



## **No TOFFEE for Turkey!**

*by Frank Richards*

the man who invented BILLY BUNTER

**T**UCK!

Turkey Tuck jumped almost clear of the form, as Mr Roger Ducas rapped out his name. Turkey could have sworn that Roger's eye was not on him, as he stealthily extracted a packet of toffee from a sticky pocket with a sticky paw. Roger's eye was on Harry Compton, who was on

'con.' But Roger sometimes seemed, to the Carcroft Fourth, to have as many eyes as Argus, and a few over. Anyhow he spotted the fat Turkey, and rapped out his name like a bullet, and Turkey jumped.

'Oh!' gasped Turkey.

Compton was at 'equo ne credite, Teucris.' There was a wel-

come pause as Roger turned his attention to James Smyth Tuck. The long-winded narrative of the good Aeneas did not entertain the Carcroft Fourth nearly so much as it once entertained Dido. They were quite glad of a brief rest.

Turkey did not share the general relief. He trembled under his form-master's eagle eye.

'What is that, Tuck?' inquired Roger.

'Oh! Nothing, sir!' stammered Turkey.

'Stand out before the form.'

Turkey could have groaned. It was a large packet of toffee, and he had not even sampled it yet. He had found it in the Lizard's study only just before the bell rang for class. Now it did not look as if he ever would sample it. He rolled dismally out.

Roger's eye fixed on the packet in the fat sticky hand. He frowned.

'Place that packet on my desk, Tuck!

Turkey, with deep feelings, obeyed. Roger's eye strayed to his cane. But he did not pick it up. Perhaps the woe in Turkey's fat face touched his heart, tough as it was.

'You are well aware, Tuck, that you must not bring comestibles into the form-room. That packet will be confiscated.'

'Oh, haddocks!' moaned Turkey.

'It will be returned to you——!' continued Roger.

Turkey brightened.

'——at the end of the term!' concluded Roger.

Turkey's fat face fell again.

'Now go back to your place.'

Turkey fell, rather than sat, in his place. The Carcroft Fourth re-started after the interval, and the 'pius Aeneas' was once more the order of the day.

Other fellows had an eye on the form-room clock. But Turkey's gaze was glued on the packet on his form-master's desk. He wondered whether Roger was going to leave it there when he dismissed his form. If so——!

The hour was up at last. Harry Compton and Co. were glad enough to get out of the form-room. Turkey, generally gladdest to do so, lingered.

'If you please, sir——!' mumbled Turkey.

'Well?' rapped Roger.

'My—my con wasn't very good, sir——'

'It was the worst in the form, as usual, Tuck.'

'Yes, sir! I—I'd like to get it right, sir! Mum—may I stay in and—and go over it again, sir?'

Roger Ducas gave the fattest member of his form a fixed look. More than once Turkey had been kept in, after a skewed con, to go over the lesson again. This was the first time he had ever asked for it! For a long moment his form-master gazed at him. Then he smiled—one of those grim smiles.



'Very well, Tuck! You will write out the translation and leave it on my desk. I shall expect to find it there.'

'Oh! Thank you, sir,' gasped Turkey. He went back to his place. His fat heart beat, as Roger gathered up papers to leave the form-room. At the last moment Roger picked up the packet of toffee. He walked out with it.

'Oh!' gasped Turkey.

He brandished a fat fist at the door when it had closed on Mr Ducas. The toffee was gone—and Turkey remained: with a translation on his hands! Turkey wondered whether life really was worth living in a school that had beaks like Roger!

**M**ozart's Sonata in B Flat pleases many: among others, it pleased Mr Roger Ducas, master of the Fourth Form at Carcroft School. To Turkey Tuck's fat ears, as he tiptoed outside his form-master's study door, it was about as pleasing as the howling of demented banshees. Twice, since class, Turkey had hovered near that study, but the coast had not been clear. Now, after tea, he had hoped that Roger would be in Common-Room, chin-wagging with the other beaks. Instead of which, Roger evidently had the radio on in his study. Turkey could hear it, in the passage: and never had that gifted composer, Mozart, had a more unappreciative listener. Turkey tiptoed away again, his designs on the confiscated toffee unavoidably postponed.

It was a fine spring afternoon. Compton, Drake, Lee, Vane-Carter, and other Fourth-form men were punting a footer, and seemed to be enjoying life. But Turkey's fat brow was clouded. Like Rachel he mourned for that which was lost and could not be comforted.

Turkey posted himself near his form-master's study window. That window was open. He listened, with unappreciative ears, to the remainder of the Sonata in B Flat. It ceased—and to Turkey's relief, the radio was shut down, and he heard a door open and close. Roger was gone, at last. One cautious squint round, to ascertain whether eyes were upon him, and then Turkey fairly hurled himself in at the open study window, and dropped breathlessly within.

He knew where to look for what he wanted. In an alcove by the fireplace there was a narrow cupboard, about three or four feet high, on the top of which stood Roger's radio. In that cupboard, all the fellows knew that Roger parked contraband goods which his duty as a form-master compelled him, from time to time, to confiscate. It was never locked—it had a simple latch, which opened by turning a knob. Nobody had ever ventured there to recapture a confiscated article—Levett's catapult had lain there half a term. Neither would Turkey have dreamed of making the perilous venture, for anything less precious than toffee. But toffee was toffee: and the fat soul of James Smyth Tuck yearned for

it with a yearning that was not to be denied.

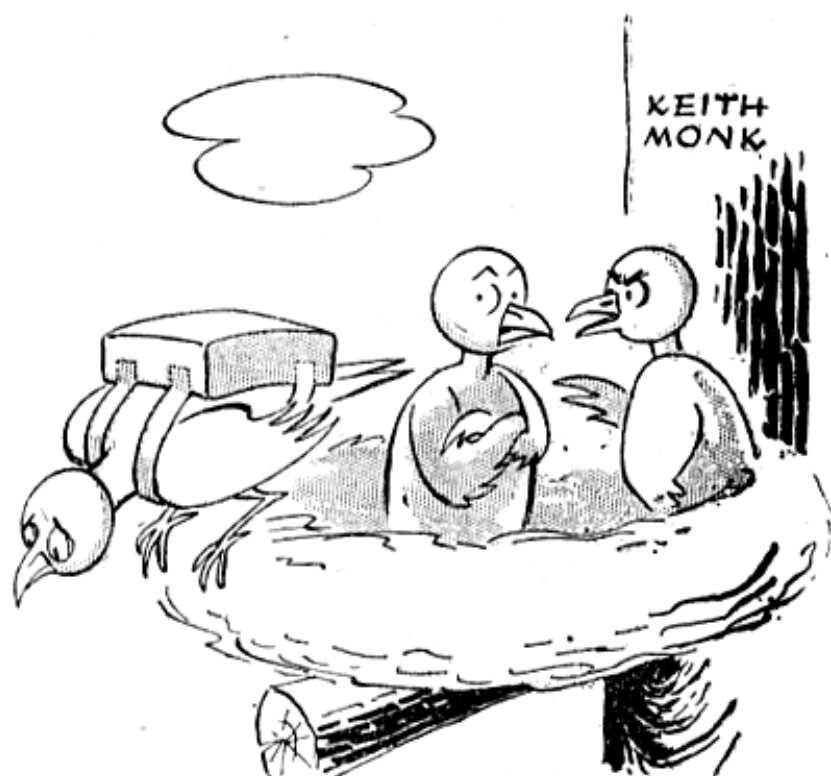
Turkey, with beating heart, stepped to that little cupboard under the radio in the alcove, with outstretched hand. As he did so, there was a sound of approaching footsteps outside the study door. Turkey spun round. Was that Roger's heavy tread—the brute coming back for something—?

'Oh, haddocks!' breathed Turkey.

For a moment Turkey's fat brain swam at the awful thought of Roger catching him there. Then he made a wild bound back to the window. He was out of that window like a shot. He bumped on the earth below with a breathless howl. But he did not linger there. He scrambled up, and vanished into space.

Groom, master of the Fifth, passed Roger's door: little dreaming how his footsteps had alarmed a fat junior in Roger's study!

**TURKEY** Tuck went to bed that night determined to keep awake. Turkey had had no luck as a daylight raider: but what could be easier than stealing down from the Fourth-form



*'I think it's high time Hortense developed a little confidence!'*

dormitory at a later hour, after Roger had gone to bed, and snooping that packet of toffee from the cupboard under the radio in Roger's study? Roger went to bed at eleven, regular as the clock in the old Carcroft tower. Nothing could be easier—if Turkey only remained awake till eleven!

It was a sound scheme: its only weak point being that Turkey fell asleep before his fat head had been on the pillow five minutes.

But he did not sleep so soundly as usual. As a rule, Epimenides himself had little on Turkey in that line. But now his slumber was haunted by dreams of Roger catching him after that toffee. He woke, at last, from a horrid vision of bending over under Roger's thickest cane. All was dark and silent. How late it was

Turkey didn't know: but he knew it must be very late. Having awakened he turned out, and groped in the dark for trousers and socks—sufficient equipment for a mild spring night. He bumped a fat head on a chair-back, and yelped—but nobody awakened—all was silent as Turkey opened and shut the dormitory door, and crept away down dark passages.

It was black as a hat on landings and staircases. Turkey crept cautiously along, groping at banisters and walls. Even in the dark, it was easy enough to grope his way to that well-known study. In five minutes, Turkey was at the door.

He crept into Roger's study. Inside the study it was, if possible, a little blacker than in the passages. Turkey rather wished that he had thought of bringing a match-box. But really he did not need it—he had only to grope his way across the room. His outstretched hands contacted the table, and there was a faint sound as an inkpot went over: a louder sound as it dropped to the floor. But that sound was not loud enough to wake Roger in his room above, so Turkey did not mind. He bumped a plump shin on an armchair, and yelped: he stubbed a podgy toe on the end of the fender, and squeaked. Then, at long last, his groping hand found a knob in the darkness, and he turned it.

It needed only

one turn of the knob to unlatch the cupboard door. But when Turkey, having turned, pulled, the door did not open. So he turned the knob to its fullest extent and pulled again. Still the beastly thing did not come open. He jerked at it, savagely, but cautiously. Then, suddenly——!

Boom!

Turkey jumped clear of the floor in his utter astonishment. For one amazing moment, it seemed to him that the clock in the ancient tower of Carcroft had somehow transferred itself into Roger's study, and was striking the hour within a few inches of his fat face. He staggered back in bewildered alarm, caught his foot in the hearthrug, and sat down with a bump and a squeak.

Boom!

It was not merely a boom. It was a thunderous roar, roaring through the study, thundering into the passages, echoing in every corner of the House, that stunned Turkey's bewildered ears.

**R**OGER Ducas fairly bounded in his bed.

No doubt Roger, in his time, had heard the chimes at midnight. No doubt the boom of Big Ben was familiar to his ears. But certainly he had never dreamed of hearing Big Ben boom, in his study below, an hour after he had gone to bed.

But there it was—booming, roaring, thun-





Gary Applegate

*'I'm sorry we must go, but I'm afraid my husband is rather tired.'*

dering, with the full force of the radio turned on to its very fullest extent. It boomed, it roared, it thundered, and like Macbeth it murdered sleep. Who could possibly have turned on the radio in his study at midnight was a deep mystery—which Roger proceeded, without an instant's delay, to investigate and elucidate. One bound from his bed, and another into his dressing-gown, and then Roger was descending the stairs at about 60 m.p.h.

Boom! greeted him, as he reached his study. Big Ben was still busy, going strong.

Roger switched on the light. It revealed a fat member of his form, in trousers and socks, scrambling up from the hearthrug with an expression of absolutely idiotic bewilderment on his fat face. It was just beginning to dawn on Turkey that he must have mistaken the knobs in the darkness, and turned on the radio instead of the knob on the cupboard

door. But Turkey had no time to think—or to act! Roger had arrived: and Turkey squirmed round and squinted at his form-master with popping eyes.

Big Ben gave a final boom. Then Roger's voice was heard.

'Go back to your dormitory, Tuck! I will deal with you in the morning!'

**TURKEY** could see nothing funny in what had happened. Any fellow, Turkey thought, groping in the dark, might have got hold of the wrong knob. It was just one of those rotten things that did happen. Turkey was not amused. But everyone else seemed to be: and when the Carcroft fellows heard in the morning, they yelled and howled with laughter. Turkey yelled and howled also, though not with laughter, when he received the reward of his midnight activities. There were six of the best—and no toffee—for Turkey!