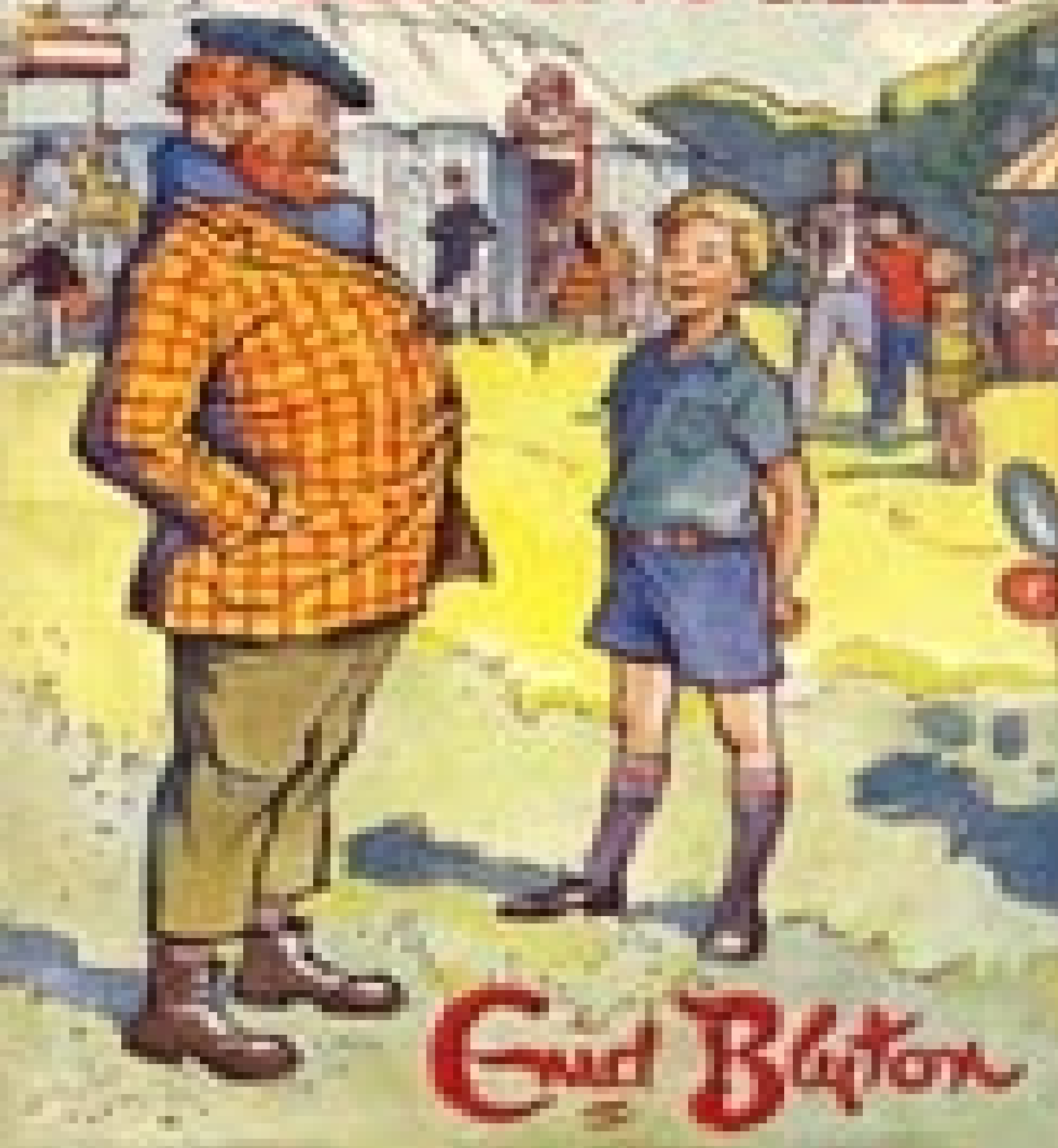


THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING MAN



Edw. B. Dalton

Im going to buy some Easter eggs, said Pip, at breakfast-time. Are you coming too, Bets? Then we might go and call on old Fatty.

Oh yes - lets! said Bets. Ive only seen him once since he came back from school, and then he was with Mrs. Trotteville and we couldnt say much.

Well call in and tell Larry and Daisy to come too, said Pip. We might go and have buns and coffee at the dairy. Mother, do you want anything in the village?

No - unless you like to buy yourself an alarm clock, said Mrs. Hilton, buttering her toast. Pip stared.

What for? he said. Ive got a watch.

Bets giggled. You mean he might get up in time for breakfast then, Mother! she said.

Ha! Funny joke, said Pip. Anyway, no alarm clock would wake me if Im really asleep. Besides, Mother - Ive only just come back from a very, very hard terms work, and as for the exams last week, well I bet you wouldnt get top marks any more than I shall. Ive not slept well for weeks, worrying about my marks.

I suppose that means that youll be somewhere near the bottom again, said Pips father, putting down his morning paper for a moment. Well, we shall know the worst in a few days time when your report comes.

Pip changed the subject quickly - a trick at which he was very good. Dad, what do you want for Easter? he asked. I did think of getting you some of that tobacco you like - and Mother, I suppose you wouldnt like a marzipan egg, would you, I know you like marzipan, and...

The trick worked. Both his parents had to smile. His mother tapped him on the hand. All right, all right, we wont mention reports till after Easter. And yes, I do like marzipan. Now, do you want to finish the toast - because if so Ill leave you to it. Bets, remember to make your bed and dust your room before you go out. AND - please dont forget that dinner is at one o'clock sharp.

The telephone bell shrilled out as Mrs. Hilton left the table. She went into the hall to answer it and called back into the room almost at once.

Its Fatty - he wants to speak to one of you. You go, Bets, youve finished your meal.

Bets flew to the telephone. Hallo! Hallo, Fatty!

Hallo, little Bets! said a warm, lively voice on the telephone. What about meeting somewhere this morning? Ive got a spot of Easter shopping to do.

Oh yes, Fatty! said Bets eagerly. Pip and I were just thinking the same. Lets meet at the dairy, shall we - for buns and coffee. Say at quarter to eleven.

Right, said Fatty. Will you tell Larry and Daisy, or shall I?

We will, said Bets. Have you got any news, Fatty? Anything exciting happening?

She heard Fattys laugh at the other end of the phone. What do you mean? You surely dont think Ive got a mystery up my sleeve already? Not a hope! As a matter of fact, Im rather fed-up about something. Tell you when I see you. So long!

Bets put down her receiver, and went to tell Pip. He was eating the last piece of toast and was alone in the room. My word! said Bets, eyeing the toast, I never in my life saw so much marmalade spread on a small bit of toast.

Oh, shut up, said Pip. You wait till you go to boarding school - youll know how nice it is to get home and not have to share the marmalade with about twenty others at your table. What did Fatty say?

Bets told him. Fine! said Pip. Well, you buck up and make our beds, and...

You jolly well make your own," said Bets, indignantly, and went out of the room. She went up the stairs two at a time, feeling happy. Holidays were good - she wasnt all alone then, the only one going to a day-school. All five of them were together - and Buster. Fattys little Scottie too - that made six.

Pip and Bets called for Larry and Daisy at half-past ten, and all four made their way to the village and went to their favourite little dairy. Fatty wasnt there yet, so they sat down and ordered currant buns with butter, and hot coffee. With plenty of milk, said Larry, and you neednt put in the sugar. Well help ourselves.

Fatty was five minutes late. He arrived on his bicycle, with Buster running beside the pedals. He came in, grinning as usual, and swung Bets out of her chair and up in the air. Then he put her down with a groan.

No - I shant be able to do that much longer, Bets. Youre growing too big! My word, youre a weight.

Weve ordered buns and coffee for you, Fatty, said Pip. Fatty sat down and gave a heavy sigh.

Ill have the coffee. But not the buns, he said, to everyones astonishment. They stared at him.

Not the buns, said Daisy. But - but you always eat twice as many as we do.

I know. But Im slimming, said Fatty. Havent you noticed my elegant figure?

They all looked at him earnestly, running their eyes up and down him.

Well - I cant see much difference, said Pip, at last. Anyway - why ever are you slimming, Fatty? I thought you liked eating.

Oh, I do, I do, said Fatty. But the school captain wants me to be in the First Tennis Team next term - and I dont fancy hurling myself about the court in boiling hot weather if I weigh about eleven stone.

I didnt know you were so good at tennis, said Larry, astonished.

Neither did I, said Fatty, modestly. But I was just fooling about with a racquet and balls on a hard tennis court ~~one sunny day last term, and old Dickory Dock - thats our head-boy - came up and - er - well - I hardly like to go on.~~

You neednt, said Larry. It seems a funny thing to me how many people think youre a Wonder at this, that and the other. Here Ive been training myself at school for terms on end, trying to get into the football team or the cricket, or even the swimming, and I cant. And you just fool about somewhere and along comes the Head or the Captain or some big noise...

And says, Trotteville, youre the worlds marvel. Do us the honour of belonging to the First Tennis Team, finished Pip. Its not really fair. And youre always top of your form - and Im never higher than ninth, and I have to slog like anything to get there - and you never seem to do any work at all. Gosh, Fatty, if I didnt like you as much as I do Id loathe you.

Fatty laughed, and helped himself to a bun. Then he sobered down and looked thoughtful. Its not going to be funny, though, this tennis business, he said. Ive sworn to get my weight down these hols. I can smash the balls over the net all right, and place them as cunningly as the next man - and I can take a cannon-ball service without blinking an eyelid - but its this running about the court that gets me. I put up like a grampus.

Well, youll just have to slim then, Fatty, said Bets, feeling very sympathetic. Well all help you. What are you going to do besides cut down your eating?

Im going to do cross-country running each day - or I might do it at night, when theres not so much traffic, said Fatty. Youve seen chaps tearing along all by themselves in white drawers and singlets, havent you? Grim and aloof and determined - and usually frightfully skinny. Well, I shall be grim and aloof and determined - though I havent much hope of getting really skinny.

Everyone laughed at the idea of Fatty being skinny. Well, youve eaten three buns already, said Pip. I suppose you didnt notice? Or did you think youd start slimming after Easter?

Fatty groaned. Have I really had three? Thats what comes of having hardly any breakfast. I get so hungry in the middle of the morning. Here, Buster, you can have my fourth bun.

Buster was only too pleased. He gulped it down and looked up for more. Busters doing well out of my slimming, said Fatty. I keep forgetting about it, and when I remember I hand him whatever on my plate.

So thats why hes so plump, said Pip. Youll have to take him cross-country running too, Fatty. Hes all tummy.

Fatty - you said on the telephone this morning that you were fed up about something, said Bets, remembering. What did you mean?

Oh yes, said Fatty, absentmindedly helping himself to a lump of sugar from the basin. Well, its this - theres some kind of peculiar Conference going to be held here in Peterswood after Easter - next week I think - and one of the members is going to stay with us - hes a friend of my father - went to school with him or something.

Well - but why are you fed-up about that? asked Larry. You wont need to entertain him, surely? Hell be some old fogey who spends his days at the Conference, wont he?

Oh yes - but hes bringing his awful daughter, said Fatty. At least - Ive never seen her - but I bet shell be awful. Mother says shes an only child, and that her mother died when she was two, so shes been brought up by her father. And Im supposed to entertain her.

There was a horrified silence. Gosh! said Pip at last. That is bad news. Either weve got to do without your company these hols, Fatty - or youve got to bring the girl with you wherever we go.

Thats just about it, said Fatty, gloomily, and took another bun. Nobody noticed, and he was halfway through it when he remembered that he was slimming. He looked at the bun in disgust.

Why did you sit on that dish looking so new and curranty? he frowned. Well - I cant put you back - and Busters almost bursting, I should think. Here goes! And he munched the other half, still looking gloomy.

Whens this girl coming? asked Bets. I do think its too bad, Fatty. Why should you have to entertain her? Why cant your mother?

Well, you know how busy my mother is, with committees and things, said Fatty. She rushed off to something or other this morning and said, Well, Frederick, I know I can depend on you to make Eunice feel at home - and dont forget to meet her and her father on the eleven-fifty train....

Eunice! said Daisy. Goodness, what an unusual name. But look at the clock, Fatty - you wont be in time to meet them - its eleven-forty-five already!

Oh, my goodness! cried Fatty, leaping to his feet. I must go. No, its all right. That clocks fast. What about you all coming with me to the station and seeing what our dear Eunice is like? Come on!

They paid the bill hurriedly and went out of the little shop, all looking gloomy. Yes - no wonder Fatty felt fed-up. Blow Eunice - she would spoil everything!

They hurried up the road, and past the Town Hall. Look, that's where the Conference is going to be, said Larry, pointing to a large notice. Four meetings next week - and look, it says All Coleopterists are invited to attend. Whatever are Coleopterists?

Colly-what? asked Bets. Fatty, what are these colly-people?

Owners of collie dogs? suggested Pip. Or growers of cauliflowers?

Or sufferers from colly-wobbles? said Daisy, with a laugh.

Ass, said Fatty. They're... hallo, look out - here's Mr. Goon on his bicycle. My word - I ought to offer him a few hints about a slimming diet.

Mr. Goon bore down on them, his uniform almost bursting at the seams. He was not at all pleased to see the Five, and even less pleased to see Buster, who immediately flew at his ankles. Goon kicked out at him.

That dog! he said in disgust. Call him off! So you're back again for the holidays, are you? Well, no meddling in what isn't your business, see? I'm going to be busy the next week or two, what with a fair coming here, and that there Conference of colly - colly - er...

Collie-dog breeders? suggested Fatty, innocently.

Oh - so that's what they are, is it? said Goon, with displeasure. Bringing a whole lot of dogs with them then, I shouldn't wonder. Dogs! As if we hadn't got enough running about in this town!

He kicked out at Buster again, but the little Scottie kept well out of reach. You'd better keep that dog yours on the lead, if there's collie-dogs wandering about, he said. Vicious, some of them are - and they'd make mincemeat of that dog of yours. Good thing too!

And away sailed Goon on his bicycle, feeling very pleased at having ticked off the five children. Buster sent a volley of barks after him.

Don't say such rude things, Buster, said Fatty, gravely. Remember that other dogs are listening.

Bets giggled. Oh, Fatty - whatever made you tell Mr. Goon about Pip's silly idea of collie-dog breeders? Hell be watching out for collie-dogs everywhere!

Anyway - what are Coleopterists? asked Daisy. Don't you know, Fatty! I thought you knew everything.

Of course I know, said Fatty, wheeling his bicycle along more quickly, as he caught sight of a clock. Coleopterists are lovers of beetles.

This announcement was greeted with exclamations of utter disbelief.

Fibber! Nobody loves beetles! Ugh!

Fatty - were not as stupid as Goon.

Think of something better than that, Fatty!

All right, all right, said Fatty, amiably. I can think of plenty of things. But that happens to be the truth.

As if anyone would hold a Conference about beetles! said Pip, scornfully. Ill ask your fathers friend about it!

Right. You ask him, said Fatty. I say - that was the train whistling - do buck up. My mother will be furious if Im late in meeting Mr. Tolling and his dear little Eunice.

How old is she? panted Bets, trying to keep up with Fatty.

I dont know, said Fatty. Youll soon see. Here we are - just in time. Phew - that bike-ride was as good as any slimming diet. Watch my bike for me, Pip - Ill go on to the platform and meet father and daughter!

He flung his bicycle against the station wall and ran inside hurriedly as the train pulled in to a standstill, the engine pouring out smoke in a way that Buster could not bear.

Fatty smoothed back his hair and waited to see whether a man and a girl got out of the train. He soon saw a very small man with a dark beard and large glasses fussing over two suitcases. With him was a girl, rather taller than the man - a stout, rather shapeless girl with two very long plaits hanging down her back. She wore school clothes - a dark blue belted overcoat, and a dark blue felt hat with a coloured band and a badge on the left-hand side.

Her loud, clear voice came to Fatty as he stood waiting. No, Dad - we dont need a porter - you can take your small case and Ill carry the large one. Were sure to be able to get a taxi.

Where did I put the tickets? said her father, diving into one pocket after another.

You gave them to me, said the girl in her clear, competent voice. Fatty felt horrified. Gracious - was this hefty, bossy girl going to be his constant companion for at least a week? He watched her take the tickets out of a strong leather purse, and then put it safely away again. She looked all round.

Wasnt somebody going to meet us? she said. Well, I do think...

Fatty didnt know what she was about to say, as he rushed up to the two of them, but he could guess. He smiled politely.

Er - are you Mr. Belling, sir? Im...

No - my names not Belling, said the small, bearded man. Its Tolling.

Oh gosh - sorry, said Fatty, who had quite honestly made a slip. I suppose - er - well - bells toll, you know, so I...

Its all right, said the girl. Im used to that silly joke, but my father isnt - so dont address him as Mr. Belling, or Jingling or Tingling - he just wont understand, and its such a waste of time explaining to him what it means.

Fatty was quite taken-aback. Er - Im Frederick Trotteville, he said, and put out his hand to take the suitcase from Mr. Tolling.

Well, if I wanted to be funny, like you, Id address you as Frederick Canterville, said the girl, and gave him a sudden grin. No, dont take my suitcase, I can manage it, thanks. But be careful of Dads case - its full of beetles!

Fatty looked down at it anxiously and was relieved to see that it was well strapped. He didnt fancy the idea of dead beetles spilling over the platform.

Ill get you a taxi, he said.

Put Dad into a taxi with his beetles, said the girl. By the way, Im Eunice - Eunice Tolling, not Belling. I dont want to go in the taxi - they make me car-sick. Id rather walk, if its all the same to you. You can put this other suitcase into the taxi too.

Yes, Mam, said Fatty, feeling as if he were under orders. He called the one and only taxi there and helped Mr. Tolling into it. He insisted on having his beetle suitcase on his knees. Fatty put the second one on the floor, and then gave the driver his address. The taxi sped out of the station yard and Eunice heaved a sigh of relief.

Well, thats Dad safely settled, she said. What time is it - about twelve? Is there anywhere near for me to have a bun or something? Im famished. We had breakfast at seven oclock.

Er - well, yes, said Fatty, and caught sight of the other four grinning at him nearby. Wait a minute, though, please. I want to introduce you to four friends of mine - Larry, Pip, Daisy - and Bets.

Hallo, said Eunice and gave them all a swift look. And I suppose this Scottie is your dog? He keeps on getting under my feet - can you make him walk to heel?

Heel, Buster, said Fatty, in a strangled sort of voice, in the midst of a dead silence. Buster obediently came to heel and sat down, looking rather surprised. Not one of the others could find a word to say. They simply stared at Eunice, and then fell in behind her and Fatty, looking at one another slyly. What a girl!

Er - Eunice wants something to eat, Fatty informed the others behind him. Pity weve just had our elevenses. Where shall we take her?

Theres a tea-shop or something over there, look, said Eunice, pointing to a rather expensive coffee-shop which the children did not as a rule go to, because of the very high prices.

Thats too expensive for us, said Daisy. They charge a shilling just for...

Oh well, Ill pay, said Eunice. I must say I like the look of those chocolate eclairs. Come on - Ill pay for you all.

Well - weve just had buns and coffee, said Daisy. We dont want any more to eat. And Fattys trying to slim.

Whos Fatty? asked Eunice in surprise. Oh - you mean Frederick. How rude! If thats his nickname, I shant use it. Frederick, I shall call you by your proper name, if you dont mind.

Er - no, I dont mind, said Fatty, signalling to the others to go away and leave them. He felt that he might be able to manage this awful girl better by himself than with the others staring and giggling.

Well - wed better go, said Larry, reluctantly. This girl was dreadful, but it really was fascinating to see how she treated Fatty. Why - he had hardly got a word in! And to think she was going to stay in his home!

So long, said Fatty, curtly, and jerked his head violently to make the others understand that he wasnt going to put up with them a minute longer. Grinning at him like that!

They stood and watched Fatty and Eunice going through the shop-door and finding a table. They gazed while Eunice signalled to a waitress and gave a lengthy order. They watched two plates of cakes and pastries being brought, and what looked like a cup of frothy drinking-chocolate - yes, and one for Fatty too!

Eunice was talking nineteen to the dozen! She could talk and eat at the same time, which was bad manners, but very interesting to watch. Fatty looked thoroughly miserable. He kept trying to interrupt but Eunice was like a steam-roller - and her conversation rolled over him without a stop. She had offered Fatty an éclair, but he had staunchly refused.

Poor old Fatty - fancy having to sit and look at those éclairs, and remember hes slimming, and listen to that awful girl all the time, said Bets, sympathetically. Oh, I say - look - hes taken an éclair after all!

So he had. Fatty couldnt bear to sit there in dead silence and watch Eunice devour all the pastries. If he could have talked himself, and aired his opinions as he generally did, it wouldnt have been so bad. In self-defence he took an éclair - and another - and another.

Oh, Fatty! said Daisy, still gazing through the window. She turned to the others. Come on - lets go. If he catches sight of us, hell be furious. Wed better go home.

Sadly they went down the road. Bets was almost in tears. "It wouldnt have been quite so bad if Eunice had been decent, she said. But how can we let her go about with us - and yet we cant desert poor Fatty and leave him alone with Eunice all the time. It really is a problem!

Larry and Daisy went to tea with Pip and Bets that afternoon. Not a word had come from Fatty, not even a telephone call. But, in the middle of tea, they heard someone coming up the drive.

Bets flew to the window. Its Fatty! she said. Fatty - in white drawers and singlet and rubber shoes! He panting like anything. I suppose hes trying to work off all those Eclairs!

Pip yelled out of the window. Come on up to the playroom. Were having tea.

Fatty went in at the garden door and ran panting into the hall. He met Mrs. Hilton coming out of the drawing-room with a friend. She gave a scream.

Good gracious - what ...! Oh, its you, Frederick. Have you come to tea in that get-up? Well, really!

Sorry, Mrs. Hilton - Im just doing a little cross-country running - in training, you know, panted Fatty and escaped thankfully up the stairs. The others were waiting for him eagerly. Bets gave him a hug.

Oh - youre soaking wet, she said. Is it raining?

No. Im just hot with running, said Fatty, and sank with a groan into a comfortable chair.

I thought you werent going to start till after Easter, said Daisy.

I wasnt. But I am to get away from Eunice somehow! groaned Fatty, and this was the best excuse I could think of. She talks non-stop - she lays down the law to me - to ME, imagine that! And she follows me about wherever I go. She even came knocking at my bedroom door this afternoon to borrow a book - and then she sat herself down by my bookcase - and wouldnt go.

You should have pushed her out! said Bets, indignantly.

I should think that if it came to pushing, Eunice might send old Fatty flying, said Larry. Shes...

Oh well - if youre going to make insulting remarks like that, Im going, said Fatty, quite huffily, and got up. Daisy pushed him down again.

You are touchy! she said. Dont you let that girl get under your skin! You tell her a few things.

I would, if shed stop to listen, said Fatty. I say - is that tea I see on the table? Im so thirsty I could drink the whole teapotful.

Youll only put back all the fat youve taken off in your running, said Daisy. Still - youll have to feed yourself up if youve got to cope with Eunice for a week! Pass him the chocolate biscuits, Pip.

I shouldnt be weak enough to take these, groaned poor Fatty, taking three. I know I shouldnt. But honestly, I shall be worn-out in a few days - and I shall be a shadow of myself - and I shall need building up!

That's what I said, agreed Daisy, pouring him out a milky cup of tea and putting three lumps of sugar in it. But Fatty, seriously - what are we going to do about Eunice?

Dont ask me! said Fatty, nibbling at a biscuit with enjoyment. The worst of it is, Mother likes her!

There was a suprised silence.

But why? said Daisy at last. Mothers do sometimes like children we loathe, we all know that - we have to ask them to our parties! But how can your mother like Eunice?

She says shes so sensible and reliable and helpful, explained Fatty. She unpacked the big suitcase and put everything away neatly in the drawers of their two rooms - and she went to the kitchen and asked Jane to be sure and not move her fathers beetle-case, not even to dust it....

What did Jane say to that? asked Pip, with interest. Jane was not at all friendly towards beetles, spiders or moths.

Oh, she went up in the air at first, thinking the beetles were live ones, but she calmed down when she heard they were dead, said Fatty, with a laugh, and then Eunice went back to Mother and asked her the times of every meal, so that she could be sure that her father was punctual - and she offered to make her bed each day and her fathers, and to do the rooms too, if it wouldnt upset Jane.

Gosh - what a girl! said Larry. I cant see Daisy doing all that. No wonder your mother likes Eunice.

She thinks shes the cats whiskers, and the cats tail too, said Fatty, absentmindedly taking a slice of cake. She says Eunice has most beautiful manners, and will be so nice to have in the house, and is so sweet to her father, and...

Well - if your mothers so keen an her, perhaps theyll pal up together after all, and youll be free to be with us, said Pip, cheering up.

Not a bit of it, said Fatty. Mother kept saying how nice it was for me to have a girl in the house, as I had no sister, and all that sort of thing. And how we could do things together - go for walks - and go to the Fair when it comes - and I could show Eunice my shed at the bottom of the garden - fancy showing her that! I was furious when Mother even mentioned my shed. I was planning to keep it as a sort of hideaway when I couldnt stand Eunice a minute longer.

Fatty paused for breath. The others looked at him with great sympathy. Usually Fatty never turned a hair, thought Larry - not a hair, whatever happened. Did you put on that get-up and go out running to get away from Eunice? he asked with a grin.

You know I did, said Fatty. Oh gosh - did I eat that slice of cake? I never meant to. I waited till Eunice was telling Mother all about the goals she shot last term in the matches - and then I murmured something about getting a bit of training done, shot upstairs and put on these things, and went out of the garden door like a streak of lightning.

Lets hope Eunice doesnt think of trotting along with you, said Larry, with a grin. Shes pretty fat herself. It might occur to her to train too, and get slim!

Dont suggest such a thing! said Fatty, in horror, and almost took another slice of cake.

Well - what are we all going to do about it? asked Daisy. Its quite clear that we cant leave you to Eunice, Fatty - youll be as limp as a rag before Easter is over. Lets see - its Easter Sunday tomorrow. Then Easter Monday - we could all go to the Fair together, couldnt we?

We could, said Fatty, looking pleased. Its jolly decent of you to let that awful girl inflict herself on you - but it will just about save my life! Ill have to put up with her tomorrow - but Ill arrange something for Easter Monday.

When does the Beetle Conference begin? asked Pip. Tuesday?

Yes, said Fatty, and Mr. Belling - I mean Tolling - has asked me to go! He has given me a ticket to take me to every single meeting if I want to go. Imagine me sitting there listening to beetle-talk!

Wont Eunice go? asked Larry.

No. She says she knows all she wants to know about beetles - and I believe her! said Fatty. I think she must know as much as her father - she helps him with his specimens.

Ugh! said Bets, and shivered. I dont mind beetles when theyre ladybirds, or those dear little violet ones that scurry through the grass...

I dont mind beetles at all, said Pip. But I dont want to be a colly - er - colly - what was it?

Coleopterist, said Fatty. Ha! You didnt believe me when I told you they were beetle-lovers! Ive a good mind to go to one of the meetings just to see what a collection of beetle-lovers is like.

I thought Eunices father looked rather like a little blackbeetle himself, said Bets. Quite a nice one - rather helpless, you know - as if he might lose his way if he ran through the blades of grass....

The others laughed. A ball rang loudly just then, and Fatty sat up straight. The telephone! If thats Eunice, youre not to say Im here - see?

But it was Mrs. Hilton who answered the phone, and then called up the stairs.

Frederick - that was someone called Eunice Tolling, she said. Frederick - are you there? Eunice wants to speak to you.

But Fatty was at that very moment climbing down the tree outside the playroom window. Tell your mother Ive gone - she must say that or Eunice will come along here, he hissed.

Fattys left, Mother, called Bets. Hes just gone home.

Well - I quite thought I heard his voice just a minute ago, said her mother, surprised. He must have left very suddenly!

He did, rather, admitted Bets with a chuckle, and went back to the playroom before any more awkward questions could be asked. She ran to the window. She could just see Fatty speeding out of the front

gate.

Poor old Fatty! she said, watching him. Its the first time anyone has ever got the best of him. Well - I expect it will come to a stand-up fight, sooner or later!

Fatty trotted round Peterswood Village, thinking that he really must work off the chocolate biscuits and the cake that he had been weak-minded enough to have. Also, he was in no hurry to get back home. Could he slip in at the kitchen door? Eunice might be keeping an ear open for the garden door!

He circled his house and garden, and went in at the little gate that led out from the very bottom of the garden into the lane. His shed was near there, and he would make sure that it was well and truly locked as he passed. It would never do to let Eunice pry into all his secrets there. Then he would slip through the garden and up to the kitchen door and get in that way.

He looked at his shed as he passed, and tried the door. Yes, it was locked - and nobody but himself knew where the key was. Good. Now - was it safe to go into the house?

He crept up the path to the kitchen door, and listened outside. He could hear the kitchen radio going. Good - Jane and Cookie were there - he could easily slip through and upstairs. They never minded!

He opened the door quietly, went through the scullery and into the comfortable kitchen. To his utter horror Eunice was there, doing some ironing and talking to the two maids. She looked up in surprise he came creeping in.

Oh - its you! Why did you go out running without telling me? Id have liked to have come with you - Im a very good runner. Dont go alone another time, Ill keep you company, Frederick! Please dont be afraid of asking me - Im willing to do anything for you, its so kind of your mother to have us here like this!

Er - Ill just go and change, said poor Fatty, quite horrified, and fled before Eunice could say another word. Have her with him when he went running? Good gracious what a truly horrible idea!

Easter Sunday was a glorious day. The Trotteville family and the Tollings went to church, and Fatty reflected that at least Eunice couldnt talk at church. Unfortunately she could sing, though, and almost deafened Fatty who had to sit next to her.

He was also very much embarrassed because of the surprised looks of the congregation at this unexpected addition to their singing powers. Everyone seemed to be turning and staring. Very bad manners, thought Fatty severely - but Eunice loved it, and sang serenely and powerfully on, basking in the stares of the people around her.

Fatty cast about in his mind to think how to get rid of Eunice that afternoon. He knew that his mother and father - and probably Mr. Tolling - would retire to have a nap. Could he say that he wanted to work? No, his father would certainly not believe that. Could he say he was tired and wanted to go home and rest?

No! Mother will feel my head and see if its hot, and think Im sickening for something, groaned Fatty. I think Ill go down to my shed. I wont tell Eunice. Ill just slip off down there. Ill take my book - and might perhaps practise a bit of disguising. I havent done any for ages - not since I went back to school last term.

Fatty waited until the grown-ups had retired to have a nap. Eunice was busy writing a letter. Fatty sat as quiet as a mouse in a corner, hoping that she wouldnt notice if he slipped out. But as soon as he stood up quietly she lifted her head and swung back her long plaits.

Where are you going, Frederick? she asked. I shant be long finishing this letter, then well have a walk or a game of something.

Fatty saw a ray of hope. Ill take your letter to the post for you, he said. Chuck it across when its finished. There are two of Mothers Im going to take.

Oh, thanks - if its not a bother to you, said the ever-polite Eunice and went on scribbling. With relief Fatty saw her blot the letter, put it into an envelope, address it and stamp it. He got up at once.

Thanks, said Eunice. Ill think out something for us to do, while youre gone.

Fatty shot out of the room and out of the garden door. He shut it firmly behind him. He was not going back through that door for quite a long time - he was going down to his shed when he came back from the post - and there he was going to stay!

He ran to the post, and then circled the house and garden till he came to the little gate again at the very bottom. He slid through that, shut it, and made his way cautiously to his shed. Really! he thought, its disgraceful to think Ive got to skulk in my own garden like this!

He unlocked his shed-door and went in. He locked it again, and sat down with a sigh of relief. Now he could be alone till teatime at any rate - and if he could be really stern with himself he could miss tea, and not go indoors until the evening meal. I could say I missed tea because Im slimming, thought

Fatty.

He began to pull open the drawers of the old chest he had there, looking at his store of disguises - dirty old coats and trousers, torn pullovers and cardigans - a butchers boy outfit - a telegram boys suit - and an old skirt and shawl and blouse that he had used when he had last pretended to be a gipsy woman!

He thought about Eunice as he examined everything. He began to have an uneasy feeling that she would not sit down quietly and wait for hours for him to return from posting the letters. She would smell a rat! She might even go and look for him!

And if she asks Mother or Jane where I could be, theyll very likely say Im down here! thought Fatty in sudden horror. Gosh - I never thought of that! Id better dress myself up in something - some disguise in case Eunice comes snooping along to my shed. I will NOT have her in here, pulling open the drawers, and messing about with all my things.

He decided that it would be easiest to make up as an old man. He had a wig and beard, and it was easy to paint wrinkles. He could slip on the dirty old flannel trousers hanging on the nail, and put on a ragged old mackintosh.

It didnt take Fatty very long, and he really enjoyed himself. He peered at his face in the mirror when he was complete with beard, moustache and wig. He drew very thick eyebrows, and grinned at himself.

You do look like a rogue! he said. I shouldnt like to meet you in the dark!

He put on the old trousers and the mackintosh, and actually put an old pipe into his mouth to complete the disguise. Fatty never left out any details if he could help it!

Then, chewing on the pipe, he sat down in the old chair there to read a book. He sighed with relief. Now he would have at least two hours peace - and more if he could stop himself from going in to tea.

He grinned when he thought of Eunice sitting waiting for him, thinking up all kinds of plans, wondering why he didnt come back. Well - maybe she would be sensible and lie back in his mothers comfortable arm-chair and go to sleep - if she ever did go to sleep. Fatty felt it was very doubtful that she ever really slept soundly - she probably slept like Buster, with one ear open.

He suddenly remembered that Buster was still shut up in his bedroom. Blow! Why hadnt he gone and fetched him before he went to the post? Now Buster might begin to whine and bark, and wake everyone up!

That was exactly what Buster did do. He waited patiently in his basket up in Fattys bedroom for some time. He heard Fatty going out to the post, and he waited with ears pricked to hear him come back.

But Fatty didnt come back. He had gone to his shed. Buster grew anxious and impatient. He whined very softly. Then he barked - not a very loud bark, for Buster was sensible enough to know what Sunday naps were, and the house was full of Sunday - he knew that!

He ran to the door and scraped at it, whining again. Then he gave a sharp bark.

Someone came up the stairs at once. It was Eunice, of course. She, too, had waited and waited for

Fatty to come back, and was beginning to feel annoyed. She liked Fatty very much, and felt that she had made a great impression on him. He was not rude and snappy to her as so many other boys had been.

Eunice had heard the whining and barking, and had been afraid that the sleepers upstairs would awake. That's Buster! she thought. I'd better go and quieten him. I do wonder where Fatty is - it's too bad of him to be so long.

She stood outside Fatty's door and knocked gently. Buster answered by an eager little whine. He didn't like this girl Eunice very much - but he was quite willing for her to let him out of the bedroom. Then he would go and find Fatty!

Eunice opened the door and grabbed Buster as he squeezed out. Sh! she said. Don't bark. Bad dog! You mustn't make a noise.

Buster was so surprised to hear himself being called a bad dog that he stopped and looked at Eunice to see if she really meant it. She took hold of his collar, looked into the room, saw his lead and slipped it on.

Buster was very cross. How dare this girl put him on the lead when he wanted to go and find Fatty!

Come on, whispered Eunice. I'll take you for a run round the garden till Frederick comes back! Hush now!

With a protesting whine Buster allowed himself to be taken downstairs and out of the garden door. All right - he would soon find Fatty! He was sure he could smell him somewhere!

To his annoyance he could not get away from Eunice. She had strong hands and no amount of pulling on Buster's part made any difference. She would not set him free!

Buster felt suddenly sure that Fatty was down in his shed. He dragged at the lead and pulled Eunice down the garden. There was the shed - and Buster flung himself on the door, barking. Wuff, wuff, wuff, wuff! Let me in! Wurf, wuff!

Fatty was pleased, and was just about to get up and let Buster in, when he heard Eunice's voice!

Bad dog! Be quiet! You'll wake everyone up! The doors locked, so Frederick is not in there. Come away, I tell you!

Fatty crouched down in a corner in horror. So that awful girl had tracked him down here - with Buster too! If he knew anything about Buster he would bark the place down now that he knew Fatty was in the shed - as he most certainly did!

Buster proceeded to bark his head off! He yelped and barked and scratched at the door, and even growled at Eunice when she tried to drag him away.

There's nobody in there, she kept saying. And then her voice suddenly changed. Or is there? Perhaps someone is hiding in Frederick's shed - someone who has no business to be there!

Fatty crouched even further back as he saw Eunices face peering through the window. Buster! I can see someones foot! he heard her say, in an excited voice. I believe there is someone there!

She went to the door and peered through the keyhole - and immediately opposite her she saw what she took to be a dirty old tramp, smoking a pipe. She gave a loud scream!

What are you doing in there? Come out at once, or Ill set this dog on you! she yelled.

Fatty was simply horrified. He couldn't imagine what to do! And then Eunice spotted someone walking along the lane nearby, and shouted loudly once more.

Help! Help! Theres someone hiding in this shed. Help!

Then, to Fattys utter horror he heard Mr. Goons voice. Mr. Goon! What bad luck that his beat should have led him there just at that time.

The policeman lost no time in coming in through the gate. What is it, Miss? Whos in there? he asked. Keep that dog off me, please!

Look inside that shed, said Eunice. Theres a horrible old tramp there - smoking! He may set the place on fire!

Goon peered through the key hole and made out the dirty figure crouching in a corner. Then Buster suddenly went quite mad and attacked the policemen's ankles viciously.

Keep that dog off me, will you! shouted Goon, commandingly. And you in there - you come out! This is private property, this is!

There was nothing for it but to come out. Fatty had no wish for Goon to break down the door, as he quite meant to do. All right - he would unlock the door and make a dash for it - and trust to Buster to keep Goon away!

Oim a-comin, Oim a-comin, croaked Fatty, stumbling to the door. Keep that dog off me!

Here, girl - let the dog pounce on the fellow when he comes out, ordered Goon. "Hell catch him for us and make things easy. Look out, now - hes unlocking the door - the sauce of it, locking himself in like that!

The door opened very suddenly indeed, and the old man inside rushed out. He lunged at Goon and almost bowled him over, big as he was.

Buster, go for him, go for him! cried Eunice in excitement. Get him - hes a tramp, hes no business there. Catch him!

Buster, mad with excitement at seeing Fatty again, leapt all round him in delight, barking loudly. Eunice and Goon quite imagined that he was attacking the old man, and were surprised that the old fellow didnt yell for the dog to be called off.

Hey - hes escaping! cried Goon, as he realized that the tramp was halfway up the garden, the dog still barking round him. Ill go after him - you keep back, Miss, hes a dangerous fellow.

But Fatty had too big a start and was now out of the front gate and racing for dear life down the road. Goon marvelled that an old man could run so fast.

By the time that Goon had got to the first corner, Fatty had entirely disappeared. He had run into the garden of the house there, gone right down to the bottom, leapt over the wall and made his way back once more to the little lane right at the bottom of his garden. He and Buster stood there, panting and listening. Buster licked Fattys hand, feeling very happy.

Theyve come back - theyve gone into the house, Buster, said Fatty at last. Now theyll wake up Dad and Mother and tell them fairy-tales about an old thief of a tramp lying in my shed. Blow them -

He slid into his shed, took his own clothes and slid out again, locking the shed behind him. He put the keys into his pocket. Then he crept up the garden to the kitchen door. He peered in at the window. Good - only Jane and Cookie were there, looking rather startled as they listened to something going on out in the hall.

Thats Goon and Eunice there, I suppose, thought Fatty, exasperated. Well, I must change out of these things somehow - but where? I darent go in yet.

He decided to change them under a tree - but first he peered in at the hall window to see what was going on. His father and mother and Mr. Tolling were all there, and Mr. Goon was trying in vain to get a word in - but Eunice was in full spate, describing at great length all that had happened.

He was FIERCE, that tramp! she cried. As strong as ten men, Mr. Goon here said. Buster was very brave, he barked and bit - and the tramp kicked out at him like anything. Oh, if only Frederick had been there, this would never have happened. He would have turned that fellow out at once.

Here! said Mr. Goon, indignantly, breaking in at last. What do you mean? If I couldnt get him, nobody could. I tell you...

A-a-a-a-ah! suddenly screamed Eunice and pointed to the hall window, through which Fatty was peering, enjoying the whole scene. Theres that tramp again. Quick, Mr. Goon!

Everyone raced out of the front door as Fatty neatly slipped in at the side door. He shot upstairs at top speed, and into his bedroom, with an excited Buster.

Not a word, Buster, he said. Not a bark, please. Just let me get changed!

He stripped off the old clothes at top speed, and stuffed them into a cupboard. He cleaned his face, and removed whiskers, moustache and beard. Then he washed his hands and sank down into a chair with a sigh.

Whew! What a joke, Buster! I wonder if theyre all still chasing that old tramp. Disgusting old fellow wasnt he? No wonder you barked at him!

He sat and waited for a while but nobody came back, so he decided to go downstairs, and out into the road, and wait there. Then he would walk briskly up as if he had been out for a stroll, and pretend to be most surprised to see the others.

It all went off beautifully. Fatty strolled up with Buster just as a very disgruntled Goon came back with an equally disappointed Eunice, and a very annoyed trio of parents.

What nonsense! Mr. Trotteville was saying. I dont believe there was any tramp there - just this girls imagination! And you believed her, Goon! On a Sunday afternoon, too!

Goon was red and angry, and Eunice was white-faced and furious, but had enough manners not to argue. They suddenly saw Fatty strolling along and shouted to him.

Frederick! Where have you been?

You seen a nasty-looking tramp, Master Frederick? asked Goon. Whiskers and all? He was down in your shed - smoking his pipe too. Might have set the place alight!

A tramp - with whiskers? said Fatty, sounding extremely surprised. Where is he? Quick, Ill set Buster on him!

That dogs already been at him, said Mr. Goon, exasperated. Must have bit his trousers to pieces - barking and snarling. I wonder hes got any ankles left!

Well, Mr. Goon, I think well not bother any more, said Mr. Trotteville, firmly. The mans gone - and we cant do anything about it. Come in, Eunice - you cant do anything either.

What a thing to happen - on a Sunday too! said Mr. Tolling, looking rather white. A good thing you happened to be about, Constable. Tramps hiding in garden sheds! Was anything stolen?

What a thing to happen - on a Sunday too! said Mr. Trotteville, beginning to look exasperated.

Anyway, he only keeps a lot of rubbish there.

Fatty said nothing to that. He was not at all anxious for his father to see what he really kept in his shed! All kinds of disguises, sets of grease-paints for making up his face, dreadful false teeth to wear over his own, cheek-pads to alter the shape of his cheeks, false eyebrows, moustaches, beards - good gracious, Mr. Trotteville would certainly have been amazed to find so many peculiar things!

Master Frederick - perhaps wed better go down to your shed and have a look round to see if that tramp took anything, suggested Goon, who thought this might be a very good opportunity of seeing exactly what Fatty did keep in his shed. Goon had a shrewd idea of the contents, and it would have been a real feather in his cap if he could have poked round into every corner. Ha! Hed find a few of that boys secrets then!

Oh, I can easily look myself, said Fatty. And I wouldnt dream of bothering you any further, Goon. You go home and finish your Sunday nap.

Goon went red. Im on duty, he said, and a good thing for you I was too! If I hadnt come by when I did that there tramp might have stolen half your things and set your shed on fire!

I bet he wasnt smoking, said Fatty, who knew quite well that he, Fatty, had only had an unlighted pipe in his mouth.

You dont know anything about it! said Eunice. I saw him, not you - and he was smoking like a chimney - wasnt he, Constable?

Thats right, Miss, said Goon, thinking that Eunice was someone after his own heart, willing to exaggerate to make a story more exciting! A very nasty-looking piece of work, he looked - no wonder the dog went for him.

Good old Buster, said Fatty, bending down to pat the little Scottie, and to hide a grin. Well, well - what a couple of exaggerators Goon and Eunice were! It was really a pity he couldnt tell them that he was the dirty old tramp!

The others had all gone indoors now, and Fatty decided that he had had enough of Goon and would go in too. He debated whether to bicycle up to Pips and tell him about the tramp episode, but decided that hed better not. Eunice might follow him there!

Come on indoors, he said to Eunice. It must be teatime by now.

Eunice followed him in, and to Fattys disgust she insisted on telling him again and again how she had peered through the window and keyhole of his shed, and had spotted the tramp, and how she and Goon had gone for him when he came out.

I dont know why you wanted to go and spy into my shed, said Fatty at last, so tired of Eunice that he decided to be rude. Perhaps she would go off in a huff then. That would be fine.

I was not spying! she said, angrily, and, to Fattys delight, took herself off at once. She marched out of the door and stamped up the stairs to her room. Fatty immediately shot out to the kitchen with Buster collected some cakes and scones and biscuits from the tea-tray, and raced off again.

~~Eunice wont come spying into my shed again today, he thought. I can take these down there and eat and read in peace. I only hope Goon doesnt come snooping round. What a life - Eunice always about, and Goon popping up whenever hes not wanted.~~

He let himself into his shed, locked the door behind him, and sat down. He found his book and began to munch. It was only when he had eaten two-thirds of what he had brought that he remembered he was slimming.

Blow! he said, and looked at the faithful Buster, waiting patiently for a titbit. Why didnt you remind me not to eat all these? Have you forgotten Im slimming, Buster? Couldnt you paw me hard, when you see Im tucking in?

Buster obligingly pawed him, and whined, hoping to get one of his favourite chocolate biscuits. You can have a cake and a biscuit, said Fatty. But only to stop me from eating them! And I warn you - youll have to go for a cross-country run with me tonight, to work off all this extra food!

And so, when Eunice, who seemed to have forgotten that she had been offended, suggested after supper that they should have a game of chess, Fatty mournfully shook his head.

Nothing Id like better than to beat you at chess, Eunice, he said, but...

Beat me! You couldnt! said Eunice. Im champion chess-player of my school!

How strange - so am I, said Fatty, quite truthfully. But I fear Ive eaten too much today, Eunice, and Im now going for an hours run down by the river and back.

What - in the dark? said his mother. Really, I think you are overdoing this running business, Frederick!

Fatty thought so too - but the idea of a solemn evening playing chess with a fiercely-brooding Eunice was too much for him. Sorrowfully he went off with Buster to change into running-shorts, and was soon loping along by the quiet river, with Buster at his heels. What a life!

Chief-Inspector Jenks has Something to Say

On Easter Monday morning, just as Mr. Goon was finishing a large breakfast of fried bacon and three eggs, a long shiny black car drew up outside his house. Mr. Goon caught sight of it as he was about to attack his third egg, and his mouth fell open even wider.

The Inspector! Now what does he want with me this morning! thought Goon, and hurriedly did up his tunic and ran to brush his hair. He called to the daily woman in the kitchen in his most urgent voice.

Mrs. Boggs! Ask whoever it is into the office, quick! Just as he spoke there came a peremptory knock at the front door, and Mrs. Boggs flew to open it.

Outside stood a tall Inspector of Police - Chief Inspector Jenks, with keen sharp eyes and an impatient look about him. ~~Mrs. Boggs showed him into the office. Mr. Goon will be along at once, sir, she said~~ and almost dropped a curtsy as she backed from the room.

Goon came in at once, looking much tidier. Good morning, sir, he said. Er - this is an unexpected visit.

Goon, said the Inspector, abruptly. There's a dangerous man somewhere in this district. An escaped prisoner, violent and up to every trick there is. Known to be clever at disguises. Now - there's a Fair at Peterswood, a likely place for a fellow like this to make for. I want you to keep your eyes open and report to me at once if there's anyone you're in the least suspicious about. I'll send men over immediately to watch whoever you report on.

Goon swelled up at once with importance. Yes, sir, he said. Er - would it be a good idea to go to the Fair out of uniform, sir? You know I took a Special Course at the Police school, sir - disguises and all that.

Well, said the Chief, looking at Goon doubtfully, you can try it, I suppose. Pity you're so fat - you can't hide that, and it makes you very noticeable.

Goon felt hurt. He looked down at himself. I could try a spot of slimming, sir, he said, hopefully. But...

Hm - it would take you months to get down to a reasonable size, said the Chief. Now, here are a few details of this fellow we want. He laid some notes down on the desk and Goon looked at them with interest.

Medium height, sharp-eyed, scar over rather thin mouth, which a moustache, real or false, could hide. May wear false whiskers... Goon stopped, as an astonishing idea came to him. He stared in excitement at the Inspector.

I saw this man yesterday! he said, excitedly, and actually poked the Chief in the chest. Yes, I did - whiskers and all!

Where? asked the Chief, sharply.

And he was violent, too - very violent! went on Goon. Kicked and flailed his arms about, and strong as I am, I couldn't hold him.

WHERE was this man? demanded the Inspector again, but Goon couldn't be stopped.

And sharp-eyed too - eyes like gimlets, he had. And a moustache as well and now I come to think of it he might have had a scar under it. Bless me, if he wasn't the man!

GOON, said the Chief, in a dangerous voice. Kindly stop gabbling and listen to me. WHERE was this fellow?

Er - well, sir - funny thing, sir, but he was in that Frederick Trotteville's garden, down in his shed," said Goon. I was called in by a young lady staying there, sir. Buster, that Scottie, he went for the old tramp fiercely, and must have bitten his ankles to the bone. Real savage he was, sir.

Was Frederick Trotteville there, too? asked the Chief. Couldnt he catch the man? Hes usually pretty nippy at that kind of thing.

Well, if that fellow could have been caught, Id have caught him, said Goon, huffily. Actually Master Frederick didnt come along till too late. Id done the dirty work before he turned up.

I see, said the Inspector, thoughtfully. I think Ill go along and see what Frederick thought of this fellow.

He didnt see him, sir, said Goon. I told you, he came along too late.

Yes, I heard you, said the Chief, curtly. All right. Study those notes, Goon, and keep your eyes skinned. That fellow has been seen here - and we know hes got friends nearby who might fix him up with some disguise. Hes not a fellow wholl hide away. Hed take a delight in mixing with people somewhere and watching the police trying to find him.

Ho - then Ill certainly disguise myself, said Goon. Supposing I put on my...

But the Inspector was already striding out to his car, and Goon was left muttering to himself. To the Trottevilles house, ordered the Inspector, and the big car slid smoothly away. It turned in at Fattys drive and stopped beside the front door. The Inspector got out and rang the bell.

Is Master Frederick in? he asked, when Jane came to the door.

Oh, good morning, sir, said Jane. Yes, I think so. He was just going out. Come in, sir, and Ill call him.

The Chief Inspector stepped in and was shown into Mrs. Trottevilles pretty drawing-room. Then came the sound of hurried footsteps down the stairs and Fatty appeared, dressed in running-shorts and white singlet. The Chief looked surprised.

Hallo, Frederick - in training for something? he enquired.

Yes, sir. Getting a bit of my fat off, explained Fatty. Ive a chance of getting into the First Tennis Team next term. Nice to see you, sir!

The Inspector came straight to the point. Frederick - Ive just come from Goon, he said. I went to see him to ask him to look out for someone for me - and he immediately started a peculiar story about a tramp hed found down in your shed.

Fatty felt himself going red. Yes, sir, he said. Er - what else did he tell you?

Oh, I got a good many details from him, said the Chief, dryly. According to him, this fellow was extremely violent, had very sharp eyes, like gimlets, and a moustache, probably with a scar under it - and Buster flew at him and bit his ankles to the bone. The tramps ankles, not Goons.

Did he say anything else, sir? asked Fatty, cautiously.

He did say that you turned up too late to help him, said the Inspector. Exactly what do you know about this violent tramp who was hiding in your shed? I thought you always kept it locked.

You think I was that tramp, sir, dont you? said Fatty, looking the Chief in the eyes.

It certainly had occurred to me, said the Chief, looking straight back at Fatty.

All right, said Fatty, with a sigh. Yes, I was the tramp. But it was only a joke, sir. I didnt even know Goon was anywhere near. A friend of ours, staying here, peeped into my shed and saw me there, looking like a tramp - I was in disguise, of course - and screamed for help. And Goon came in, and I got away. Buster didnt go for me, of course - he was just excited to see me and leapt all round me as went. Er - Goon exaggerated a bit, I expect.

Yes. I guessed as much, said the Inspector, a twinkle in his eye. You were extremely strong and violent, according to him - he quite thought you were the man were after.

I suppose - I suppose you wouldnt care to tell me about this man, said Fatty, hopefully. I mean - I might be able to help. You never know.

Ill leave you a copy of the notes I left with Goon, said the Chief, and he took a sheaf of papers from his pocket and extracted two or three pages from them. Better not tell Goon that you know about this man - but keep your eyes open for anything out of the way this next week. The Fairs on - and theres a Conference of some sort on too - so the place will be full of strangers.

Oh, thanks, sir, said Fatty, joyfully, as he picked up the notes. Thanks a lot. This is right up my street. Ill do my best. I can tell the others, sir, cant I? You know they can be trusted too - weve done quite a lot to help you in the past, havent we?

The Chief laughed. Yes. So long as you give the orders to the others, and they obey you, thats all right. But remember, Frederick - this fellow is dangerous - all I want you to do is to keep your eyes and ears open and pass on anything you hear that might be of value. Youve got a way of picking up information - in fact I might almost say youve got a gift for it!

Thanks, Chief, said Fatty, pleased, and saw him politely to the front door. As soon as he had shut it Eunice came running up to him.

Who was that, Frederick? It was a Chief Inspector, wasnt it? What did he want to see you for? Was it about that tramp yesterday?

Yes - mostly about him, said Fatty, guardedly. He wasnt going to let Eunice know what else the Chief had told him.

Well - I do think you might have called me, said Eunice, indignantly. After all, I found him - and I called the policeman - and I tried to catch him.

Well - the Chief got all the information from Goon, I expect, said Fatty. Now I must start on my training, Eunice. Sorry to have to leave you to yourself.

Ill come too, said Eunice, but at that moment Mrs. Trotteville came in, and, to Fattys relief, made it impossible for Eunice to go with him, by asking her if she would mind arranging the flowers.

Eunice, always good-mannered with her elders, agreed at once. and Fatty fled in delight. He meant to

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