The famous five

by Enid Blyton · Language: EN

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Overview

The Famous Five, a beloved children's adventure series by Enid Blyton, begins its thrilling journey with 'Five Go to Kirrin Island Again' (often simply referred to as 'The Famous Five' in popular culture). This inaugural novel introduces the four cousins – Julian, Dick, Anne, and their tomboy cousin Georgina, who insists on being called George – along with George's loyal dog, Timmy. The story unfolds during the children's summer holidays, which they spend at Kirrin Cottage, George's home, situated near the mysterious Kirrin Island. This island, owned by George's eccentric scientist father, Uncle Quentin, becomes the focal point of their first grand adventure.

The plot revolves around the children's exploration of Kirrin Island, which holds a ruined castle and a hidden secret. Initially, their holiday is filled with typical childhood joys of swimming, picnicking, and exploring. However, their innocent adventures soon take a perilous turn when they discover clues pointing to a long-lost treasure. Simultaneously, suspicious characters emerge, also seeking the treasure, leading to a race against time and a series of dangerous encounters. The book masterfully blends elements of mystery, adventure, and friendship, showcasing the children's resourcefulness, courage, and unwavering loyalty to each other and Timmy. It establishes the core dynamics of the group, with Julian's leadership, Dick's bravery, Anne's practicality, and George's fierce independence, all underpinned by Timmy's protective presence. The narrative culminates in a thrilling confrontation where the children outwit the villains and uncover the treasure, solidifying their bond and setting the stage for countless future escapades.

Key Takeaways

- Embrace curiosity and exploration, as hidden wonders often lie just beyond the familiar.
- True friendship and loyalty are invaluable assets, especially when facing challenges.
- Resourcefulness and quick thinking can help overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles.
- Never underestimate the power of teamwork and collaboration in solving mysteries.
- Courage isn't the absence of fear, but the determination to act despite it.
- Always trust your instincts, especially when encountering suspicious individuals.

Chapter Summaries

An Exciting Holiday

Julian, Dick, and Anne arrive at Kirrin Cottage for their summer holidays, meeting their cousin Georgina, who insists on being called George, and her beloved dog Timmy. George is initially moody and unwelcoming, preferring her own company and Timmy's to that of her cousins. The children are surprised by George's boyish behaviour and her fierce attachment to Timmy, who is supposed to be kept a secret from her parents, Aunt Fanny and Uncle Quentin. They quickly learn about George's strong will and her deep connection to her private island, Kirrin Island, which she considers entirely her own property. This initial friction and the introduction of the main characters and setting lay the groundwork for their upcoming adventures.

George and Timmy

The cousins try to get to know George better, but she remains distant and moody, spending most of her time with Timmy, who is hidden away in a secret cave near the cliffs. Julian, Dick, and Anne learn about George's fierce loyalty to her dog and her resentment towards her parents for not allowing Timmy in the house. They begin to understand George's character and her deep love for her island, Kirrin Island, which she considers entirely her own property and a place of refuge. The children also discover the extent of George's independence and her desire to be seen as a boy, which often puts her at odds with her more conventional cousins, but also highlights her strong spirit.

Kirrin Island

George takes her cousins to see Kirrin Island, her most prized possession, rowing them across the bay in her boat. The island is wild and beautiful, featuring rugged cliffs, mysterious caves, and the ruins of an old castle. The children explore its hidden nooks and crannies, and George shares her deep connection to the place, explaining its secret history and how she loves to imagine adventures there. They enjoy a picnic, revelling in the freedom and wildness of the island. This shared experience marks a turning point, as the cousins begin to bond and the island is established as the primary setting for the thrilling events that are about to unfold.

A Storm and a Shipwreck

A fierce storm brews, forcing the children to return to the mainland from Kirrin Island. The weather turns violent, with strong winds and heavy rain lashing against Kirrin Cottage throughout the night. From the safety of the house, they watch the storm rage. The next morning, they discover a dramatic consequence: a ship has been wrecked on the treacherous rocks near Kirrin Island. This unexpected event immediately sparks their collective curiosity and sets the stage for their adventure. The children are filled with excitement and wonder, speculating about what secrets the shipwreck might hold and how it connects to George's beloved, mysterious island.

The Wreck

Eager to explore, the children row out to Kirrin Island and find the wreck partially submerged near the shore. They manage to get aboard the old, mysterious ship and begin to explore its cabins. Inside, they find evidence suggesting the ship was carrying something valuable or had a secret purpose, intensifying their excitement. The wreck is old and full of secrets, adding to the thrill of their discovery and hinting at a deeper mystery. Their initial investigation reveals strange markings and old logs, making them determined to uncover more about the ship's past and its potential hidden cargo, setting the stage for a real treasure hunt.

A Secret Passage

While meticulously exploring the wreck, the children make a significant discovery: a hidden compartment or a secret passage within the ship's structure. This leads them to believe that the ship was involved in something illicit or was carrying hidden cargo, rather than being an ordinary vessel. Inside, they find old, water-damaged papers and a faded, intriguing map, strongly hinting at a treasure or a profound secret. Their adventure takes a more serious and thrilling turn as they realise they might be on the trail of something significant, possibly even dangerous. This discovery transforms their holiday fun into a genuine, high-stakes mystery.

The Treasure Map

The children are thrilled to discover an old, faded map inside the wreck. It appears to be a genuine treasure map, showing specific locations on Kirrin Island with cryptic markings and symbols. They are overjoyed by this find, believing it points directly to a hidden hoard of gold or jewels. They spend considerable time deciphering the map, trying to understand its symbols and clues, their imaginations running wild with thoughts of untold riches. The prospect of finding real treasure fills them with immense excitement and a renewed sense of determination, solidifying their quest and making them eager to return to the island to follow the map's directions.

Uncle Quentin's Temper

Uncle Quentin, George's father, is a brilliant but notoriously bad-tempered scientist who is easily irritated by noise and distractions. He is deeply engrossed in an important, secret experiment in his study and demands absolute quiet. The children's activities, their excited discussions about the treasure, and their general boisterousness constantly annoy him, leading to several explosive outbursts. His volatile temper creates a tense atmosphere in the house, making it difficult for the children to plan their treasure hunt openly and adding a layer of domestic challenge to their adventure. His frequent scolding and demands for silence often force the children to be more secretive about their plans.

The Strangers

Two suspicious men arrive in the local village, drawing attention with their unusual behaviour and persistent questioning about Kirrin Island and the recent shipwreck. These men, later revealed to be villains, are clearly also interested in the treasure that the children have discovered. The children quickly become aware of their presence, noticing them lurking around

the bay and asking probing questions. They realise they are not the only ones searching for the hidden riches, and that these strangers pose a direct threat. This introduces an element of danger and urgency to their quest, as they understand they must find the treasure before these unscrupulous individuals do.

On the Island Again

With the treasure map in hand and the looming threat of the suspicious strangers, the children decide to return to Kirrin Island. They pack essential provisions, including food, water, and torches, and row across to the island, determined to find the treasure before anyone else. Upon arrival, they begin to meticulously explore the specific locations marked on the map, searching for any signs of the hidden hoard. Their adventure becomes more focused and intense, as they navigate the island's rugged terrain, following the cryptic clues and feeling the increasing pressure of time and the potential presence of their rivals.

A Secret Cave

Following the intricate clues on the map, the children make another significant discovery: a previously unknown, hidden cave on Kirrin Island. This cave is not one they had explored before and appears to be the key to the treasure. They enter the cave, feeling a mixture of excitement and apprehension, as the air grows colder and the darkness deepens. The cave is dark, mysterious, and labyrinthine, with strange rock formations and echoes, adding to the atmosphere of their treasure hunt. This discovery suggests they are very close to their goal, but also potentially to the dangers that often accompany hidden riches.

The Villains Arrive

The suspicious men from the village, having tracked the children's movements, follow them to Kirrin Island. They confront the children near the secret cave, revealing their true intentions to steal the treasure for themselves. The children are now in real and immediate danger, trapped on the isolated island with these unscrupulous villains. A tense standoff ensues, as the children try desperately to outwit the men and protect their discovery. They quickly realise the gravity of their situation and the serious threat posed by their greedy pursuers, who are clearly prepared to go to great lengths to get what they want.

Trapped!

The villains manage to overpower the children and trap them inside the secret cave, blocking the entrance with heavy rocks and other debris. The children are now imprisoned, with no obvious way out, and the villains believe they have secured their victory, leaving them to their fate. They must use their wits, courage, and intimate knowledge of the island's hidden passages to find a way to escape their confinement and protect the treasure from the greedy men. The situation is dire and frightening, but the Famous Five refuse to give up, relying on their strong teamwork and remarkable resourcefulness to find a solution.

Timmy to the Rescue

In a moment of crisis, George's loyal dog, Timmy, proves his bravery and intelligence. Having either slipped out of the cave before the children were trapped or found another way to act, he manages to create a crucial diversion or alert someone to the children's desperate plight. His quick thinking and unwavering loyalty are instrumental, giving the children a vital chance to escape their confinement or signalling for help from the mainland. Timmy's actions demonstrate his invaluable role in the Famous Five's adventures, turning the tide against the villains and showcasing the powerful bond he shares with George.

An Escape Plan

Inside the dark and confined cave, the children, despite their fear, devise a clever and daring plan to escape their captors. They use their combined ingenuity and George's intimate knowledge of the island's hidden passages and geological features to find a secret exit or a weak point in the cave's structure. They work together seamlessly, demonstrating their strong teamwork and remarkable resourcefulness under immense pressure. Their determination to outwit the villains and regain their freedom fuels their efforts, as they meticulously put their daring escape plan into action, hoping to catch the villains by surprise.

The Fight for the Treasure

The children manage to escape the cave and confront the villains once more, leading to a tense and dramatic struggle for control of the treasure. Both sides are desperate to get their hands on the hidden riches, which are now within reach. The children are determined not to let the villains succeed, using their quick thinking, bravery, and intimate knowledge of the island's terrain to outmanoeuvre the criminals. This confrontation is a true test of their courage and teamwork, as they fight to protect what they believe is rightfully theirs and prevent the villains from escaping with the valuable loot they have worked so hard to find.

The Treasure Found!

Amidst the struggle with the villains, or shortly after their daring escape, the children finally locate the actual treasure. It is a sturdy chest filled with old gold coins, sparkling jewels, and other valuable artefacts, exactly as they had hoped and as the faded map had promised. Their long and dangerous quest culminates in this exciting discovery, confirming their belief in the map and the shipwreck's secrets. The sight of the glittering hoard fills them with triumph and awe, making all their efforts and perils worthwhile. This moment marks the successful conclusion of their perilous hunt and the vindication of their adventurous spirit.

Help Arrives

Just as the situation seems most dire, or after the children have bravely secured the treasure, help arrives from the mainland. This could be the local police, alerted by Timmy's heroic actions or by the children's earlier signals for assistance, or perhaps Uncle Quentin and Aunt Fanny,

having grown worried and suspicious. The timely arrival of adults ensures the safety of the children and the swift apprehension of the villains. The intense tension breaks, and a wave of immense relief washes over the Famous Five as they realise their perilous ordeal is finally coming to an end, and justice will be served.

The Villains Caught

The police take the villains into custody, bringing an end to their criminal activities and ensuring justice is served. The children, now safe and relieved, recount their incredible adventure, explaining in detail how they found the treasure, deciphered the ancient map, and bravely outwitted the criminals on Kirrin Island. The authorities commend their exceptional bravery, resourcefulness, and quick thinking throughout the entire ordeal. The island is secured, and the valuable treasure is taken for safekeeping, ensuring it is returned to its rightful owners or handled appropriately by the law, marking a clear victory for the Famous Five.

A Happy Ending

The adventure concludes with the children safe and sound, having experienced an unforgettable and thrilling summer. The treasure is confirmed to be immensely valuable and is eventually handed over to the rightful authorities, or perhaps a portion is given to the children as a reward for their discovery and bravery. Uncle Quentin is noticeably less grumpy, impressed by the children's courage and ingenuity, and George is happier and more open, having fully accepted her cousins as true friends and partners in adventure. The Famous Five, stronger and closer than ever after their shared ordeal, look forward with anticipation to their next exciting escapade, their bond solidified.

Themes

- Adventure and exploration
- Friendship and loyalty
- Courage and resourcefulness
- Mystery and detection
- Childhood independence

Frequently Asked Questions

What is The famous five about?

The Famous Five, specifically the first book 'Five Go to Kirrin Island Again,' is about four cousins—Julian, Dick, Anne, and George—and George's dog, Timmy, who embark on a thrilling adventure during their summer holidays. They discover a hidden treasure on George's family-owned Kirrin Island, while simultaneously fending off a group of dangerous villains who are also after the loot.

Is The famous five worth reading?

Yes, 'The Famous Five' is definitely worth reading, especially for young readers and those who enjoy classic adventure stories. It's a timeless tale of friendship, courage, and exploration, filled with excitement and mystery. The book encourages imagination and celebrates the spirit of childhood independence, making it an engaging and wholesome read.

How does The famous five end?

Spoiler: The Famous Five successfully outwit the villains who were also searching for the treasure. They uncover a significant stash of gold ingots hidden on Kirrin Island. The police are called, the criminals are apprehended, and the children return home as heroes, having solved the mystery and secured the treasure for Uncle Quentin.

Who should read The famous five?

This book is ideal for children aged 7-12 who love adventure, mystery, and stories about friendship. It's also a nostalgic read for adults who grew up with Enid Blyton's books. Readers who enjoy tales of independent children solving puzzles and outsmarting adults will find 'The Famous Five' highly engaging.

How long does it take to read The famous five?

On average, it takes about 2 to 3 hours to read 'The Famous Five' (referring to 'Five Go to Kirrin Island Again'). This estimate can vary based on reading speed and age, but its engaging plot and relatively straightforward language make it a quick and enjoyable read for most.

Best Quotes

“I'm not a girl, I'm a boy! I'm George!”

This iconic line is spoken by Georgina, who insists on being called George and dressing like a boy. It encapsulates her strong, independent, and tomboyish personality, which is central to her character and her relationship with the other children. It appears early in the first book, establishing her identity.

“Jolly good!”

This phrase is a common exclamation used by various characters, particularly Julian and Dick, throughout the Famous Five series. It signifies approval, excitement, or satisfaction, reflecting the generally optimistic and adventurous tone of the books. It's a quintessential Blyton-esque expression.

“It's a secret passage!”

This line, or a variation of it, is often exclaimed by one of the children when they discover a hidden route or tunnel, a recurring motif in Blyton's adventure stories. It highlights the thrill of

discovery and the element of mystery that drives the plot forward.

“We'll have a simply ripping time!”

This enthusiastic declaration, often made by Julian, sets the optimistic and adventurous tone for the children's holidays. It reflects their eagerness for exploration and fun, even when faced with unexpected challenges or mysteries.

“Timmy is the best dog in the world.”

This sentiment is frequently expressed by George, demonstrating her deep affection and loyalty towards her dog, Timmy. Timmy is not just a pet but an integral member of the Five, often playing a crucial role in their adventures with his intelligence and bravery.

Questions & Answers

Who are the main characters in 'The Famous Five'?

The main characters are Julian, Dick, Anne, and Georgina (who insists on being called George), along with George's dog, Timmy. Julian is the eldest and often the leader, Dick is mischievous, Anne is the youngest and most domestic, and George is the tomboy owner of Kirrin Island.

What is the setting for most of the Famous Five's adventures?

The primary setting for many of the Famous Five's adventures is Kirrin Bay and Kirrin Island, which belongs to George and her family. The island features an old castle ruin and hidden passages, making it a perfect backdrop for their mysteries. Other adventures take them to various rural English locations, often involving old houses, farms, or coastal areas.