shock!"

Coker felt a choking sensation grip his throat. "Break it gently"! "Too much of a shock"! Did it—could it possibly—mean that that outsider Blundell had flouted public opinion and barred him from the eleven once again?

As if in answer to that question, Bob Cherry of the Remove, from the centre of a knot of grinning Removites, yelled across to him.

"Poor old Coker! We're awfully sorry for you, aren't we, chaps?"

"Oh, rather!"

"We're even sorrier for the poor old Fifth!" added Bob. "What on earth will they do?"

"Echo answers 'What?'" chuckled Vernon-Smith.

Coker felt his blood boil within him. So Blundell had let him down, after all!

Coker's fists clenched, his lips tightened, and his eyes gleamed with a vengeful gleam.

"I'll show him!" he roared suddenly. And without even deigning to cleave a way through the crowd to look at the list that was the cause of his emotion, he rushed away on the trail of the offending skipper of the Fifth.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### COKER'S LITTLE MISTAKE!

**C**RASH!  
Coker had reached the foot of the stairs. Unfortunately, Trotter, the page, had reached them at the same moment. Still more unfortunately, Trotter was balancing a tray containing hot coffee, intended for Messrs. Prout and Hacker, who were playing chess in Masters' Common-room.

Trotter collided with Coker and went off at a tangent. His tray flew up in the air and descended on Coker's head, shooting a scalding stream of coffee over the hero of the Fifth.

"Whoooooop!" roared Coker, while from the crowd that had followed Coker from the Hall came a roar of quite a different kind.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clumsy young idiot!" hooted

Coker. "Look where you're going next time!"

Coker carried on up the stairs, coffee streaming from his hair as he went. It took more than hot coffee to put Coker off his stroke, once he was aroused.

The dull sound of a second collision smote the ears of Coker's pursuers as Coker turned the bend of the staircase. It was followed by a fiendish howl and a whole series of thuds as two human shapes hurtled down the stairs.

One of those human shapes was Bunter of the Remove. The other was Coker. Coker was gasping, as he staggered to his feet.

"Why didn't you get out of the way, you fat freak?" he panted. "Stay there till I come back and I'll slaughter you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter did not join in the yell of hilarity. Bunter was speechless.

Coker raced up the stairs once more.

Two Fifth-Formers raced after him as he went. They were Potter and Greene. Potter and Greene tried to lay restraining hands on their leader; but they found the task quite beyond their powers.

"Old man——" gasped Potter.

"Old chap——" panted Greene.

"Stand back, you two!" roared Coker. "I'm after Blundell, and you're not going to stop me!"

"Yes, but——"

"You see, old chap——"

"I see a couple of idiots who're going to have their heads knocked together unless they get out of my way!" hooted Coker, as he cleared the last two stairs of the flight and charged across the landing towards the Fifth quarters. "Buzz off!"

"You—you fathead!" gasped Greene.

"Hold on a tick and listen to me!" begged Potter. "You don't understand——"

"Rot! You're the fellows who don't understand!" retorted Coker. "You don't understand what I feel about this; but I'm going to show you now!"

Coker charged into the Fifth passage. His henchmen, in a last despairing effort, tried to grab him before he reached Blundell's study—and failed!

"Stop, you idiot!" yelled Potter.

"Can it, you loony!" howled Greene.

But Coker was deaf to the voice of the charmers. He flung open the door of Blundell's study and rushed in.

"Put 'em up!" he roared.

Blundell, the skipper of the Fifth, had been reclining in an armchair, reading a novel. He hurriedly abandoned both as Coker came in, and jumped to his feet in surprise, not unmingled with alarm.

"Mad?" he inquired.

"Put 'em up!" repeated Coker, brandishing his fist as he advanced into the study. "Either that or take the licking that's coming to you!"

"Mad—mad as a hatter!" said Blundell.

"Leave me out of the team would you?" asked Coker, in a grinding voice. "I'll show you! Put 'em up!"

"But——"

Coker's big fist landed out, and Blundell yelled as he caught it on the nose. An instant later Blundell was responding in kind. As head man of a senior form, Blundell was ordinarily far too dignified to indulge in scuffling. But no considerations of dignity could outweigh the natural instinct to avenge that buff on the nose. Blundell piled in.

When the pursuing crowd of juniors arrived on the scene a few seconds later, the two Fifth-Formers were going great guns, while Potter and Greene danced round the study trying to separate them.

"Go it, ye cripples!" yelled Skinner of the Remove. "Two to one in doughnuts on Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Came a thud and a crash, and Blundell went down.

More by luck than judgment, Coker had landed a knock-out!

"There!" said Coker, with considerable satisfaction. "Perhaps that'll teach you not to bar me from the team in future!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For some reason, that remark caused an outbreak of wild hilarity among the crowd.

Blundell staggered to his feet. Unlike the onlookers, he was not hilarious. He glared at Coker with an almost wolfish glare.

"You—you maniac! You imbecile!" he shrieked. "If you'd looked on the list, you'd have seen that I *have* put you in the team!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A kind of spasm seized Coker. He blinked; his jaw dropped; some vital spark seemed to depart from him.

"You—you what?" he stuttered.

"I put you in the team!" roared Blundell. "In a fit of utter insanity, I put you down to play—and you come here and punch me because you say I didn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker's face was almost haggard. He stared round at the hysterical crowd and his eye fell on Bob Cherry.

"Cherry, you—you idiotic young scoundrel, didn't you say——"

"I said I was sorry for you, old bean!" grinned Bob. "So I am;



"Put 'em up!" roared Coker as he rushed into Blundell's study and brandished his fist. "Either that or take a licking!" "Mad!" said Blundell, rising to his feet. "Mad as a hatter!"

you can't play footer for toffee and the rest can. I'd be sorry for anyone under those circles!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I said I was sorrier for the Fifth," added the cheerful Removite. "That's true, too; nobody could help feeling sorry for any team you played in! Nothing in what I said to make you think you weren't in the team, was there?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

Coker stared at Bob Cherry almost dazedly. Then, slowly and limply, he sank into Blundell's armchair. Coker's feelings rarely led him to display signs of physical weakness. But there was no doubt on this occasion that Blundell's unexpected revelation had

brought him almost to the point of collapse.

Potter and Greene mercifully closed the study door and shut out the hilarious crowd.

What happened in Blundell's study after that was not the crowd's concern.

It was highly probable that Coker would apologise with quite unaccustomed humility and that Coker would not be the same Coker for at least a week.

The crowd didn't bother about that. They only remembered the extraordinary expression on Coker's face when he realised what he had done—and that recollection kept them laughing for the rest of the evening!

# THE STORY OF GREYFRIARS

By the Greyfriars  
Rhymester



A GREY old building in the trees  
From ages medieval  
Has weathered all the centuries  
Of warfare and upheaval ;  
A monastery of olden time,  
Its monks in Holy Orders,  
Its chapter-bell would daily chime,  
And peace was in its borders.

But came a time of trouble, which  
Broke out among the tenants,  
The ancient monastery grew rich,  
They suffered and did penance;  
Alike from commoner and lord  
The monks took many acres,  
Until the folk, with one accord,  
Defied these money-makers !

When later, the Franciscan Friars  
(As Grey Friars they were noted)  
Were bringing peace throughout the shires,  
To lives of good devoted,  
King Hal ascended to the throne !  
He thought the institution  
Of churches ought to be his own,  
And caused the Dissolution !

And so the monastery was shut  
At Good King Henry's pleasure !  
He banished the Franciscans, but  
He never found their treasure !  
So well the treasure was concealed  
That Henry was defeated,  
And nobody has since revealed  
The place where it's secreted !

The building stood till Edward's reign  
Deserted and neglected,  
And then it blossomed out again,  
To honour resurrected,  
"A School for Sons of Gentlemen,  
To Educate and Nourish !"  
And so it has remained since then,  
Long may it grow and flourish !

Now in its hallowed age it stands  
With years and honours greater,  
With many sons in distant lands  
To praise their Alma Mater ;  
While boys and Old Boys by the score  
Are swift to sing its glories,  
Yet even they can't love it more  
Than we who read their stories.