

First published in 'The Magnet' 1932 under the title "The Secret of the Scarab".

Bunter and the Secret of the Scarab

FRANK RICHARDS



“Bunter, his fat face white with terror, blinks through his big spectacles at the murderous Greek. Every instant he fears to feel his fat arm twisted and to hear the crack of breaking bones. His podgy heart almost dies in his breast.”

His Greyfriars' chums have left the fat Owl alone with their prisoner, Kalizelos, and the wily Greek manages to trick Bunter into letting him escape. As if that wasn't enough, there are those other beasts chasing him all over the desert just because of a small disaster with their tent!

Even when the stupid Ass's unfailing courage rescues Harry Wharton and Co. from certain death *nobody* seems in the least bit grateful!



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CHAPTER ONE

ALL MAULY'S MONEY!

"SHEER off!"

"What?"

"I'm talking to Mauly!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity. "We don't want to be interrupted, do we Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"Oh, really, you beast--"

Whereat the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove chuckled.

It was a warm day on the Nile. All the days on the Nile were warm. Sunshine, the clear, dry sunshine of Egypt, streamed down on the slow-rolling river, on the city of Luxor, and on the dahabiyeh tied up to the bank.

Harry Wharton & Co. had been ashore with Hassan, the dragoman, seeing the sights.

Warm as the Nile valley was, the Famous Five did not seem to tire-in which they were very unlike Billy Bunter and Lord Mauleverer. Billy Bunter was fat and lazy. Lord

Mauleverer was slim and lazy. Mauly liked to see the sights of Egypt from a long cane chair on the upper deck of the big Nile houseboat, with his legs resting on another chair, and his hands clasped behind his head.

Billy Bunter did not care a lot for sights, anyhow, and he declared that he was fed-up on temples and tombs and mummies. Sitting under an awning, eating sticky Turkish

sweetmeats had more appeal for Bunter. So the two slackers had been left on board the dahabiyeh while the energetic five "did" Denderah with Hassan.

Warm and dusty, but merry and bright, the chums of the Remove clattered back to Luxor on the donkeys, and came tramping cheerily across the gangway to the tied-up

dahabiyeh.

Lord Mauleverer gave them a sleepy grin and a tired nod as they tramped on the upper deck.

Billy Bunter gave them an inimical glare through his big spectacles; and as the glare produced absolutely no effect on the five, he requested them to sheer off. Bunter, it seemed, did not want their company just then.

But what Bunter wanted, or did not want, was a trifle light as air to the cheery chums of the Remove.

Black Nubian servants pulled out deck-chairs for them, and they sat down, with smiling faces.

"I say, you fellows, I think you might sheer off!" said Bunter. "It's rather bad form to interrupt private conversation!"

"Fathead!" said Bob Cherry politely.

"I'm talking to Mauly!" roared Bunter.

"Poor old Mauly!" said Frank Nugent, with deep sympathy.

"The poorfulness of the esteemed old Mauly is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"The interruptfulness is a boonful blessing, isn't it, my estimable idiotic Mauly?"

"Yaas!" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

"What's the jolly old secret?" asked Johnny Bull, with a glare at Bunter. "Are you expecting a post order in Egypt, and asking Mauly to cash it for you in advance, you fat fraud?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't think you fellows ought to be inquisitive," said Bunter. "If there's one thing I can't stand, it's inquisitiveness!"

"Oh, my only summer hat!"

"Butting in when a fellow's having a private talk with a pal!" said Billy Bunter indignantly.

"Rotten bad form, you know! I say, Mauly, old man, come down to the balcony!"

"Can't!"

"Why not?" demanded Bunter.

"Tired!"

"You silly ass, you've been sitting in that chair for two hours! What's made you tired?"

"You!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter fixed his big spectacles on his noble pal with an expression that did not seem at all pallid. But he controlled his wrath. He had an important matter to discuss with Lord Mauleverer--a very important matter indeed. It was not a time for telling the schoolboy earl what he thought of him.

"We've had no end of a time, Mauly!" said Harry Wharton. "You ought to have come! The Temple of Hathor at Denderah is a corker!"

"I'll take your word for it, old man!" said Mauly.

"And the Temple of Isis!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, shut up!" said Bunter. "If you haven't the good taste to sheer off while I'm talking to my pal, you might shut up, at least!"

"Don't you want to hear about the jolly old sights at Denderah, Mauly?" asked Nugent.

"Not at all-I mean, yaas!" amended Lord Mauleverer hastily. "Anythin' to keep Bunter from talkin'!"

"The celebrated Temple of Hathor is--" began Bob.

"Shut up!" roared Bunter. "Now, Mauly, I was saying--"

"Oh dear! Yaas!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "Go it, old fat bean! Mind if I go to sleep?"

"Oh, really, Mauly, as I was saying, I'm not the fellow to brag or to make a song about what I've done--you know that! But did I, or did I not, get you away from those Arab beasts, Hamza and Yussef, when they bagged you the day we went to Karnak? Did I, or did I not, risk my life with a pluck that none of those fellows would have been capable of to rescue you?"

"No!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you ungrateful beast!" roared Bunter.

"You jolly well know I did!"

"I know you were on the spot by accident, and in such a shivering funk that you jolly nearly left me behind it!" said Mauly. "Is that what you mean?"

"No, it isn't!" roared Bunter. "And look at the night that Greek rotter, Kalizelos, got on the dahabiya after that silly scarab! Did I, or did I not, watch over your safety and save you?"

"No!" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of all the ungrateful rotters--" gasped Bunter.

"You got out in the night rooting after grub and butted into the Greek johnny, and were scared out of your wits!" yawned Mauleverer.

"Is that what you mean, old top?"

"No wonder Shakespeare talks about the thankless tooth of a serpent's child!" said Bunter bitterly. "I'm accustomed to ingratitude! Look what I've done for these fellows! And are they grateful? No fear! B-

there's a limit, Mauly! You owe me your life! I'm not bragging of it; pluck happens to be my long suit. Kindest friend and noblest foe, and all that--that's me all over. Now, look here, Mauly, for some reason remittances haven't reached me since we've been on this holiday in Egypt--"

"I knew he was expecting a postal order!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" roared Bunter. "I'm not going to sponge on you, Mauly. I'm not like some fellows I could name, I hope! But a loan till my remittance comes is quite a different matter. You've lent me a few piastres already--"

"A few thousand!" grinned Bob.

"Do shut up, Cherry! Now, look here, Mauly--"

Lord Mauleverer sat up.

"I see the point," he said thoughtfully. "The fact is, you men keep on telling me that nothing's safe in my pockets. You've made me hide that jolly old scarab of A-Menah, so that I shan't lose it. Those Arabs the other day at Karnak got a lot of money off me. On the whole, I think the best thing I can do is to hand over all the money I've got to Bunter."

"You silly ass!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Billy Bunter eagerly.

"I'll take care of it for you, Mauly! Rely on me!"

Lord Mauleverer fumbled in his pocket. Billy Bunter watched him with his eyes almost bulging through his spectacles. Harry Wharton & Co. simply stared.

Lord Mauleverer was in the happy position of having more of that useful article, cash, than a fellow could possibly want. There was no doubt that he was careless with it. Backsheesh flowed from Mauleverer's pockets like a stream - or, rather, like a torrent. Hassan, the dragoman, was making a fortune out of him. Innumerable natives, all along the Nile, had lapped up the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Billy Bunter had used him like a bank in which he had an unlimited account. But this seemed to be rather the limit, even for Mauly.

Placing his cash in the care of Billy Bunter was really an amazing proposition. There was little doubt that it would have been for Mauly's benefit to have a friend taking care of his cash for him. But dropping it into the Nile would have been about as useful as placing it in the fat hands of the Owl of the Remove.

Mauleverer seemed in serious earnest, however. He drew his Russia-leather purse from his pocket.

"Mauly, you ass!" exclaimed Wharton, almost aghast.

"You shut up, Wharton!" roared Bunter wrathfully. "Mauly knows a pal he can trust."

Mauly isn't asking you to take care of his money for him, are you, Mauly?"

"No."

"He's asking me," said Bunter loftily. "He knows he can rely on a pal like me. You fellows can shut up."

"Well, fools and their money are soon parted!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Thanks!" yawned Mauleverer.

"My esteemed idiotic Mauly--" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Don't you men think it a good idea?" asked Mauleverer innocently. "You've told me often enough that I'm jolly careless. I own up-I'm careless. Well, this money will be safe with Bunter. I can leave it to his judgment to spend it how he thinks fit--"

"Oh crikey!"

"I leave it absolutely in his hands," said Mauleverer. "You don't mind, Bunter?"

"My dear chap-my dear old pal!" gasped Bunter. "That's all right! I'm your man! Hand it over!"

"It's a lot of responsibility off my hands, you see," Mauleverer explained to the staring five.

"Bunter's willin' to take it on. That settles it. I'm goin' to hand over all my money to Bunter-even a piastre I've got about me. Bunter can do as he likes with it. I leave it to him entirely."

"Dear old Mauly!" said Billy Bunter, his fat voice fairly thrilling with affection. "Rely on me!"

"Here you are, old chap!"

Lord Mauleverer opened his nobby purse. From the interior he extracted a nickel coin, which was called a "kirsch" in the native tongue, but more generally a piastre. Its value was two-pence and a halfpenny! This he placed in the eager outstretched palm of William

George Bunter.

"There!" he said, and he replaced the purse in his pocket and sank back lazily in his chair.

Bunter blinked at the coin. He seemed hardly able to believe his little round eyes, or his big round spectacles.

"What-what-what's this?" gasped Bunter blankly.

"It's a piastre, old top."

"I know it's a piastre, you idiot! But what-what is it for?"

"It's all my money."

"Wha-a-at?"

"By the way," added Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully, as if he had just remembered something. "I shall have to drop into the bank before we leave Luxor and get some cash.

I've entirely run out."

Bunter blinked at him. He blinked at the nickel coin in his fat palm. He blinked at Mauleverer again. He seemed bereft of speech. There was a sudden roar from the Famous Five.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter found his voice.

"Mauly! You silly idiot-you frabjous ass-you burbling chump--"

"Eh?" Lord Mauleverer looked surprised.

"Are you calling me those fancy names because I'm trusting you with all my money, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five. They realised now that his lazy lordship had been gently pulling the fat Owl's podgy leg.

"Mean to say this is all the money you've got?" shrieked Bunter.

"Yaas!"

"Why, you-you-you idiot--"

"I feel that I can trust you with it, Bunter, old bean. Spend it how you like-use your own judgment--"

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

The expression on Billy Bunter's fat face might have made the statue of Rameses the Second smile.

"You-you-you--" gurgled Bunter. "You-you funny idiot! You slacking ass! You idiotic dummy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anythin' the matter, old bean?" asked Lord Mauleverer, raising his eyebrows. "That isn't really the way to talk to a fellow who's trusting you with all his money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter

"My dear chap--"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter hurled all Mauly's money-that single, solitary piastre-into the Nile. Then, with a sort of scorn, he rolled away, followed by a sleepy grin from Lord Mauleverer and a howl of laughter from the Famous Five.

After which Harry Wharton & Co. told Mauly all about the wonderful things they had seen that day in Denderah. Mauly did not mind. He went to sleep, and slumbered gently and peacefully while they talked to him.

CHAPTER TWO

RUCTIONS ON THE RIVER!

"CAMPING out?"

"That's it!"

"Rot!" said Bunter.

The song of the Nubian sailors, as they handled their long poles, sounded musically in the sun on the morning. The great houseboat swung away from the Nile bank and floated out into the river. The Greyfriars tourists had "done" the eastern bank-Luxor, and Karnak, and the other wonderful things-and now the dahabiyeh was being poled across the Nile to the western bank, where many more marvels awaited them.

Hassan, the dragoman, was bursting with information respecting the Necropolis, the "City of the Dead," the Tombs of the Kings, the Tombs of the Queens-tombs, and tombs, and tombs! -that covered a vast space on the west bank of the Nile opposite Luxor. There were, as the dragoman told them gleefully, innumerable dead persons-more innumerable than in any part of Egypt hitherto explored by the Greyfriars party. Which, to Hassan's mind, at least, was an irresistible attraction.

The juniors had breakfasted on the balcony, under the awning, at the stern of the dahabiyeh.

Billy Bunter was still breakfasting on the balcony when they went to the upper deck. The broad waters of the Nile glistened in the sunshine, and other dahabiyehs were to be seen, as well as a crowd of feluccas-some rowing with their great, heavy oars, others gliding under the big lateen sails. The Cleopatra was the largest and handsomest dahabiyeh to be seen. Mr. Hilmi Maroudi, of Cairo, who had lent it to the Greyfriars party, was a

millionaire, and his dahabiyeh was a palatial boat. The juniors watched the busy scene on the Nile with keen interest. Other tourists were going across to the western bank that morning, but most of them in the ferryboat or in hired feluccas.

Billy Bunter rolled up to the upper deck, after packing away several breakfasts, one after another, and he brought with him a big orange in either fat hand to wind up his meal. He found the Famous Five discussing what they were going to do on the western bank. And as soon as he learned that the idea was to leave the dahabiyeh tied up and camp out for a night or two ashore, Bunter stated his opinion for what it was worth.

The chums of the Remove did not seem to consider that it was worth very much. They continued to discuss their camping arrangements, regardless.

"You'd like to go camping, Mauly-what?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yaas."

"Look here, Mauly," said Billy Bunter.

"What's the good of roughing it in a silly tent when you can come back and sleep comfortably on the dahabiyeh? You'd rather come back to the dahabiyeh, wouldn't you?"

"Yaas."

"You can't do both, fathead!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Oh dear!" said Mauly.

Lord Mauleverer's system was to agree with every suggestion made-which was a little awkward when opinions differed.

Billy Bunter guzzled an orange, hurled the peel into the Nile, and swatted flies that had a fancy for the orange juice smeared on his fat face.

"Well, you can take this from me," he said. "I'm not going camping! If you camp out in a lot of putrid ruins you won't have my company!"

"I say, camping seems rather a jolly idea," remarked Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "Let's camp out by all means!"

"Oh, really, Mauly!"

"Hassan can fix us up with all the things we need," said Bob.

The dragoman salaamed.

"On my head be it, sar!" he said. "Hassan is your dragoman. You trust Hassan. Everything shall be done to the top of a hole, as you say in your noble English language."

"Everything shall be-what?" ejaculated Mauleverer.

"The esteemed Hassan means that the topholefulness will be terrific," explained Hurree Jamset Rai Singh.

"Oh gad!" said Mauly, and the juniors chuckled.

A nasal voice, in emphatic tones, hailed the juniors on the dahabiyeh from a felucca on the Nile. In that felucca sat two tourists-one a tall, lean gentleman, with lantern jaws, the other a short, stout gentleman. Each of them wore a sun-helmet and smoked glasses, and carried a red-covered guidebook and spat continually into the Nile. From which latter

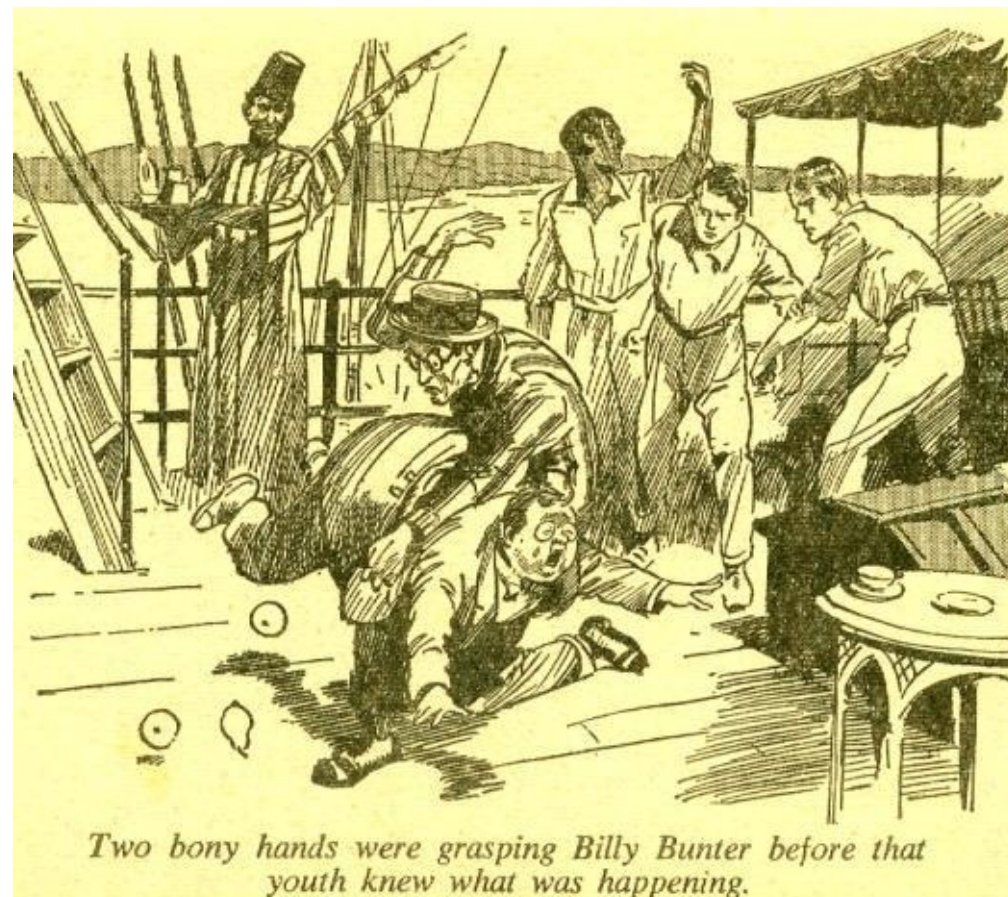
circumstance the juniors guessed that they were tourists from the great United States. It was the lean man who hailed the dahabiyeh.

"Say! You!" he called out. "You figure that you want to run down this doggoned felucca?"

I'll say you'd better tell your sailors to keep them pesky poles away."

The tall, bronze-complexioned reis, standing at the high helm of the dahabiyeh, glanced down at the felucca, but gave no sign. The singing Nubians poled on, unregarding. Billy Bunter sniffed. On board the most magnificent dahabiyeh on the Nile, Billy Bunter felt immensely superior to commonplace tourists in a hired boat.

He sniffed to make that superiority clear to the commonplace persons. Harry Wharton & Co. looked down at the felucca. The small craft was cutting across the bows of the big craft,



so they concluded that it was the felucca's own look-out if there was trouble, and left it at that. Lord Mauleverer, with great politeness, raised his hat to the American gentlemen and answered in his most courteous tones.

"Sorry, sir! We'd much rather not run you down, as a matter of choice. But perhaps you wouldn't mind keepin' out of the way."

The lean gentleman gave him a glare.

"You bought the Nile?" he inquired.

"I think not," answered Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "I've been buyin' things ever since I've been in Egypt-the people here won't take no for an answer, you know! I can't

remember everythin' I've bought! But I don't think the Nile was among my purchases."

The Famous Five grinned as his lordship made that reply with perfect gravity. The lean American stared at him.

"Say, bo, was you born funny?" he asked. "I'll say you don't want to shoot off your mouth to promiscus when you're talking to George Washington Jacks! George W. Jacks might step aboard the hooker and spank you, some!"

"My esteemed and ridiculous friend," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "the spankfulness might be boot on the other leg."

Mr. Jacks gave quite a jump. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's English, learned from the wisest moonshee in Bhanipur, often had a surprising effect on strangers.

"Carry me home to die!" said Mr. Jacks. "Did you hear that, colonel?"

"Did I, colonel?" answered the fat man. "I'll say I did."

Both the American gentlemen, apparently, were colonels, though they did not look like military gentlemen.

"Jevver hear anything like it, Colonel Skink?" asked G. W. Jacks.

"I'll say no, Colonel Jacks," answered Colonel Skink.

The dahabiyeh rolled heavily on. The little felucca, which was rowed by a couple of brown men, danced on the wash of the great houseboat.

Some of the Nile washed aboard and wetted the feet of the two colonels, and angry remarks were made through the noses of Messrs. Jacks and Skink.

"Cheek!" said Billy Bunter.

He pushed his face into his second orange.

Bunter liked oranges, and he enjoyed them-but it could not be said that his method of dealing with them was either cleanly or elegant.

Having gobbled the interior of that fat and juicy fruit, Bunter carelessly tossed the remains over the side of the dahabiyeh.

"Look out!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Eh?"

"You fat ass!"

It was too late for Bunter to look out. The remnant of the orange had landed. Every bullet is said to have its billet, and the same rule seemed to apply to that juicy relic of Bunter's latest snack. It landed in the keen, sharp, penetrating eye of Colonel Jacks.

G. W. Jacks was standing up at the moment.

The next moment he was sitting down. He sat down with a sudden concussion that made the light felucca rock. The roar that burst from G. W. Jacks might have been heard on both banks of the Nile.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. "You clumsy ass, Bunter--"

"Eh?" said Bunter. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had not even seen where his missile had landed. "What's the row? I say, you fellows, what is that Yankee yelling about?"

Colonel Jacks was yelling wildly to his rowers. They stared at him dubiously, but obeyed.

The felucca ran alongside the dahabiyeh, and the long-limbed American was aboard the Cleopatra almost in the twinkling of an eye. He was angry and excited--there was no doubt about his anger and excitement. There was, orange-juice in his eye, which was

uncomfortable and painful. And obviously he was convinced that the missile had been thrown intentionally--which was enough to annoy even a very good-tempered man, And

the long gentleman from the U.S. did not seem at all good-tempered, anyhow.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"What--"

"Yarooooh!" roared Bunter.

Two bony hands were grasping Billy Bunter before that fat youth knew what was happening.

He was sprawled, face down, across a bony knee.

Spank!

"Whoooooop."

Spank, spank!

"Yow! Wow!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton.

Spank!

"Yooop! Help! Rescue!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows--Whoooooop!"

Spank, spank!

"I guess you can't get by with sauce to G. W. Jacks!" roared the lean colonel. "No, sir! I'll say nope sir! I'll surely say nope! Not G. W. Jacks, sir! George W. Jacks doesn't stand for it, sir!

Sure! Not in your lifetime, and some over! Nope!"

Spank, spank, spank!

Billy Bunter wriggled and raved. Harry Wharton & Co. gathered round and grasped G.

W. Jacks on all sides. Bunter deserved to be spanked, perhaps, for landing the relic of a juicy orange in a stranger's eye from sheer carelessness. But the lean gentleman was overdoing it wholesale. The Famous Five grasped various parts of Colonel Jacks' bony person and yanked him away from the Or of the Remove.

"Chuck it!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Keep your jolly old temper, old bean!"

"Yaroooh! Pitch him into the Nile!" yelled Bunter. "Whop him! Oh crikey! Rag him! Pull his nose! Yaroooh!"

"I'll say you'd better leggo!" roared G. W. Jacks, struggling in the grasp of the juniors.

"Yep! I'll say so!"

But the juniors did not let go. The excited transatlantic gentleman seemed rather too dangerous to be released. They led him to the side, and Wharton shouted to the dancing felucca.

"Catch!"

"Search me!" ejaculated the other colonel in the felucca, staring up in astonishment. "By the green horned toad, you can search me!"

The rowers held the felucca close alongside, and the Famous Five dropped the bony

gentleman back where he belonged. The thin colonel went sprawling down, and the fat colonel, in an unfortunate moment for himself, stepped forward to catch him and help him land. His foot slipped from the rocking boat, and he missed G. W. Jacks. But G. W. Jacks did not miss him-G. W. Jacks landed on the back of his neck.

There was an agonised gurgle from the plump colonel as he was squashed in the bottom of the boat under the bony colonel.

"Ooooh! Great gophers! Yoooogh!"

"Thunder!" gasped Colonel Jacks.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the dahabiyeh.

The two colonels were wildly mixed up in the bottom of the felucca. The light craft rocked wildly on the shipping water, which drenched over the two struggling and sprawling colonels.

There was a cackle of laughter from the Nubian crew of the Cleopatra; even the grave reeve condescended to grin.

The dahabiyeh rolled on, leaving the felucca behind. Two crimson and breathless citizens of the United States sorted themselves out at last, and sat and gasped for wind. The dahabiyeh rolled on, and they faded out of the picture, still gasping.

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT IS THE SECRET?

"WHAT about the jolly old prisoner?" said Bob Cherry.

The dahabiyeh was tied up once more on the western bank. Before the eyes of the

Greyfriars tourists stretched the vast necropolis of ancient Thebes. Nearer at hand a crowd of donkey boys already had their eyes on the tourists, and were already leading their animals towards the bank and shouting from the distance. Itinerant dealers in spurious antiquities were watching for them to come ashore.

Lord Mauleverer nodded thoughtfully as Bob referred to the prisoner of the dahabiyeh.

"Let's go down and see the jolly old bird in his cage," said Mauly, and the Famous Five followed him down to the cabins.

One cabin door was locked, and a Nubian was squatted outside on guard. He rose and

salaamed and unlocked the door, and Lord Mauleverer stepped into the prison-cabin, with the Famous Five behind him. Kalizelos, the Greek, rose to his feet, his black eyes burning at the Greyfriars fellows. For a good many days now Kalizelos had been a prisoner on board the Cleopatra under lock and key. As Mauleverer stepped in the Greek looked as if he would spring on him like a tiger. Mauleverer smiled and waved him back.

"Keep your temper, old bean!" he said.

"Hassan, knock him on the head if he cuts up rusty!"

"On my head be it, sar!" answered the dragoman, who had followed the juniors down, stick in hand.

Lord Mauleverer regarded the prisoner with thoughtful seriousness. Harry Wharton & Co.

were smiling.

Mauly's method of dealing with the Greek made them smile; but there was no doubt, at all events, that it was keeping their enemy out of mischief.

And there was no doubt that Kalizelos had asked for it. He had crept on board the

dahabiyeh in the darkness of a night to steal the Golden Scarab-and Mauleverer had

awakened with the Greek's knife at his throat! In Cairo the rascal had been handed over to the police by Mr. Maroudi, the juniors' Egyptian friend; but he had escaped. Mauly was taking his own measures to see that the villain did not escape a second time. So far, those measures had been efficacious.

"We're going away from the dahabiyeh for a day or two, Mr. Kalizelos," drawled Lord Mauleverer

"I'm givin' you another chance before we go. Are you comin' to terms?"

"Fool!" snarled the Greek.

"Look at it reasonably," urged Mauleverer placidly. "I've got the Golden Scarab that my father found in Egypt years and years ago. It's mine. It belonged to jolly old A-Menah three thousand years ago, the reign of Ram-Ram-Ram-thingummy--"

"Rameses the Second!" grinned Bob.

"Yaas, I know it was Ram-somethin'. Jolly old A-Menah wore it as an amulet in those days, at the battle of What's-its-name, in Syria, and it seems to have brought him luck. He came back from the wars with a big diamond in his trousers pocket-if they wore trousers in the reign of Ram-Ram-Ram-thingummy! The story goes that the scarab will guide any Johnny who happens to hold it to that big diamond-the Eye of-of-of--"

"The Eye of Osiris!" prompted Bob.

"Yaas, that's it! Now, of course, I don't believe a word of it," said Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. "I can't quite swallow ancient Egyptian magic. But the trouble is that you do, Mr. Kalizelos. You keep on tryin' to get that scarab off me, and you've made things dashed unpleasant-shuttin' a fellow up in tombs, and so on. You can't expect a fellow to like it."

"Fool!"

"Your manners, old thing, are simply horrid," said Lord Mauleverer. "But never mind that.

It seems that you got hold of an ancient papyrus, in your curio shop at Cairo, and learned the secret of the scarab. You're after that scarab like my friend Bunter after a jam-tart--"

"Oh, really, Mauly--"

"And a chap gets fed-up," said Mauleverer, shaking his head. "Now you've been obliging enough to drop into my hands, and I'm keepin' you where you can't do any more harm--"

"I demand to be handed over to the law!" said the Greek hoarsely.

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"You wouldn't-if you didn't fancy that you could wangle it to get away from the jolly old law," he answered. "I don't think a fearful lot of the law. It's rather a fishy bizney, even in my own country. In the East I've got an idea that it's largely a matter of backsheesh. You see, you got away in Cairo, on a bean, and I can't help thinkin' you'd get away in Luxor.

You're safer here."

"Fool!"

"Thanks! Now, there's two ways out of this difficult matter," said his lordship. "Either I can give you

the scarab, or you can give me the secret. I'm not givin' you the scarab-it's mine.

But I've got to draw your teeth! You see that?"

"Fool!"

"This sportsman doesn't seem to have a high opinion of my intellect, does he, you men?"

Never mind! Now, old top, if there's really a secret, cough it up. Once you've handed it over, you won't want the scarab, and I can get shut of you. I'd be thankful to see the last of you, believe me. You can see for yourself that it's the only way."

"Fool!"

Lord Mauleverer slipped his hand into his pocket and drew out the golden beetle, the cause of so many exciting adventures since the Greyfriars chums had started on their Egyptian holiday.

The Greek's eyes snapped at sight of it.

Shaped like the sacred beetle of ancient Egypt, made apparently of solid gold, the amulet lay on Lord Mauleverer's palm, glistening in the light. Often and often had the juniors handled it, wondering what was its strange secret-if any. They knew that the tiny picture-writing engraved on it told nothing but the name and title of A-Menah. That it had magic

properties was hardly to be believed. How it could possibly guide its possessor to the Eye of Osiris was unimaginable. Yet the look on the Greek's face, the hungry greed that blazed in his eyes, the eager twitching of his features showed how strong was his belief.

It was obvious that Kalizelos could barely restrain himself from springing at the schoolboy earl and snatching at the scarab. Yet what secret could he have read in that ancient papyrus written by the scribe of A-Menah? What secret could there be in the golden beetle that no other eyes could read?

"There's the jolly old article," said Lord Mauleverer, holding it up. "It's mine, as I've mentioned. I'm not givin' it away-especially if it's a clue to a diamond worth a quarter of a million pounds. That's askin' rather too much of a fellow, what? Trot out the secret!"

"I will tell you nothing!" hissed the Greek.

"If you weren't so jolly savage about it, old thing, I shouldn't believe there was a giddy secret at all. But you're not the man to risk your life, and spend money like water, for the sake of a mere curiosity. I'm beginnin' to believe there really is a secret-though I can't begin to guess what it is. Won't you cough it up?"

"Never!"

"Most likely it's only gammon," said Mauleverer. "But if it turns out to be worth anythin', I'll do the fair thing. I'll stand you ten percent of the loot, if I bag it. What?"

"That's a good offer!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"All or nothing!" muttered the Greek. "Fool!"

The scarab is valueless to you. You cannot read its secret. Only I can read it. A thousand pounds-ten thousand pounds-sell me the scarab."

"Beats me hollow," said Lord Mauleverer. "This sportsman is in earnest, you men-he'd be glad to trade out ten thousand pounds for this scarab, which is worth about twenty-five for its metal. Do you get him?"

"It's pretty plain there is a secret, and that Kalizelos knows it," said Harry Wharton. "But the scarab is yours, Mauly, and if it leads to a treasure, the treasure is yours."

"Quite! We can't let this man go," said Mauleverer. "Not unless he draws his own teeth by handin' over the secret. If I could trust him to let me alone, and let my scarab alone, I'd be glad to get shut of him. But--"

"It shall be mine!" snarled the Greek. "Your life, or a thousand lives, shall not stand in the way. I will gain my freedom-you cannot keep me on this dahabiyeh! Then for you, death; for me, the scarab!"

"Thanks for the tip," said Lord Mauleverer, slipping the sacred scarabæus of A-Menah into his pocket. "I'll see that you don't get loose-till you've coughed up that jolly old secret! Last time of askin'!"

"Fool!"

"I take that as an answer in the negative. Come on, you men!"

"Look out!" yelled Bob, as the Greek made a sudden, desperate spring.

Crack!

Hassan was looking out!

His thick stick whirled in the air, and came down with a loud crack on the head of

Konstantinos Kalizelos.

The Greek gave a gasping cry, and rolled on the floor of the cabin.

Hassan chuckled.

"Hassan look out, noble sar!" he said. "Hassan, is your dragoman! You trust Hassan! Oh, yes!"

"Sorry, old thing," said Lord Mauleverer, politely, as the Greek sat up dizzily, clasping his head with both hands. "You asked for that-what? Ta-ta!"

The juniors left the cabin. The door was closed and locked on the Greek. His voice

followed them in a string of fierce imprecations as they went.

Their faces were thoughtful as they returned to the deck. What was the strange secret of the scarab? was an intriguing mystery. Looking at the golden beetle, they could not believe that it held a secret but looking at the desperate Greek, they could hardly doubt it.

Their minds seemed to sway to and fro on the subject.

"Better take it ashore with us, I think," yawned Lord Mauleverer. "That Greek sportsman is safe enough, but-- I don't fancy leavin' the scarab on the dahabiyeh with him while we're away for days."

"No fear," agreed Bob Cherry. "Mind you don't drop it in one of the jolly old tombs, though."

"I say, you fellows--"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Ready, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter fixed his eyes, and his spectacles, severely on the chums of the Remove.

"I'm ready, if we're going to have a car, and if we're coming back to the dahabiyeh for the night," he answered firmly. "If you're going to ride those beastly donkeys, and camp out among a lot of putrid old ruins, I'm not ready! I refuse to do anything of the sort!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"We're going to ride donkeys, and we're going to camp out for the night, old fat bean," he said.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter."

Snort from Bunter.

"Then you can jolly well leave me out!" he snapped.

Bob Cherry took out his handkerchief.

"Excuse me while I cry for a few minutes, you men," he said. "Boo-hoo! We're going to l-lose B-B-Bunter! Boo-hoo!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter.

"Pardon these tears!" sobbed Bob Cherry.

"Excuse my emotion! Boo-hoo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean it!" roared Bunter. "You can jolly well get on the best you can without me, see?"

"Boo-hoo!"

"Come on," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

And the Greyfriars party went ashore, Bob Cherry drying his tears; and Billy Bunter glared after them with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CITY OF THE DEAD!

"GREAT, enormous, and gigantic Ramesseum--" chanted Hassan.

Harry Wharton & Co., having "done" the Colossi of Memnon, arrived at the Ramesseum on donkey back. Hassan's brown face fairly glowed with satisfaction. If there was anything the dragoman enjoyed more than cheating his lordly gentlemen it was pointing out to them the wonders of Egypt. And the Ramesseum, the gigantic temple built by Rameses the Second, was "some" sight.

The juniors dismounted from their steeds, which were left with the donkey-boys. Other tourists were on hand; and the ancient courts of the Ramesseum echoed to many

languages-French and German, Arabic, English, and American.

It was a sunny day-and, of course, warm! It was going to be a real "beano," as Bob Cherry described it. The day was to be spent in donkey-riding among the ruins, seeing the sights; and instead of riding back to the Nile and the dahabiyeh, the party were going to camp out.

Within a short ride of the Tombs of the Kings was an estate belonging to Mr. Hilmi

Maroudi, of Cairo, partly cultivated with orange-trees, partly desert. Mr. Maroudi, who had lent his magnificent dahabiyeh to his young friends, had told them of it, and that he had sent word to his manager to make them welcome if they gave the place a look-in. So while the juniors were sightseeing with Hassan, the Nubians were conveying the necessary

things to Mr. Maroudi's land for camping out.

When the day's ride was over, the juniors were to find the camp ready, the tent up, and the supper cooked-which was camping-out on very easy and agreeable terms. The

friendship of Mr. Maroudi was helping to make their holiday in Egypt run on very pleasant lines.

Had Billy Bunter been able to see the party as they arrived at the Ramesseum, he would not have been able to observe any diminution of their cheery spirits on account of his absence. Indeed, from their looks, it might have been supposed that the chums of the Remove were rather bucked by Bunter's determination to stay on the dahabiyeh.

Clatter! Clatter! Clatter! came the beating of donkeys' hoofs, and the juniors glanced round at new arrivals. A nasal voice, which they had heard already that morning, came to their ears.

"Say, you! You bonehead! You want to take a cinch on this ornery cayuse, I'm telling you."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here come the jolly old colonels!" grinned Bob Cherry.

The two American gentlemen were in sight.

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