

# Bernard Bunting

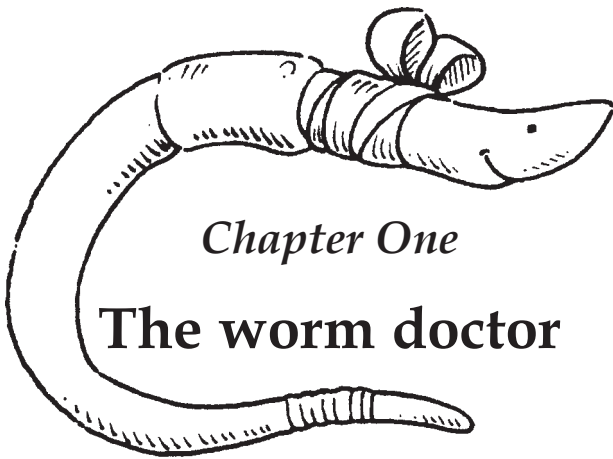
The Worm Doctor!



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## *Chapter One*

# **The worm doctor**

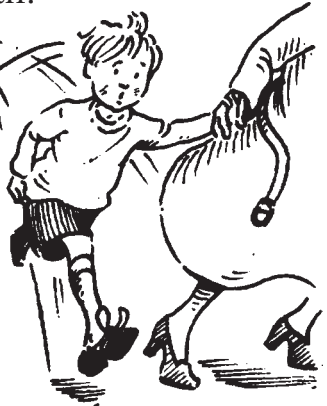
Bernard Bunting was late for school. It wasn't his fault. But at half past eight the telephone rang. His mum talked with a friend for at least five minutes. (Bernard thought it was more like two hours!)

After that they had to run all the way to school... up the hill, past the shops, over the road, round the corner and in through the gate. Bernard was out of breath.

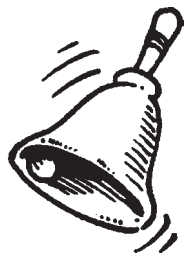
“Sorry, Miss Bacon,” he said. “The telephone rang.”

Miss Bacon frowned. “Don't be late again, Bernard Bunting!” was all she said.

Bernard sat down next to his best friend, Brian. They couldn't talk together



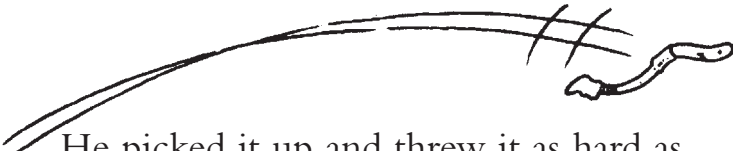
until playtime. Miss Bacon made them work hard at their maths. That meant “No talking!”



At a quarter to eleven the bell went for playtime. Bernard and Brian were first out of the door.



“I think we should throw that one into the hedge,” Bernard said. “That’s a kind thing to do.”



He picked it up and threw it as hard as he could towards the hedge.

“We could call ourselves the worm doctors,” Brian said brightly. “We’re helping all these worms in school. They might live longer because of what we have done.”

All playtime the two boys looked for worms on the muddy grass at the side of the playground. They found six! They put them all under the pot with the other three. Then the bell went.

At lunchtime...

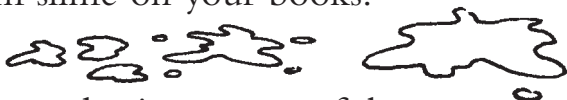
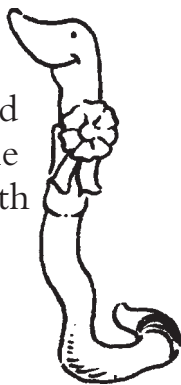


The worms moved very slowly. There was only time for three races. In the end, String

won two races and Wormhead won one race. Slime was last each time!

The boys found two more squashed worms. They threw them both into the hedge. No one else wanted to play with Bernard and Brian.

Bernard nearly forgot to wash his hands before going back inside. But Brian reminded him, "You don't want worm slime on your books."



By afternoon playtime, seven of the worms had escaped. Bernard was sure that String was still there.

"If we leave him here overnight, he might escape too," he told Brian. "I'm going to take him home."

"How will you do that?" Brian asked.

Bernard thought hard. "I know. My empty yoghurt pot is still in my lunchbox.

String can go in there."

He found his lunchbox on the shelf in the cloakroom. The empty yoghurt pot was inside. He slid String into it. Back in the classroom, he put some paper over the top and stuck it



down with sticky tape.

When he got home, he unpacked his bag. Out came his reading book. Out came his lunchbox. Out came the yoghurt pot. But... the paper had fallen off the top of the pot. It was empty. Bernard searched his bag. He shook it upside-down. But the worm had gone. Where was String?

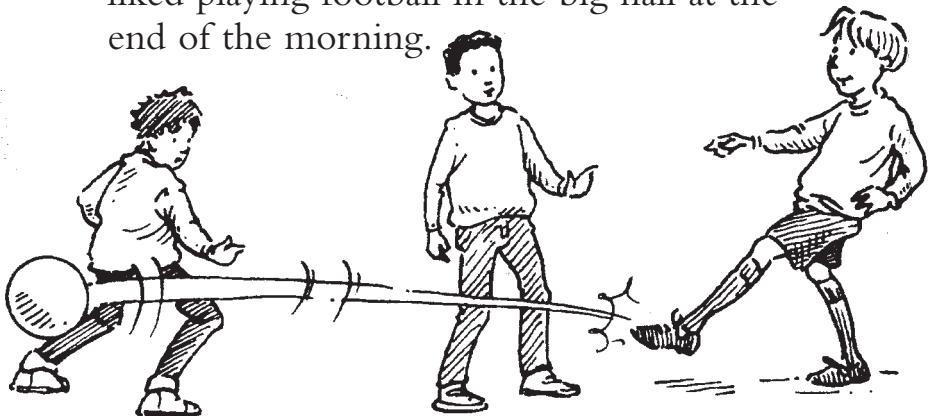


## Chapter Two

# Under attack

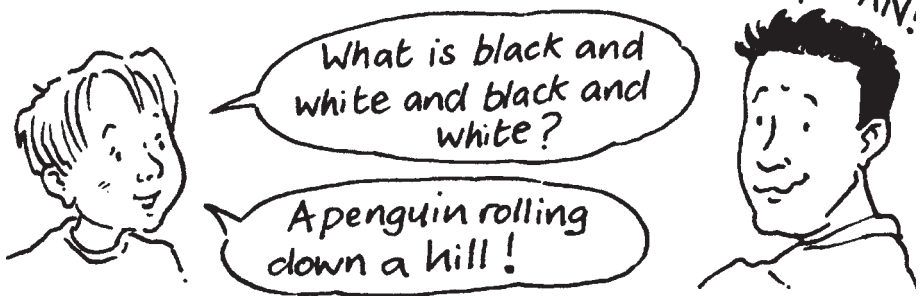
Bernard Bunting liked going to church. His mum, his dad and his sister all went to church with him, except when his dad was at work. His dad was a firefighter. He sometimes had to work at night and at weekends.

There were three things Bernard really liked at church. He liked the songs they sang. He liked Big G who was the leader of Trailblazers, his church group. Best of all, he liked playing football in the big hall at the end of the morning.



Big G was seventeen years old and studied Computers at the college in town. He always played football with the smaller boys after church. On Saturday afternoons he played for the Rangers team. He was always telling jokes. He usually began their group time with a joke.

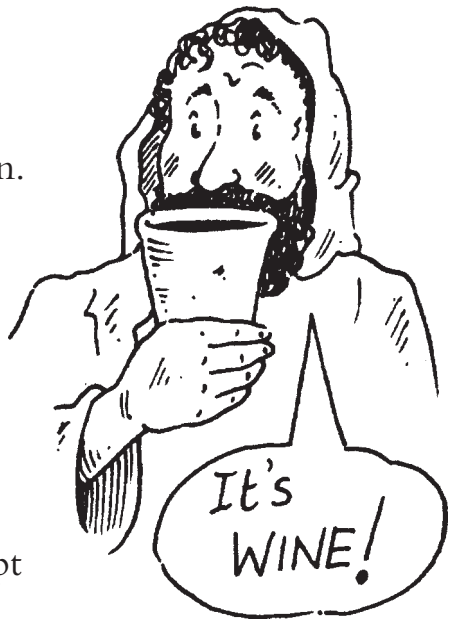
There were five in the group this Sunday morning. They sat round a table in a corner of the big hall where Bernard played football. Bernard had heard a good joke at school on Friday. He wanted to tell everyone. So when Big G opened his mouth to begin, Bernard spoke instead.



Then Big G began. "Bernard has told you the first joke of the morning. So I'm going to tell you a story. It's about Jesus at a wedding."

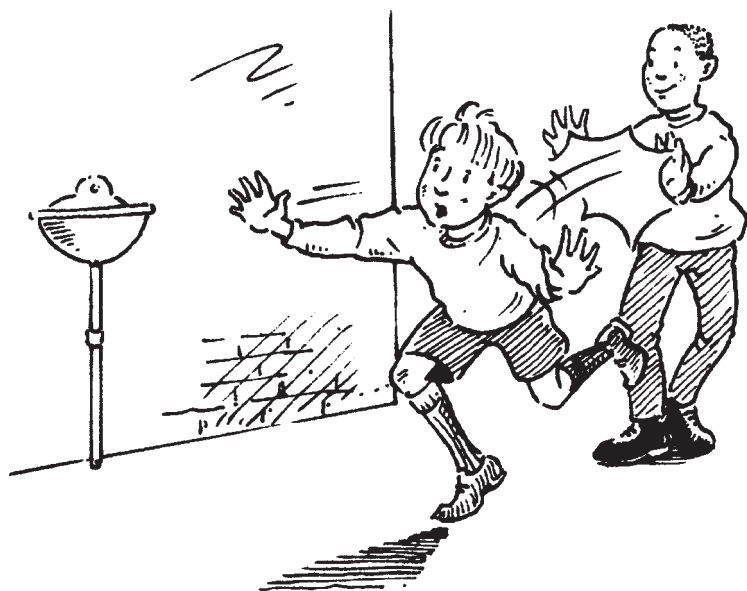
The story was about Jesus at the party after a wedding.

“Everything went wrong,” Big G went on. “Everyone was having a great time. But then the wine ran out. The person in charge was in big trouble. It looked like everyone would be thirsty. Jesus was there and he came to help. They kept loads of water in great big jars and somehow all this water became wine. Jesus made that happen. It was really, really good wine too,” Big G went on. “Just as Jesus helped people then, he can help us now – at home, at school, in the car.”



Bernard wanted Jesus to help him in the playground. Sometimes he felt all alone in the playground. Sometimes he fell over. Sometimes he got into a fight. Sometimes he got bored. Sometimes he had an argument. So he asked Jesus to be with him in the playground at school that week.

The next day at morning playtime Bernard was thirsty. So he ran over to the water fountain.



Brian saw what had happened.



Dean was in Year 5. He was always picking on the smaller boys. Brian helped Bernard get up. His knee was cut and bleeding. Bernard had to go inside to get it cleaned up.

After playtime, Miss Bacon asked, "How did this happen, Bernard?"

Bernard really wanted to tell Miss Bacon about Dean, but he was scared.

At lunchtime, Bernard and Brian were playing stuck-in-the-mud with their friends. Bernard ran round the corner just as...



So Bernard got a cut on his other knee! He had to go inside to get that knee cleaned up too! His knees looked just like two squashed tomatoes!



Bernard told his mum about it all as he was getting ready for bed that evening. "I asked Jesus to be with me in the playground, and look what happened!

He can't have been there!"

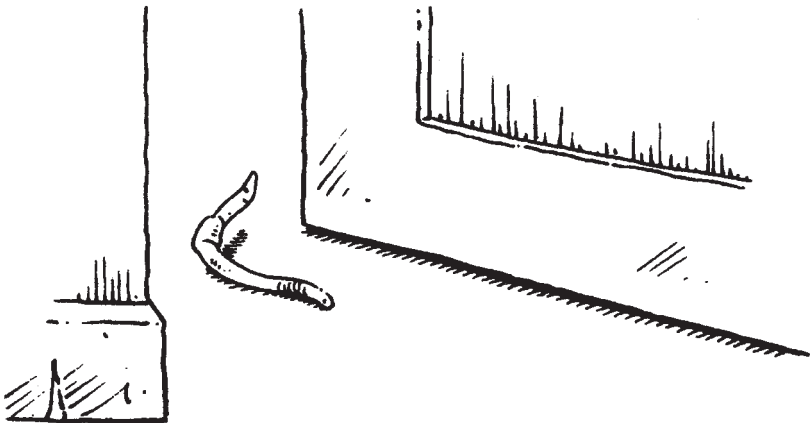
"Lots and lots of bad things happen to us, Bernard," his mum explained. "Jesus



doesn't always take them away. But he is with us to help us be brave. He helps us know the right thing to do. Shall we ask him to be with you tomorrow in the playground? And to stop Dean picking on you?"

The next day, Dean was in big trouble because he was rude to his teacher. He had to stand outside the headteacher's office every playtime for a week. He soon forgot about Bernard Bunting.

Meanwhile, String had...

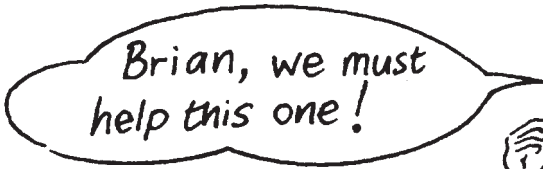




## Chapter Three

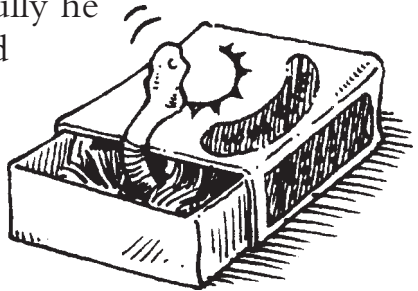
# Shoe on the roof

The worm was flat at one end. The other end was grey and pink. It wiggled a bit – just a little bit.



Bernard and Brian were in the playground. They had looked everywhere for worms. This morning Flat End was the only one they could find.

Bernard felt in his pocket for a matchbox. Carefully he tipped the moving end of Flat End into the box. The rest slid in. Ugh! It was horrid. Even Bernard turned up his nose.

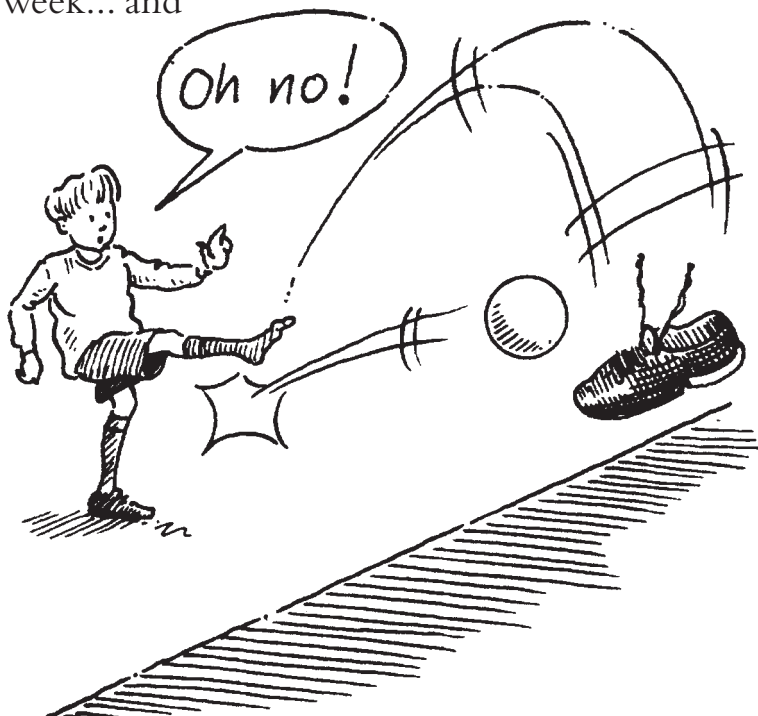


The boys carried the box to the hedge. They opened it and shook out Flat End into the leaves.

“Get better quick,” Brian said.

“Come on,” said Bernard. “Let’s join the others for football.”

But Bernard had forgotten something. He had forgotten to tie up his shoelaces. A boy saw the two boys coming and kicked the ball towards Bernard. Bernard took a great big kick – his biggest kick of the week... and



The shoe landed on the flat roof!

Bernard put his PE shoes on. But all day he worried about his shoe – and his mum and Miss Bacon. He put his other shoe in his bag. He hoped his mum would not find it there.

But she did. Mums always do! They have eyes everywhere.

“Why are you wearing your PE shoes?” she asked. “Where is your other shoe?”



Before going to sleep that night, Bernard didn't want to talk to Jesus. That was what he usually did. He knew he had told a lie to his mum. He knew that was wrong. He felt very bad about that. He cried himself to sleep.

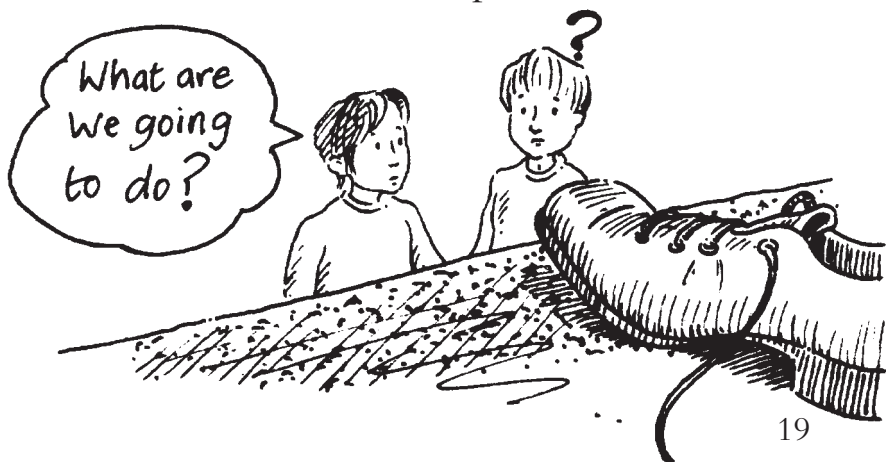


In the morning he looked out of the window. It had been raining. His shoe on the roof would be very wet.

“You’ll have to wear your PE shoes to school,” his mum said crossly. “Take your shoe with you. You can change into your proper shoes as soon as you get to school. Miss Bacon may still get cross with you. You must be more careful, Bernard.”

Bernard didn’t look at his mum. He felt very, very bad!

Of course he didn’t change his shoes. He wore his PE shoes all morning. At playtime he and Brian looked up on the roof.



It was PE in the afternoon. Afterwards Bernard was one of the first to get changed. He was so quick because he didn't have to change his shoes! But Miss Bacon saw him. She was like his mum. She had eyes everywhere.

Bernard realised how wrong he had been. He had told one lie. And then another.

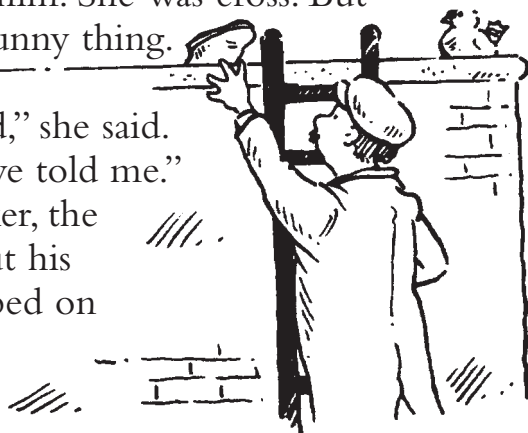


Then he couldn't do anything right.

Bernard felt like he wanted to cry. Miss Bacon stared at him. She was cross. But then she did a funny thing. She smiled!

"Oh Bernard," she said. "You should have told me."

So Mr Dunker, the caretaker, got out his ladder. He climbed on



to the roof and got Bernard's shoe. It was a bit wet. But Bernard put it on anyway.

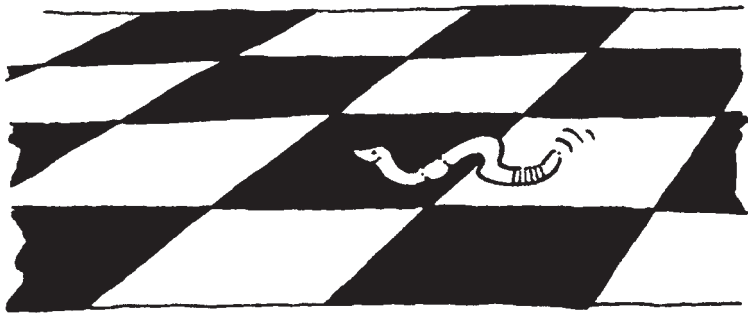
"Sorry," he said to Mr Dunker.

"Sorry," he said to Miss Bacon.

"Sorry," he said to his mum when he told her about the shoe.

"Sorry," he said to Jesus quietly. "You don't like me telling lies."

Meanwhile...





## Chapter Four


# Catapulting acorns

“That makes twenty-four,” Brian said.

He put another acorn on top of the acorn pile he and Bernard were building under the tree.

When it was lunchtime the children were sometimes allowed onto the field. Today Bernard and Brian were glad when Miss Bacon said, “Children, you can go on the field this lunchtime if you want to.”

It was autumn. The three oak trees on the field were dropping acorns. It was a bit like acorn rain.



The problem is,  
how many acorns  
can we stuff  
into your bag?

Don't  
know!



Bernard wiggled his hands in the two pockets of his trousers. Out came one dirty handkerchief, two Smarties and an elastic band.

"I've got an idea," Bernard said as soon as he saw the elastic band. "My cousin Toby came to see us on Saturday. He showed me how to make a catapult with an elastic band."

Bernard picked up one of the spare acorns. He pulled the band back to make a loop and put the acorn in place.

