

FIVE GO TO BILLYCOCK HILL

Gladys Blyton



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Chapter One

A WEEKS HOLIDAY

Wheres the map? said Julian. Is that it, George? Good! Now - where shall we spread it?

On the floor, said Anne. A map is always easiest to read on the floor. Ill push the table out of the way.

Well, be careful, for goodness sake, said George. Fathers in his study, and you know what happened before when someone pushed the table right over!

Everyone laughed. Georges father so often came pouncing out of his study if any sudden noise was made when he was working.

The table was pushed out of the way and the big map unfolded and spread out over the floor. Timmy was surprised to see the four children kneeling down around it, and barked, imagining this was some kind of new game.

Be quiet, Timmy! said Dick. Youve got into trouble once this morning already for making a row. And stop brushing my face with your tail.

Wuff, said Timmy and lay down heavily on the map.

Get up, idiot, said Dick. Dont you know were in a hurry? We want to trace our route to Billycock Hill...

Billycock Hill - what a lovely name! said Anne. Is that where were going?

Yes, said Julian, poring over the map. Its near some caves we want to see - and theres a Butterfly Farm not far off, and...

A Butterfly Farm! said George, surprised. Whatevers that?

Just what it sounds like! said Dick. A farm for butterflies! Toby, a friend of ours at school, told me about it. He lives quite near it and he says its a most interesting place - they breed butterflies - and moths, too - from eggs, and sell them to collectors.

Do they really? said Anne. Well, I must say I used to enjoy keeping caterpillars and seeing what they turned into - it was like magic to see a lovely butterfly or moth creep out of the chrysalis. But a farm for them - can we really go and see it?

Oh, yes - Toby says the men who run it are very decent about showing anyone round, said Julian. Apparently Billycock Hill is a good place for rare butterflies, too - thats why theyve got their farm there. They rush about with nets half the time - and at night they go moth-hunting,

It sounds exciting, said Dick. Well, what with caves to see, and a butterfly farm, and Toby to visit,

and...

And just Five together again on a sunny weeks holiday! said George, giving Timmy a sudden thump of joy. Hurrah for Whitsun - and thank goodness our two schools had a weeks holiday at the same time!

The four cousins sprawled on the floor, looking with great interest at the map, following out a route with their fingers. As they traced out the way, there came an angry noise from the study, where Georges father was at work.

Whos been tidying my desk? Where are those papers I left here? Fanny, Fanny - come here!

He wants Mother - Ill get her, said George. No, I cant - shes gone shopping,

Why cant people leave my papers alone? came her fathers voice again. Fanny! FANNY!

Then the study door was flung open and Mr Kirrin came striding out, muttering to himself. He didnt see the four children on the floor, and fell right over them. Timmy barked in delight and leapt at him thinking that for once in a way Georges father was actually having a game with them!

Oooh! said George, as her fathers hand came over her face. Dont! What are you doing, Father?

Uncle Quentin - sorry you fell over us! said Julian. Shut up, Timmy - this isnt a game!

He helped his uncle up and waited for the explosion. His uncle brushed himself down and glared at Julian. Have you got to lie on the floor? Get down, will you, Timmy? Wheres your mother, George? Get up, for goodness sake! Wheres Joan? If shes been tidying my desk again Ill give her notice!

Joan the cook appeared at the doorway, wiping her floury hands on her apron. Whatevers all this noise about? she began. Oh, sorry, sir - I didnt know it was you. I...

Joan - have you been tidying my desk again? almost shouted Georges father.

No, sir. Have you lost something? Never you mind, sir, Ill come along and find it, said Joan, who was used to Mr Kirrins ways. Pick up that map, you four - and put the table back. Stop barking, Timmy. George, take him out for goodness sake, or your father will go mad.

Hes only excited because were all together again, said George, and took Timmy into the garden. The others followed, Julian folding up the map, grinning.

We ought to put Uncle Quentin into a play, said Dick. Hed bring the house down! Well - do we know the way, Julian? And when do we start?

Heres Mother, said George as someone came to the front gate with a basket.

Julian ran to open it. He was very fond of his kindly, pleasant-faced aunt. She smiled round at them all.

Well - have you decided where to go - and what to take with you? Youll be able to camp out this beautiful weather - what a lovely Whitsun its going to be!

Yes, said Julian, taking his aunts basket from her and carrying it indoors. Were going to Billycock Hill, and as our friend Toby lives at the bottom of it, at Billycock Farm, hes going to lend us all the camping gear we need.

So we shant need to load our bikes with tents and mattresses and things, said Dick.

Oh - good! said his aunt. What about food? You can get it at Tobys farm, I suppose?

Rather! We shant feed there, of course, said Julian. But we shall buy any eggs or milk or bread we need - and Toby says the strawberries are already ripening!

Aunt Fanny smiled. Well, I neednt worry about your meals, then. And youll have Timmy with you, too, so hell look after you all. Wont you, Timmy? You wont let them get into any trouble, will you?

Woof, said Timmy, in his deepest voice, and wagged his tail. Woof.

Good old Tim, said George, patting him. If it wasnt for you wed never be allowed to go off so much on our own, I bet!

Uncle Quintins a bit on the war-path, Aunt Fanny, said Dick. He wants to know whos been tidying his desk. He came rushing out of the study, didnt see us lying on the floor round our map - and fell right over us.

Oh dear - Id better go and find out what papers hes lost now, said his aunt. I expect he forgot that he had a tidying fit on last night, and tidied his desk himself. Hes probably put a lot of his most precious papers into the waste-paper basket!

Everyone laughed as Mrs Kirrin hurried into the study.

Well, lets get ready, said Julian. We wont need to take much, as old Tobys going to help us. Macs, of course - and dont forget yours, Timmy! And jerseys.' And one or two maps.

And torches, said Anne, because we want to explore those caves. Oh, and lets take our swimsuits in case we find somewhere to bathe. Its warm enough!

And candles and matches, said George, slapping the pocket of her shorts. Ive got those. I got Joan to give me three boxes. And lets take some sweets.

Yes. That tin of humbugs, said Julian. And I vote we take our little portable radio!

Oh, yes - thats a good idea, said Anne, pleased. We can hear our favourite programmes then - and the news. I dont suppose we shall be able to buy newspapers.

Ill get out the bikes from the shed, said Julian. Dick, get the sandwiches from Joan - she said shed make us some, because we shant get to Tobys farm till after our dinner-time - and I bet well be hungry!

Wuff, said Timmy, who knew that word very well.

He says remember biscuits for him, said Anne with a laugh. Ill go and get some now, Tim - though I expect you can share meals with the dogs at Billycock Farm.

Joan had two large packets of sandwiches and cake ready for them, and two bottles of orangeade. There you are, she said, handing them over. And if you get through all those youll no longer feel hungry. And here are Timmys biscuits - and a bone.

Youre a brick, Joan, said Dick, and put his arm round her to give her one of the sudden hugs she liked. Well, youll soon be rid of us - a whole week at Whitsun - isnt that luck - and with such glorious weather, too.

Buck up! called Julian. Ive got the bikes - and no ones had a puncture, for a change. Bring my mac, Dick.

In three minutes everything was packed into the bicycle baskets, or strapped at the back. Timmy made sure that his biscuits and bone were packed by sniffing at each basket until he came to the smell he was hoping for. Then he wagged his tail and bounded round excitedly. The Five were together again - and who knew what might happen? Timmy was ready for anything!

Good-bye, dears, said Mrs Kirrin, standing at the gate to see them go. Julian, take care of the girls - and Tim, take care of everyone!

Uncle Quentin suddenly appeared at the window. Whats all the noise about? he began impatiently. Oh - theyre off at last, are they? Now well have a little peace and quiet! Good-bye - and behave yourselves!

Grown ups always say that, said Anne as the Five set off happily, ringing their bells in farewell. Hurrah - were off on our own again - yes, you too, Timmy. What fun!

Chapter Two

OFF TO BILLYCOCK HILL

The sun shone down hotly as the Five sped down the sandy road that ran alongside Kirrin Bay. Timmy loped easily beside them, his tongue hanging out quite a long way. Anne always said that he had the longest tongue of any dog she had ever known!

The sea was as blue as forget-me-nots as they cycled along beside it. Across the bay they could see little Kirrin Island, with Kirrin Castle towering up.

Doesnt it look fine? said Dick. I half wish we were going to spend Whitsun at Kirrin Cottage, and going bathing, and rowing across to Georges little island over there.

We can do that in the summer hols, said Julian. Its fun to explore other parts of the country when we can. Toby says the caves in Billycock Hill are marvellous.

Whats Toby like? asked George. Weve never seen him, Anne and I.

Hes a bit of a joker, said Dick, Likes to put caterpillars down peoples necks and so on - and beware if he has a magnificent rose in his buttonhole and asks you to smell it.

Why? asked Anne, surprised.

Because when you bend down to smell it youll get a squirt of water in your face, said Dick. Its a trick rose.

I dont think Im going to like him much, said George, who didnt take kindly to tricks of this sort. Ill probably bash him on the head if he does things like that to me.

That wont be any good, said Dick cheerfully. He wont bash you back - hell just think up some worse trick. Dont scowl, George - were on holiday! Tobys all right - a bit of an ass, thats all.

They had now left Kirrin Bay behind and were cycling down a country lane, set with hawthorn hedge each side. The may was over now, and the first wild roses were showing pink here and there. A little breeze got up, and was very welcome indeed.

Well have an ice when we come to a village, said Julian after they had cycled about six miles.

Two ices, said Anne. Oh dear - this hill - what a steep one weve come to. I dont know whether its worse to ride up slowly and painfully, or to get off and push my bike to the top.

Timmy tore up to the top in front of them and then sat down to wait in the cool breeze there, his tongue hanging out longer than ever. Julian came to the top first and looked down the other side.

Theres a village there, he said. Right at the bottom. Lets see - yes, its Tennick village - well stop and

ask if it sells ices.

It did, of course, strawberry and vanilla. The four children sat on a seat under a tree outside the small village shop, and dug little wooden spoons into ice-tubs. Timmy sat nearby, watching hopefully. He knew that at least he would be able to lick out the empty tubs.

Oh, Tim - I didnt mean to buy you one, because you really are a bit fat, said George, looking at the beseeching brown eyes fixed on her ice cream. But as youll probably get very thin running so far while were cycling, Ill buy you a whole one for yourself.

Wuff, said Timmy, bounding into the little shop at once and putting his great paws up on the counter, much to the surprise of the woman behind it.

Its a waste, really, giving Timmy an ice, said Anne when George and the dog came out. He just loosens it with his tongue and gulps it down. I sometimes wonder he doesnt chew up the cardboard tub, too!

After ten minutes rest they all set off again, feeling nice and cool inside. It really was lovely cycling through the June countryside - the trees were so fresh and green still, and the fields they passed were golden with buttercups - thousands and thousands of them, nodding their polished heads in the wind.

There was very little traffic on these deserted country roads - an occasional farm-cart, and sometimes a car, but little else. The Five kept to the lanes as much as they could, for they all preferred their quaint winding curves set with hedges of all kinds, to the wide, dusty main roads, straight and uninteresting.

We ought to get to Billycock Farm about four oclock, said Dick. Or maybe sooner. What time do we have our lunch, Julian? And where?

Well find a good place about one oclock, said Julian. And not a minute before. So its no good anyone saying they are hungry yet. Its only twelve.

Im more thirsty than hungry, said Anne. And Im sure old Timmy must be dying of thirst! Lets stop at the next stream so that he can have a drink.

Theres one, said Dick, pointing to where a stream wound across a nearby field. Hey, Tim - go and have a drink, old fellow!

Timmy shot through the hedge to the stream and began to lap. The others dismounted and stood waiting. Anne picked a spray of honeysuckle and put it through a buttonhole of her blouse. Now I can sniff it all the time, she said. Delicious!

Hey, Tim - leave some water for the fishes! shouted Dick. George, stop him drinking any more. Hes swelling up like a balloon,

Hes not, said George. Timmy! Thats enough! Here, boy, here!

Timmy took one last lap and then raced over to George. He pranced round her, barking joyfully.

There - he feels much better now, said George, and away they all went again, groaning as they cycled slowly up the many hills in that part of the country, and shouting with delight as they sped furiously down the other side.

Julian had decided where to have their midday meal - on the top of a high hill! Then they could see all the country for miles around, and there would also be a nice cooling breeze.

Cheer up, he said as they came to the steepest hill they had so far encountered. Well have our lunch at the top of this hill - and a good long rest!

Thank goodness, panted Anne. Well be as stiff as anything tomorrow!

It really was lovely at the top of the hill! It was so high that they could see the countryside spreading for miles and miles around them.

You can see five counties from here, said Julian. But dont ask me which - Ive forgotten! Lets lie in this heather and have a bit of a rest before we have our lunch.

It was soft and comfortable lying in the springy heather, but Timmy did not approve of a rest before lunch. He wanted his bone! He went to where George had put her bicycle down, and sniffed in her basket. Yes - his bone was most certainly there! He glanced round to make sure that everyone was resting, and nobody watching him. Then he began to nuzzle a paper parcel out of the basket.

Anne was lying nearest to him, and she heard the crackling of the paper and sat up. Timmy! she said, shocked. Oh, Timmy - fancy helping yourself to our sandwiches!

George sat up at once, and Timmy put his tail down, still wagging it a little as if to say, Sorry - but after all, it is my bone!

Oh - he just wants his bone, said George. Hes not after our sandwiches. As if he should take them, Anne! You might have known he wouldnt!

I feel rather like having mine now, said Anne. Julian, cant we have some? - and I do want a drink.

The idea of a drink made everyone long to begin lunch and soon they were unwrapping ham and tomato sandwiches, and enormous slices of Joans fruit cake. Julian found the little cardboard drinking cups, and poured out the orangeade carefully.

This is fine, said Dick, munching his sandwiches and gazing out over the rolling countryside, with its moorlands, its stretches of farmland with the fields of green corn, and its sloping hills. Look - see that hill far away in the distance, Julian - over there - would that be Billycock Hill do you think? Its rather a funny shape.

Ill look through my field-glasses, said Julian, and took them from their leather case. He put them to his eyes and stared hard at the far-away hill that lay to the north of them.

Yes - I think it probably is Billycock Hill, he said. Its got such a queerly-shaped top; it looks a bit like an old Billycock hat.

He handed the glasses round, and everyone looked at the far-off hill. George put the glasses to Timmy's eyes. There you are! she said. Have a squint, Timmy! Julian, it doesn't look so very far away

It's not, as the crow flies, said Julian, taking back his glasses and surveying the countryside around them again. But it's a long, long way through those hundreds of little winding lanes. Any more sandwiches, anyone?

There aren't any more left, said Dick. Or fruit cake either. Have a humbug if you're still hungry,

The humbugs were passed round and Timmy waited hopefully for his turn. George gave him one. No, that's much use to you, she said. You just swallow it without even one suck!

We'll rest for half an hour more, said Julian. Gosh, I do feel sleepy!

They all snuggled down into the soft clumps of heather, and soon they were asleep in the warm sun. Even Timmy snoozed, with one ear half up just in case someone came by. But nobody did. In fact it was so very quiet on the top of the hill that three-quarters of an hour went by before anyone awoke. Anne felt something crawling up her arm and woke with a jump.

Ugh - a big beetle! she said, and shook it off. She glanced at her watch. Dick! Ju! Wake up! We must get on, or we'll never be there by tea-time!

Soon they were once more on their way, tearing down the hill at top speed, shouting as they went, with Timmy barking madly beside them. Really, the start of a holiday was the happiest thing in the world!

Chapter Three

BILLYCOCK FARM

The Five certainly cycled fast that afternoon, and would have arrived at Billycock Hill even sooner than they did if it hadnt been for Timmy. He panted so much in the heat that they stopped for brief rests every fifteen minutes.

Its a pity hes so big and heavy, said Anne. If he had been a small dog we could have taken turns at carrying him in our bicycle baskets.

Billycock Hill was soon very near. It certainly was a queer shape, very like an old-fashioned hat. It was partly heather-clad and partly sloping meadow land. Cows grazed in the meadows, and farther up the hill, where there was shorter, wiry grass, the farmer had put a good many sheep.

Nestling down at the foot of the hill was a rambling old farm-building, with outhouses and stables and a big greenhouse. That must be Billycock Farm, said Julian. Well, weve made very good time, you know - its only half past three. Lets wash our faces in that stream over there - we all look rather hot and dirty. Timmy, you can have a bathe if you want to!

The water was cool and silky to the touch, and the children laved it over their faces and necks, wishing they could do as Timmy was doing - lie down in the stream and let the water flow over him!

Thats better, said Dick, mopping his face with an enormous handkerchief. Now lets go and present ourselves at Billycock Farm. I hope Tobys remembered that were coming - he promised to lend us all we wanted for camping out.

They combed their hair, brushed down their clothes with their hands, and then, feeling more respectable, made their way across a field-path to a farm gate. The field was bumpy, so they rode slowly.

Soon they were in a big farmyard, with hens pecking around them, and ducks swimming on a round duckpond. Farm dogs began barking from somewhere - and then something ran round the corner of the old house - something very small and pink.

Whatever is it? said Anne. Oh - its a pigling! What a pet! Oh, its come right up to us - little pigling, have you escaped from your sty? How clean you are!

The tiny pig gave funny little squeals, and ran up to Timmy, who sat back on his haunches in surprise staring at this unexpected little creature. He thought it must be some sort of dog without any hair.

The pigling butted Timmy gently and Timmy retreated backwards. Julian laughed. Tim cant make it out! he said. No, dont growl, Timmy - its quite harmless!

Hallo - whos this? said Dick as a small figure came round the house. It stopped when it saw the Five.

What a dear little boy! said Anne. Is he Tobys brother?

The child didnt look more than five years old. He had a head of bright yellow curls, big brown eyes, and a grin just like his big brothers.

Thats my pig, he said, coming slowly towards them. He runned away from me.

Anne laughed. Whats your pigs name? she said.

Curly, said the small boy, and pointed at the piglings tail. Hes got a curly tail. It wont go straight.

Its a nice tail, said Anne. The pigling ran to the small boy, and he grabbed it by its tail. You runned away again, he said. Then he picked up the pig and walked off.

Hey! Is this Billycock Farm? called Julian. Have you got a brother called Toby?

Toby? Yes, Tobys over there, said the boy, and he pointed to a big barn. Tobys ratted with Binky.

Right, said Julian. The little boy disappeared with his queer pet, and Julian laughed. Hes rather a pet himself, he said. Come on - lets go and find Toby and Binky. Perhaps Binky is another brother.

Or a dog, said George, and put her hand on Timmys collar. Better be careful. He might go for Tim.

Yes - Binky might be a dog, of course - probably a good ratter, said Julian. Dick and I will go to the barn and you two girls stay here with Timmy.

They went off to the barn. A great noise came from inside as the two boys approached. Shouts and barks and the rap of a stick came to their ears.

Get him, Binky - look, he went under that sack! Oh, you fathead, youve lost him again!

Wuff-wuff-wuff! Rap-rap! More yells! In great curiosity Julian and Dick peered into the rather dark old barn. They saw Toby there, prodding under sacks, with a most excited collie beside him, barking incessantly.

Hey, Toby! yelled Julian, and Toby stood up and turned a red and perspiring face towards the two boys.

Oh - youve arrived! he said, going quickly to the door. I thought you were never coming. Glad to see you! But are there only two of you? I got out tents and things for four.

There are four of us - five counting Timmy, said Julian. Weve left the two girls over there with him - hes our dog. Will yours be friendly or not?

Oh, yes, so long as I introduce them, said Toby, and they all went out of the barn. As soon as Binky, Tobys dog, saw Timmy, he stood still, made himself stiff, and growled, while the hackles on his neck slowly rose up.

Its all right, shouted Toby to the girls. Bring your dog here. Hell be all right with Binky in half a

minute.

Rather doubtfully George brought Timmy across. Timmy was a bit doubtful himself of this big collie. Toby bent down and spoke into Binkys ear.

Binky, shake paws with this nice girl - shes a friend.

He nodded at George. Hold out your hand, he said.

George bent down to the collie and held out her hand. At once the dog put up his paw and allowed her to shake it solemnly.

Now you, said Toby to Anne, and she did the same. She liked this dog Binky, with his bright brown eyes and long, sleek nose.

Does your dog shake hands, too? asked Toby. George nodded, He does? Right - tell him to shake paws with Binky. Binky, shake!

Timmy, shake, commanded George, and very politely and solemnly the two dogs shook paws, eyeing each other cautiously. Timmy gave a sudden little whine - and then the two were tearing round the yard together, barking furiously, chasing one another, rolling over, and having a wonderful game.

Thats all right, then, said Toby, pleased. Binkys quite all right with anyone, human or animal, so long as he can shake hands with them. Ive taught him that. But hes a dud ratter! He just cant seem to nip a rat. Well - lets go and see my mother. Shes expecting you. Shes got a whopping great tea.

This was all very satisfactory! Just the kind of welcome the Five liked. Anne looked sideways at Toby. She thought he was rather nice. George wasnt so sure. He had a rose in his buttonhole - was it a trick one, and was he going to ask her to smell it?

We saw a little yellow-haired boy just now, said Anne. With a tiny pigling.

Oh, thats Benny with his pet pig, said Toby, laughing. He calls it Curly - and he adores it! Weve offered him a kitten or a puppy - but no, he wants that pigling. They go everywhere together - like Mary and her lamb! Bennys a pet - he really is. Kid brothers are usually a nuisance, you know, but Benny isnt.

Kid sisters are a bit of a nuisance sometimes, too, said Dick, glancing slyly at Anne, who at once gave him a determined punch. Still - Annes not too bad, is she, Ju?

Tobys mother, Mrs Thomas, was a plump and jolly woman, with a smile as wide as Tobys and Bennys. She made them all very welcome.

Come along in, she said. Tobys pleased youre going to camp hereabouts - hes got all the tents and rugs youll need - and you can come every day and get eggs and milk and bread and butter and anything else you need from here. Dont be afraid to ask!

There was suddenly the scamper of little hooves and Curly the pigling came running indoors.

There, now! said Tobys mother. Theres that pigling again. Benny, Benny - you are NOT to let Curly come indoors. Cats I dont mind, nor dogs - but pigs I wont have. Benny!

Benny appeared, looking most apologetic. Sorry, Mum - but hes lively today. Oooh, I say - what a tea. Can we have some yet?

Ill just make the tea - unless youd rather have some of our creamy milk? said Tobys mother.

Oh, milk, please, Mrs Thomas, said Anne, and they all said the same. Nothing could be nicer than icy cold, creamy farm milk from the dairy on a hot day like this.

They all sat down to tea, and the four visitors wished they had not had such a big lunch! A large ham sat on the table, and there were crusty loaves of new bread. Crisp lettuces, dewy and cool, and red radishes were side by side in a big glass dish. On the sideboard was an enormous cake, and beside it a dish of scones. Great slabs of butter and jugs of creamy milk were there, too, with honey and home-made jam.

I wish I was hungry, really hungry, said Dick. This is just the kind of meal for a hungry day.

I didnt think youd have had much lunch, said Mrs Thomas. Now then, Toby - youre the host. See to your guests, please - and, Benny, take the pigling off your knee. I will not have him at the table.

Curly will be very upset if he sees that ham, said Toby slyly. Thats his grandfather!

Benny put Curly down hurriedly, afraid that his feelings might be hurt. The pigling went to sit beside Timmy, who, very much surprised, but rather pleased, at once made room for him.

It was a very happy meal, and Toby was a good host. Anne sat beside little Benny, and found herself liking him more than ever. Hes like a little boy out of a story, she said to George. He and Curly ought to be put into a book!

Well now, said Mrs Thomas after everyone had eaten their fill, what are your plans? Toby, show them where you have put their tents and everything. Then they can decide where they are going to camp.

Come on, then, said Toby, and Benny and Curly and Binky all came along, too. You can help to carry everything - and well go up on Billycock Hill and find a fine camping place. How I wish I could camp out with you too!

Away they all went, feeling rather full but very happy. Where should they camp? How lovely to sleep out at nights, and see the stars through the opening in the tent!

Chapter Four

A FINE CAMPING-PLACE

Toby had put all the camping-out gear in a nearby barn. He took the Five there, with Benny and the pigling trailing after. Binky came, too, so friendly now with Timmy that they trotted along side by side, occasionally pushing against each other like schoolboys!

Julian and Dick looked at the pile of canvas, the pegs and the ropes. Yes, these two tents would do very well, though if the weather stayed like this they would hardly need tents! They could lay their rugs out on the springy heather.

This is fine, Toby, said Julian gratefully. Youve even provided a kettle and a frying-pan.

Well, you might want to cook a meal, said Toby. Or boil soup. Theres a saucepan for that - ah, here it is!

He picked it up and promptly put it on Bennys head, where it stuck tightly on his yellow curls. Benny yelled and ran at Toby, hitting him with his fists. The little pig rushed away in fright and disappeared round a corner.

Anne took the saucepan off poor Bennys head. Youre all right! she said. It was a funny hat to wear, wasnt it?

Curlys runned away again! wept Benny, and he pummelled the laughing Toby. I hate you, I hate you!

You go and find him, said Toby, fending off the angry small boy, and Benny ran off on his fat little legs.

Well, weve got rid of him for a few minutes, said Toby. Now - is there anything Ive forgotten? Youve got torches, I suppose? What about candles - and matches?

Weve got those, too, said Dick. And weve brought macs and swimsuits - but thats about all. I see youve put a couple of rugs here as well in case were cold!

Well, it might turn wet and chilly, said Toby. Of course, if it snows, or anything like that, youll have to come and borrow some more rugs! Now, shall I help you to fix them on your bikes?

It was too difficult to fix everything on to the four bikes, and in the end Toby found a handcart and the children piled everything into that.

Well fetch our bikes some other time, said Julian.

Leave them here! said Toby. Theyll be all right. Are you going now? Well, Ill get a package Mothers got ready for you - you know, ham and new-laid eggs and bread and butter and the rest.

Its most awfully good of her, said Julian gratefully. Well, lets start - weve got everything in the handcart now. Well just wait for the food. Dick, you and I can push this handcart together. It will need two of us up the hill - and I vote we camp on the side of the slope somewhere, so that we can get a good view.

Toby came back with an enormous package of food. Benny came with him, Curly trotting behind. Benny carried a basket of ripe strawberries.

I picked them for you, he said, and handed them to Anne.

What beauties! she said, and gave the smiling child a hug. We shall enjoy them, Benny.

Can I come and see your camp when youve builded it? he asked. Can I bring Curly? Hes never seen a camp.

Yes, of course you can, said Anne. Are we ready now, Julian? What about milk? Mrs Thomas said we could take some.

Oh, yes - I forgot that, said Toby. Its in the dairy. He sped off with Binky, and the others arranged everything neatly in the useful little handcart. Toby came back with the milk - two big bottles. They were stacked carefully in a corner of the cart.

Well, were ready now, I think, said Julian, and he and Dick began to push the cart down the path to the gate. Timmy and Binky trotted on ahead, and everyone else followed. Benny came as far as the gate with Curly, then Toby sent him back.

You know what Mother said, Benny, he said. Youre not to come with us now - itll be too late when Binky and I come back.

Bennys mouth went down, but he didnt attempt to follow them. He picked Curly up in his arms in case the pigling should run away after the others.

Bennys a pet, said Anne. I wish I had a little brother like that.

Hes all right, said Toby. A bit of a cry-baby, though. Im trying to bring him up properly - teasing him out of his babyishness, and making him stand on his own feet.

He seems to be able to do that all right, said Dick. My word - the way he went for you when you put that saucepan on his head! He pummelled you right and left!

Bennys a funny little kid, said Toby, giving a hand with the cart as they reached the slope of the hill. Hes always having queer pets. Two years ago he had a lamb that followed him everywhere. Last year he had two goslings that followed him about - and when they grew into geese they still followed him. They waddled all the way upstairs one day!

And this year hes got a pig! said George, who, like Anne, was very much amused with Benny. Dont you think Timmy was very funny with Curly? Im sure he still thinks its a puppy without any hair!

They made their way up the hill, following a narrow sheep-path. The handcart bumped and wobbled,

and soon it needed four or five pairs of hands to push it.

How much farther? panted Toby at last. Surely youre not going right to the top?

No, said Julian. About halfway up. We do want to have a good view, Toby, Not very much farther up, should think. But lets have a bit of rest, shall we?

They sat down, glad to get their breath. Certainly the view was magnificent. Far away on the horizon were purplish hills, and in front of them stretched miles and miles of green and golden countryside. Green for growing corn and grass - gold for the buttercups, which were at their best in this sunny week of June.

I like those silvery threads here and there winding about the green fields, said Anne. Little streams - rivers - curving like snakes all about! And I like the dark green patches that are woods.

Whats that just down there? asked George, pointing to what looked like an enormous field with great sheds in the centre.

Thats an airfield, said Toby promptly. A bit hush-hush. Secret planes tried out, and all that. I know all about it because a cousin of mine is there - hes a flight-lieutenant. He comes to see us sometimes and tells me things. Its an experimental place.

Whats that, exactly? asked Anne.

Well - where new ideas are tried out, said Toby. They deal mostly with very small planes down there - one-man fighter planes, I think. Dont be scared if you hear noises from the airfield sometimes - bangs and bursts. I dont know what they are, of course - its all to do with their experiments.

I wish I could visit the airfield, said Dick. Im keen on planes. Im going to fly one when Im older.

Youd better meet my cousin, then, said Toby. He might take you up in one.

I should like to meet him, said Dick, delighted. So would Julian.

Wed better get on now, said Julian, standing up. We wont go much higher - the view cant be much better anywhere else!

George and Anne went on ahead to find a good camping-place, while the three boys pushed the cart slowly over the heather. But it was Timmy who found the right place! He ran on ahead, feeling thirsty, so when he heard the sound of running water he ran to it at once.

From under a jutting rock gushed a little spring. It rippled down a rocky shelf and lost itself in a mass of lush greenery below. Rushes grew to mark the way it went, and George's sharp eyes could follow its path for quite a long way down the hill, outlined by the dark line of rushes.

Julian! Look what Timmys found! she called as she watched him lap from the clear spring water. A little spring gushing out of the hillside! Hadnt we better camp near it?

Jolly good idea! shouted back Julian, and left the handcart to come and see. Yes, this is just the place

A fine view - plenty of spring heather to camp on - and water laid on quite near!

Everyone agreed that it was a fine place, and soon all the gear was taken from the handcart. The tents were not erected, for everyone meant to sleep under the stars that night, the evening was so warm. Nobody wanted to lie in a stuffy tent!

Anne unpacked the food parcel, wondering where would be the coolest place for a larder. She went over to the rock from which gushed the crystal-clear spring water. She pushed away the rushes around and discovered a kind of small cave hollowed out of the rock below the spring.

It would be as cool as anything in there, thought Anne, and put her hand through the falling water into the cave-like hole. Yes, it was icy cold! Was it big enough to hold the milk bottles and everything? Just about, she thought.

Anne loved arranging anything, and she was soon at work putting away the food and the milk into her queer larder. George laughed when she saw it.

Just like you, Anne! she said. Well, wed better put a towel by the spring, for certainly we shall get soaked every time we get out any food!

Tell Timmy hes not to try and poke his head into my larder, said Anne, pushing Timmy away. Oh, no hes all wet. Go and shake yourself somewhere else, Timmy - youre showering me with drops of water!

Toby had to leave them, for it was already past his supper-time. See you tomorrow! he said. How I wish I was staying up here with you! So long!

Away he went down the hill with Binky at his heels. The Five looked at one another and grinned.

Hes nice - but its good to be alone again - just us Five, said George. Come on - lets settle in. This is the best camp weve ever had!

Chapter Five

THE FIRST NIGHT - AND A MORNING VISITOR

Whats the time? said Julian, looking at his watch. Good gracious - its almost eight oclock! Anyone feel tired?

Yes, said Dick, Anne and George, and even Timmy joined in with his deepest Woof.

With all that bicycling and then pushing that heavy cart up the hill, I can hardly move! said Dick. I vote we have a simple supper - something out of Annes little larder - and then spread our rugs over some thick heather and sleep under the sky. Even up here, with a breeze, its warm. I should be stifled in a tent.

Well, were all agreed on that, said Julian. Anne, what do you suggest for a light supper?

Bread, butter and some of Mrs Thomass farm cheese, said Anne promptly. With a tomato or two if you like - and icy-cold milk and Bennys strawberries to finish with. That is - if the milk has had time to get cold in the little hole under the spring.

Sounds jolly good, said Julian. What do you think, Timmy ? Anne, if you and George get the supper ready, Dick and I will prepare our heathery beds. Then we can all turn in as soon as possible. I honestly feel that once I sit down or lie down Ill not be able to get up again!

Same here, said Dick, and went off with Julian to find the best place for sleeping. They soon found one. They came across a giant of a gorse bush, thick, prickly and still full of golden blooms. In front of it was a stretch of very close-set heather, as springy as the best mattress in the world. Dick sat down on it and grinned at Julian.

Just made for us! he said. We shall sleep like tops here. We hardly need a rug to lie on, its so close-grown. Help me up, Ju - my legs wont do anything now Ive sat down!

Julian pulled him up and they called to the girls: Anne! George! Bring the supper here. Weve found a good place. Its by this giant gorse bush.

The girls came along with the meal, and the boys fetched a couple of rugs from the pile of things that they had brought in the handcart. They spread them on the heather.

I say! This certainly is a good place, said George, coming up with Anne and Timmy, carrying a loaf of bread, a pat of butter and tomatoes. Anne had the milk and the cheese. Timmy was carrying a little bag of his own biscuits.

The gorse bush will shelter us from too much wind, said Dick, taking the milk from Anne. Its an ideal spot - and the view is superb.

It was a very happy supper they had, sitting in the heather, while the sun sank lower and lower in the

west. The evenings were very light now, and certainly they would not need candles! They finished up everything, and then went to wash at the little spring that bubbled out so cheerfully.

They lay down on their rugs in the heather while it was still daylight. Good night! said Dick, and promptly fell fast asleep. Good night! called Julian, and lay for a few seconds looking at the view, which was now becoming dim and blue.

Timmy kept the two girls awake for a minute or two, trying to squeeze in between them. Do keep still, Timmy, said George. And just remember youre on guard, even though I dont expect there is anyone nearer than a mile - and that will be at Billycock Farm! Lie still now, or Ill push you off the rug! Good night, Anne.

George was soon asleep, and so was Timmy, tired out with so many miles of running. Anne lay awake for a few minutes, looking at the evening star which shone large and golden in the sky. She felt very happy. I dont want to grow up, she thought. There cant be anything nicer in the world than this - being with the others, having fun with them. No - I dont want to grow up!

Then she, too, fell asleep, and night came quietly down, with stars brilliant in the sky, and very little noise to be heard anywhere - just the gurgling of the spring some way away, and the far-off bark of some dog - perhaps Binky at the farm. The breeze died down, so that even that could not be heard.

No one except Timmy awoke at all that night. Timmy put up one ear when he heard a squeak just above his head. It came again and he opened one eye. It was a small black bat circling and swooping, hunting for insects. Its squeak was so high that only Timmys quick ear caught it. He put down his listening ear and went to sleep again.

Nobody stirred until a very loud noise awakened them. R-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r! R-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r! They all woke up with a jump and the boys sat up straight, startled. What could it be?

Its a plane, said Julian, staring up at a small aeroplane flying over the hill. It must be one from that airfield down there! I say - its five past nine! Five past nine - weve slept for nearly twelve hours!

Well, Im going to sleep for some more, said Dick, snuggling down into his heathery bed again and shutting his eyes.

No, youre not, said Julian, giving him a shove. Its too good a day to waste in any more sleep. Hey, you girls - are you awake?

Yes, called George, sitting up, rubbing her eyes. That aeroplane wakened me. Annes awake, too - and you can see that Timmy is; hes gone after a rabbit or something.

Well all go and wash at the spring, said Anne, scrambling off the rug. And George and I will get breakfast. Anyone like a boiled egg?

The sun shone down out of a blue sky, and the little breeze awoke and began to blow again. They washed in the cold water, and Timmy drank it, lapping it thirstily as it splashed down over his nose. Then they had their breakfast.

It was easy to make a little fire in the shelter of the giant gorse bush, and boil the eggs in the saucepan

Bread and butter and tomatoes completed the simple meal, with cold creamy milk to wash it down.

In the middle of this Timmy began to bark frantically, but as his tail was wagging all the time, the others guessed that it must be Toby coming. They heard Binkys answering bark, and then the dog himself appeared, panting and excited. He greeted Timmy first of all, and then ran round to give everyone a lick.

Hallo, hallo, hallo! came Tobys voice, and he appeared round the gorse bush. Had a good night? I say arent you late - still having your breakfast? My word, youre sleepy-heads! Ive been up since six. Ive milked cows and cleaned out a shed, and fed the hens and collected the eggs.

The Five immediately felt ashamed of themselves! They gazed at Toby in admiration - why, he was quite a farmer!

Ive brought you some more milk, bread and eggs and cake, he said, and put down a basket.

Jolly good of you, said Julian. We must pay for any food we get from your farm, you know that. Any idea of how much we owe for yesterdays food and for what youve brought today?

Well, my mother says you dont need to pay her, said Toby. But I know you mean to - so I suggest that you pay me each time and Ill put the money into a box and buy my mother a smashing present at the end - from you all. Will that do?

Thats a good idea, said Julian. We couldnt possibly accept food if we didnt pay for it - but I know what mothers are - they dont like being paid in money for their kindness! So well do what you say. Now, reckon up what we owe so far, and Ill pay you.

Right, said Toby in a business-like way, Ill charge you market prices, not top prices. Ill just tot up the bill while youre cleaning up and putting away what Ive brought.

The girls washed-up in the spring, and the boys carried everything there for Anne to put in her larder. Toby presented Julian with a neatly-written bill, which he at once paid. Toby receipted the bill and gave it back.

There you are - all business-like, he said. Thanks very much. What are you going to do today? There are super caves to be explored if you like - or theres the Butterfly Farm - or you can just come down on our farm for the day.

No, not today, said Julian, afraid that they might make themselves a nuisance to Mrs Thomas. I dont feel like seeing caves this morning either - so dark and eerie on such a sunny day. What shall we do, girls?

But before they could decide Binky and Timmy began to bark, each dog standing quite still, facing the same way - towards the giant gorse bush.

Who is it, Tim? asked George. Go and see! Go on, then!

Timmy ran behind the bush, followed by Binky, and then the children heard a surprised voice.

Hallo, Binky! What are you doing all the way up here? And whos your friend?

Its Mr Gringle, said Toby. One of the men who own the Butterfly Farm. Hes often up here with his net because its a wonderful place for butterflies.

A man came round the gorse bush - rather a peculiar figure, untidy, with glasses slipping down his nose, and his hair much too long. He carried a big butterfly net and stopped when he saw the five children.

Hallo! he said. Who are all these, Toby? Quite a crowd!

Friends of mine, Mr Cringle, said Toby solemnly. Allow me to introduce them. Julian Kirrin, Dick Kirrin, Anne Kirrin, George Kirrin, their cousin - and their dog Timothy.

Ha - pleased to meet you! said Mr Gringle, and came shambling forward, his big butterfly net over his shoulder. Behind his glasses shone curiously bright eyes. He nodded his head to each of the four cousins. Three boys - and a girl. Very nice lot, too. You dont look as if youll leave litter about or start fires in this lovely countryside.

We shouldnt dream of it, said George, delighted that he had thought she was a boy. Nothing pleased George as much as that! Mr Gringle - could we see your Butterfly Farm, please? We would so like to

Of course, my dear boy, of course, said Mr Gringle, and his eyes shone as if he were very pleased. We dont often have visitors, so its quite an event when somebody comes along. This way, this way!

Chapter Six

THE BUTTERFLY FARM

Mr Gringle led the way down the hill by a little path so overgrown that it was hardly possible to see it. Halfway down the little company heard a squealing noise - and then an excited little voice.

Toby, Toby! Im here! Can I come with you?

Its Benny - and the pigling! said Anne, amused at the little couple making their way excitedly toward them. Timmy ran to Curly and sniffed him all over, still not quite sure that he wasnt some kind of strange Puppy.

What are you doing up here? said Toby sternly. You know youre not supposed to wander too far from the farm. Youll get lost one of these days, Benny.

Curly runned away, said Benny, looking up at his big brother with wide brown eyes.

You mean you wanted to find out where Id gone so you came after me with Curly, said Toby.

Curly runned away, he runned fast! said Benny, looking as if he was going to cry.

Youre a scoundrel, Benny, said Toby. You make that pigling of yours an excuse for getting about all over the place. You wait till Dad hears it - youll get such a spanking. Well - tail on to us now - were going to the Butterfly Farm. And if Curly runs away, let him! Im tired of that pig.

Ill carry him, said Benny, and picked up the little creature in his arms. But he soon had to put him down, for Curly squealed so loudly that Timmy and Binky both leapt round him in great concern.

Hm - well - shall we proceed? asked Mr Gringle, walking on in front. Quite a party we have today.

Are your butterflies afraid of pigs or dogs? asked Benny, trotting beside him. Shall we leave them outside?

Dont ask idiotic questions, Benny, said Toby. Then he gave a cry and caught Mr Gringles arm. I say sir - look at that butterfly. Dont you want to catch it? Is it rare?

No, said Mr Gringle rather coldly. Its a meadow-brown - very common indeed. Dont they teach you anything at school? Fancy not knowing that!

Julian, do we have any butterfly lessons? asked Toby with a grin. I say, Mr Gringle, what about you coming and teaching us about Cabbage Butterflies and Cauliflower Moths, and Red Admirals and Blue Captains and Peacock Butterflies and Ostrich Moths and...

Dont be an ass, Toby, said Julian, seeing that Mr Gringle had no sense of humour at all, and did not think this in the least funny. Mr Gringle, are there many rare butterflies about here?

Oh, yes, yes, said the Butterfly Man. But not only that - there are so many of all kinds here, and it is easy to catch as many as I want for breeding purposes. One butterfly means hundreds of eggs, you know - and we hatch them out and sell them.

He suddenly made a dart to one side, almost knocking George over. Sorry, boy! he said, making the others smile, sorry! There's a Brown Argus there - a lovely specimen, first I've seen this year! Stand clear, will you.

The children - and the dogs, too - stood still as he tiptoed towards a small dark brown butterfly spreading its tiny wings as it sat on a flowering plant. With a swift downwards swoop the net closed over the plant, and in a trice the Butterfly Man had caught the fluttering insect. He pinched the net inwards, and showed the children the tiny creature.

There you are - a female Brown Argus, one of the family of the Blue Butterflies you see so often in full summer. She'll lay me plenty of eggs and they'll all hatch into fat little slug-like caterpillars, and.

But this isn't a blue butterfly, said Anne, looking through the fine net. It's dark brown, with a row of pretty orange spots along the margins of its wings.

All the same, it belongs to the Blue Butterfly family, said Mr Gringle, taking it out with the gentlest fingers and putting it into a tin case slung round his shoulders. It's probably come up from one of those hay meadows down in the valley there. In you go, my little beauty!

Mr Gringle, quick - here's a most lovely butterfly! called George. It's got greeny-black front wings with red spots, and lovely red back wings with dark green borders. Oh, quick - I'm sure you want this one!

That's not a butterfly, said Dick, who knew a good deal about them.

I should think not! said Mr Gringle, getting his net poised ready to swoop. It's a moth - a lovely little thing! Down went his net and the pretty little red and green insect fluttered in surprise inside it.

But moths don't fly in the daytime, argued George. Only at night.

Rubbish! said Mr Gringle, looking at the moth through the thick lens of his glasses. What are boys coming to nowadays? In my boyhood nearly every boy knew that there are night-time and daytime ones as well!

But, began George again, and stopped as Mr Gringle gave her quite a glare.

This is a Six-Spot Burnet Day-Flying Moth, he said, speaking slowly as if he were addressing a very small child. It loves to fly in the hot sunshine. Please do not argue with me. I don't like ignorance of this sort.

George looked rather mutinous and Dick nudged her. He's right, fathead, he said in a low voice. You don't know much about moths, so say nothing, George, or he won't let us go with him.

I'd like two or three more of these Six-Spots highly-coloured and unusually large. Perhaps you would see if you can find any more, all of you.

Everybody began to look here and there, and to shake any little bush or clump of grass they passed. ~~Timmy and Binky were most interested in this and began a hunt on their own, sniffing and snuffling everywhere, not quite sure what they were looking for, but enjoying it all the same.~~

Mr Gringle took a long time to get to his Butterfly Farm, and the children began to wish they hadn't asked to go. There was so much sidestepping to see this and that, so much examining when a specimen was caught, so much talky-talk, as Dick whispered to Anne.

Do you keep your butterflies and moths in those glass-houses? asked Julian.

Yes, said Mr Gringle. Come along - I'll show you what I and my friend Mr Brent do. He's away today, so you can't meet him.

It was certainly a queer place. The cottage looked as if it were about to fall down at any moment. Two of the windows were broken and some tiles had fallen off the roof. But the glass-houses were in good repair, and the glass panes were perfectly clean. Evidently the Butterfly Men thought more of their butterflies and moths than they did of themselves.

Do you live here all alone with Mr Brent, your friend? asked Dick curiously, thinking that it must be a strange and lonely life.

Oh, no. Old Mrs Janes does for us, said Mr Gringle. And sometimes her son comes here to do any small repairs, and to clean all the glass of the butterfly houses. There's the old lady, look. She can't be afraid of insects of any sort, so she never comes into the glass houses.

An old woman, looking exactly like a witch, peered out at them through a window in the cottage. Anne was quite scared to see her. Toby grinned. She's quite harmless, he said to Anne. Our cook knows her because she often comes to us for eggs and milk. She's got no teeth at all, so she mutters and mumbles and that makes her seem more like a witch than ever.

I don't much like the look of her, said Anne, going thankfully into the first of the butterfly houses. Oh, what a lot of butterflies!

There certainly were! Hundreds were flying about loose, and many others were in little compartments either by themselves or with another butterfly to match,

The children saw that many bushes and plants were growing in the glass-house, and on some of them were placed long sleeves made of muslin, tied in at each end.

What's in these long sleeves of fine muslin? asked Dick. Oh - I see. They are full of caterpillars! My word, how they are eating, too!

Yes. I told you we breed butterflies and moths, said Mr Gringle, and he opened the end of one of the muslin bags, so that the visitors could see the caterpillars better. These are the caterpillars of one kind of butterfly; they feed on this particular plant.

The children gazed at scores of green caterpillars, marked with red and yellow spots, all eating greedily on the leaves of the twig enclosed there. Mr Gringle undid another of the muslin bags and showed them some huge caterpillars, each of them green, with purple stripes on the side and a curious

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