

Bertie's Cat Burglar
Written By FamousEngines
For The Marvellous Mr. Maithwaiter



One bright morning Bertie the Bus was feeling very excited. At the station by the river he met Toby.

“Good morning,” Toby called, “Keeping busy?”

“Oh indeed!” replied Bertie, “Why, I’ve got a special job today! I’m off to collect a Vicar- The one Edward’s friends with. He’s taking a party from his church on a coach outing around our area; I was chosen especially!”

“What an honour,” smiled Toby.

“It certainly is! Though we best not mention it to Thomas,” added Bertie with a wink.

With a roar of his engine, he raced happily away. Bertie didn’t often get to see wider parts of the Island; he relished every chance he got to explore.

Before long he had picked up his special party. He saw some of his friends too; Edward and BoCo, and even Trevor in the Vicarage Orchard.

“What a splendid day this is!” chortled Bertie, “Bright skies, old faces and special charters; just the tickets to make a bus feel young!”

The rest of the morning flew by, as did the afternoon.

Everyone had a splendid time seeing the cosy villages and sprawling fields around Thomas' Branch Line. Whenever they saw an engine Bertie's passengers would wave; a treatment they gave Terence the Tractor too, who was most touched.

But eventually, far too soon in Bertie's opinion, it was time to head home. But as they neared one of the stations they saw a Porter waving to them.

"Something must be wrong," worried Bertie.

"I wonder what it could mean for us," murmured his Driver.

They quickly found out; "There's been an accident up the road," explained The Porter, "No one injured, but there's quite a traffic jam. We've heard about your special charter and think it's best if Toby takes everyone to the Junction. That way you won't be stuck waiting in traffic all night."

Bertie was disappointed, as was everyone else, but they were thankful for a solution.

"Most kind of you all," smiled The Vicar warmly as everyone climbed aboard Henrietta; Bertie's Driver among them.

"I don't fancy a long wait for us to get home," he admitted, "I'm sure staying here for a night won't do you any harm."

Bertie was cross, though deep down he understood, "What a way to end the day!" he sighed.

"Ah well, at least you had most of your day to enjoy," comforted Toby.

"So much for an exciting conclusion," murmured Bertie quietly as Toby puffed away,

"Though I suppose this is better than being stuck in traffic," the bus yawned. It wasn't long before Bertie was fast asleep.

He awoke next morning to the sound of an approaching taxi. He stirred quietly as his Driver was dropped off nearby.

Bertie carefully opened an eye. He could see his Driver heading towards him. He could feel someone sitting on one of his seats. Everything was as it should be.

Bertie's eyes shot open; somebody was inside him, and it wasn't his Driver!

"Oh help!" cried Bertie, "Thief! Robbers! Vandals!"

His Driver sprinted over. He peered inside, then suddenly burst out laughing.

Bertie was most surprised; "What's so funny?" he asked, bemused.

There, curled up on one of his seats, was Sierra, the Station Cat!

“So much for a Thief,” chuckled his Driver, “She must have found a way in whilst you were asleep!”

Bertie felt very silly; his face turned as red as his paintwork.

Sierra, oblivious, or perhaps uninterested, continued to dream peacefully. Bertie and his Driver quickly recovered from the surprise, and took a fast shine to their visitor.

“It seems a pity to disturb her,” sighed The Driver.

“Perhaps she could be one last special passenger,” chuckled Bertie.

And so she was. For the rest of the morning Sierra stayed seated, even when she finally awoke. The passengers thought it a lovely surprise, and Bertie felt pleased. But at last Sierra’s fancy ran dry. When Bertie next stopped at Maithwaite she hopped out for home.

Toby was surprised to see her emerge, but Bertie quickly explained the entire ordeal.

“It would seem you got your exciting conclusion after all,” chuckled Toby.

Bertie grinned broadly; “After the shock of all that; I quite fancy I’ve had my share of excitement for the year!”

The End

With A Very Happy Birthday To Maithwaiter!

