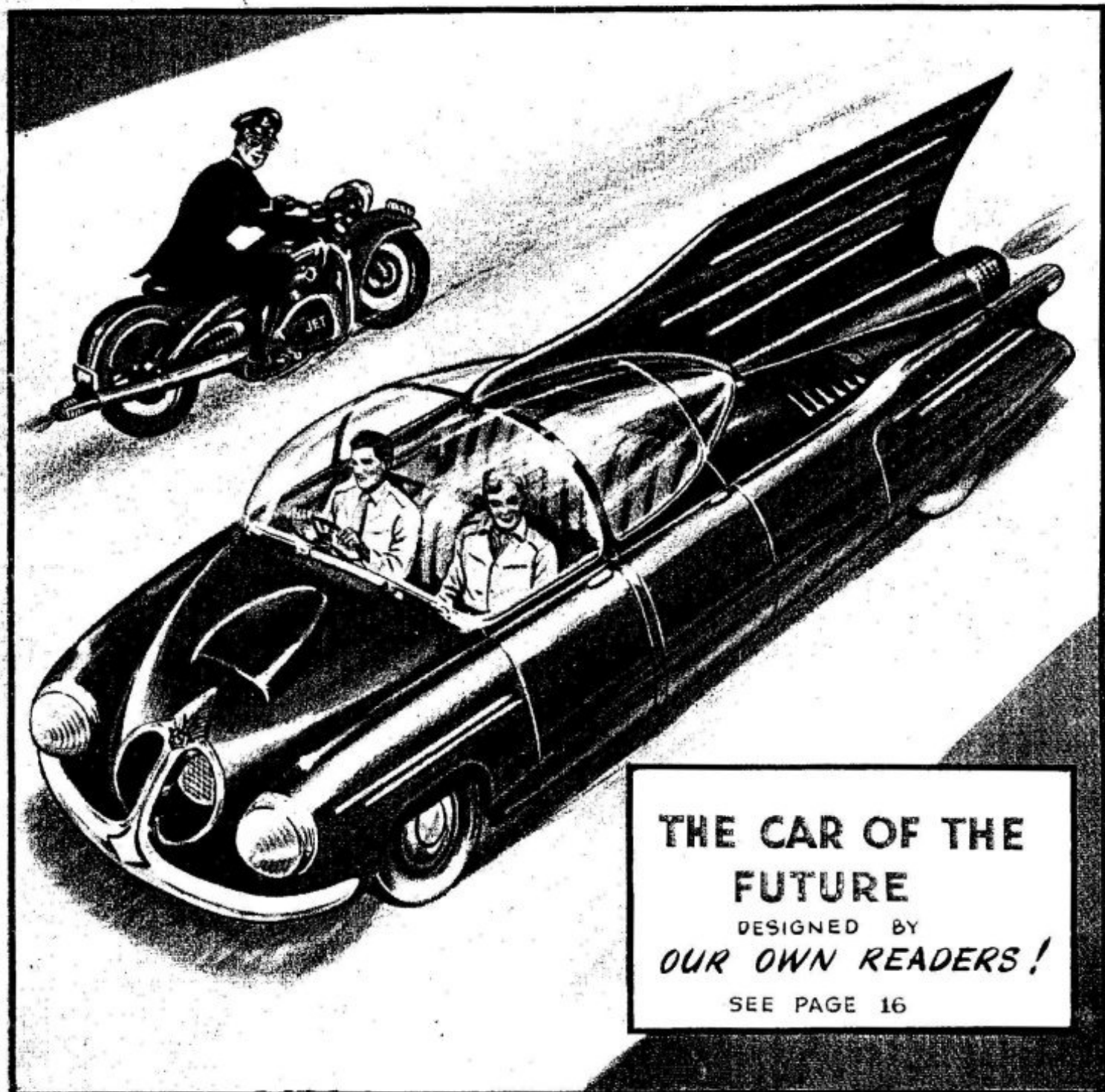


36 PAGES — PACKED WITH ENTERTAINMENT FOR BOYS OF ALL AGES!

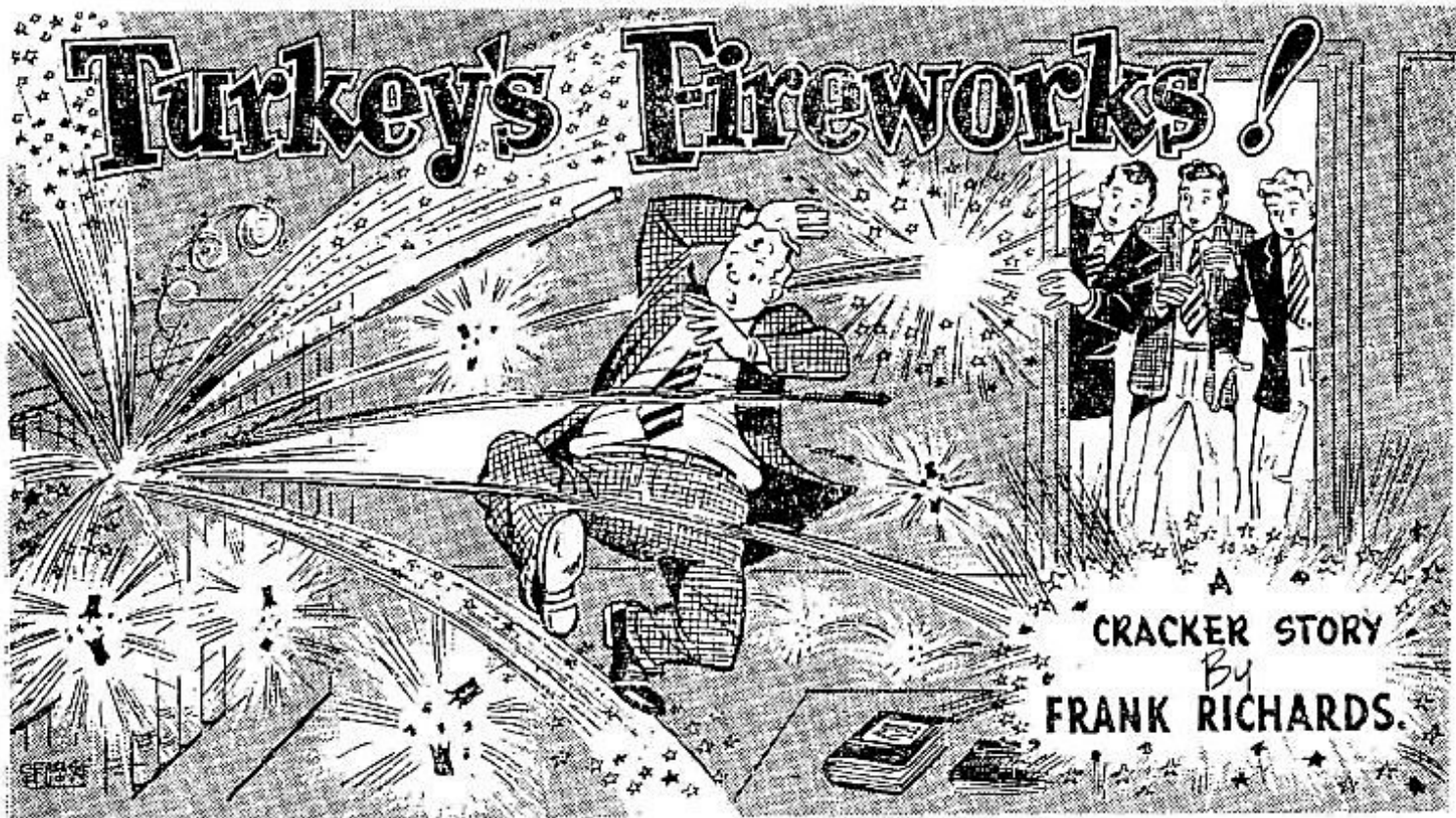
**THE SILVER JACKET**  
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THE MAGAZINE FOR BOYS

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**THE CAR OF THE  
FUTURE**  
DESIGNED BY  
**OUR OWN READERS!**  
SEE PAGE 16

**THIS IS AUSTRALIA'S FAMOUS MAGAZINE FOR BOYS!**



A  
CRACKER STORY  
By  
FRANK RICHARDS.

LANGLEY of the Sixth, captain of Carcroft School, frowned.

Langley was seated on a bench under one of the old Carcroft oaks. It was a sunny afternoon: almost warm, for winter. Langley was concentrated on a paper that lay on his knee. Langley was much better at football than at mathematics, and he was in the state that Carcroft fellows called "bottled" by that maths paper.

So when his concentration was interrupted by the sound of voices on the other side of the big oak, he was not pleased.

Three juniors of the Fourth Form had stopped there, to speak, quite unaware that so great a man as the captain of the school was anywhere in the offing. Harry Compton, Bob Drake and Dick Lee had quite keen eyesight, but they could not see through the trunk of a massive old oak.

They were talking football. Three voices came round the tree to Langley's ears. They were cheery and quite pleasant boyish voices. But they interrupted maths. Langley was tempted to call out to them to walk on. But, after all, juniors had a right to chat in the quad if they liked, and he refrained.

Then came another voice, recognizable as the fat voice of Turkey Tuck of the Fourth Form.

"Oh! Here you are, you chaps!"

The fat Turkey had joined the three under the oak branches.

"Here we are, fathead!" answered Harry Compton.

"I've been looking for you—"

"Well, now you've found us, go and look for somebody else!" suggested Bob Drake.

"I want you chaps to keep cave. I've got it!" announced Turkey.

Langley of the Sixth breathed hard. There were four of them now, and he simply couldn't get on with a mathematical problem with four voices buzzing in his ears.

"You've got what?" asked Dick Lee.

"A bundle of crackers for Gunter!" chuckled Turkey. "I've been down to Ridgate, and got 'em. Look! Cost me half-a-crown! But it's worth that to make that rotter Gunter jump out of his skin! What? He, he, he!"

"Rot!" said Harry Compton.

"Rubbish!" said Bob Drake.

"Forget it!" advised Dick Lee.

Snort from Turkey!

"Didn't he smack my head?" he demanded. "Just because I happened to put my foot on a packet of chocs he dropped. I didn't know he saw me put my foot on it—I mean, I wasn't going to snoop it after he was gone—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle," said Turkey. "But I've got it in for Gunter of the Sixth, I can tell you. I've got it all cut and dried. I know his fag has the fire ready laid in his study—Gunter will put a match to it when he comes in. Think he will guess that there's a bundle of crackers hidden in the middle of it? He, he! Think it will make him jump when they go off bang? He, he, he!"

Turkey Tuck chuckled loud and long.

"You silly ass!" said Harry Compton. "Keep clear of Sixth-form studies, and chuck that bundle of crackers away. It's a potty trick to put fireworks in a fire. If a pre caught you, you'd get six."

"You fat image," said Bob Drake. "You might set Gunter's study on fire."

"He smacked my head!" hooted Turkey.

"Couldn't have knocked any sense into it," remarked Dick Lee.

"I'm going to make him jump out of his skin—" snorted Turkey. "I want you fellows to keep cave while I get going in Gunter's study. I didn't want some fatheaded prefect like Langley or Lowndes to catch me—"

"TUCK!"

It was a startling voice. It came round the big oak. It was followed by its owner, Langley of the Sixth, captain and head-prefect of Carcroft.

"Oh, haddocks!" gasped Turkey Tuck.

He jumped almost clear of the ground in his startled affright. Indeed he would have jumped quite clear of it if he had had a little less weight to lift. Langley's unexpected voice had as startling an effect on Turkey Tuck, as he expected that bundle of crackers to have on Gunter of the Sixth when they exploded in his study fireplace. Turkey's gooseberry eyes fairly goggled at the Carcroft captain as he came round the oak.



"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bob Drake.

Langley gave no heed to the Carcroft Co. His eyes were fixed on the fat, dismayed face of James Smyth Tuck.

"You young ass!" rapped Langley. "I heard every word you said! You've got a bundle of fireworks there!"

"Oh! No! Yes!" gasped Turkey. "I—I mean—yes—no—"

"Do you want to set the school on fire, you little idiot?"

"Oh! Yes! I—I mean, no—"

"If you weren't the thickest-headed young ass at Carcroft, I'd give you six for thinking of playing such a trick!" rapped Langley. "Those fireworks are confiscated. Go to the House at once. Take those crackers to my study and put them on the shelf there. If I don't find them there when I come in, I'll give you six of the very best."

"Oh! I—I—"

"Cut off!" snapped Langley.

Turkey blinked at him. There was no help for it. His deep-laid scheme for making Gunter of the Sixth jump out of his skin was completely off. He blinked at Langley, blinked at Harry Compton and Co. and then slowly and reluctantly revolved on his axis, and rolled away to the House.

Langley, frowning, returned to his bench and his mathematical problem. Harry Compton and Co. strolled away smiling.

"Turkey all over!" remarked Bob Drake. "He would burble it out with a pre. only a couple of yards away!"

"Ha, ha ha!"

The chums of the Fourth chuckled. They resumed talking football, nothing doubting that they had heard the last of Turkey's bundle of crackers. But on that point they were in error.

## II.

"TOO LATE!" said Bob Drake.

"Eh! Wharrer you mean?" bleated Turkey.

"We've finished tea."

Three fellows in the corner study in the Fourth grinned.

When Turkey Tuck rolled into a fellow's study about tea-time, the natural inference was that Turkey was understudying the lion, seeking what he might devour. But if that was the case he was, as Bob said, too late. Tea was over in the corner study: the festive board had been quite cleared.

But Turkey did not give it even a glance. For once, Turkey was not thinking of the foodstuffs. Other matters were in Turkey's fat mind.

"I haven't come to tea!" he yapped.

"You haven't!" agreed Bob. "Shut the door after you."

Turkey shut the door. But he stayed on the inner side of it.

"I want one of you chaps to help me out," he said. "You know Langley made me take my crackers to his study. I had to, you know, or he'd have given me six if he hadn't found them there. Well, I put them on the shelf, like he told me, and they're still there. He hadn't done anything with them since he came in."

"How do you know, fathead?"

"I've just squinted in at his study window, from the quad," explained Turkey. "He always has his window open. I saw him having tea in his study with Lowndes. Then they went out, and I squinted in—and

know who had them, so that's all right—absolutely safe. Look here, you chaps—be pals and help me out."

"You want us to help you out?" asked Bob.

"Yes, rather, old chap!" said Turkey, eagerly.

"Sure?" asked Bob.

"Yes, yes, yes!" bleated Turkey.

"O.K.," said Bob. "You open the door, Dick, and I'll help Turkey out."

Dick Lee, grinning, threw the door open.

"That's right, old chap," said Turkey. "You help me out—ow! Warrer you grabbing my neck for? Leggo, will you? Ow! wow! What do you think you're up to, Bob Drake?"

## MUSCLES COCKLES HAS A HOLIDAY!



George Roots is taking his annual holidays and this means that Muscles has a month's rest, too. In his place we are running THEM THAR HILLS, a guest strip by a sixteen-year-old Australian artist, Max Yahl. You'll find it on page 22. Muscles will be back and up to his tricks again in next month's issue.

there was the bundle on his shelf, just where I left it a couple of hours ago."

"Well, what about it?" asked Harry Compton.

"Well, a chap might be spotted going to his study," said Turkey. "But I've told you he's left his window open. A chap could nip in at the window and get that bundle as easy as anything. Most likely he wouldn't ever miss it—I shouldn't wonder if he's forgotten all about it by this time. I say, Bob, old chap, you're awfully good at climbing—"

"Am I?" grinned Bob.

"Ever so much better than I am," said Turkey. "You could nip in at Langley's window as easy as falling off a form. You'll get that bundle of crackers back for me, won't you, old fellow?"

"Not in these trousers."

"What about you, Compton? Nobody will see you—it's getting dusk in the quad now. Safe as houses, old chap."

"You howling ass!" said Harry Compton. "Leave your silly crackers where they are. You're not safe with fireworks."

"I say, Lee, will you get that bundle of crackers for me?"

"Not so'd you'd notice it."

"Well, of all the rotters!" said Turkey, in disgust. "I tell you I want those crackers. Langley won't miss them—and if he does he won't

"Helping you out!" answered Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" yelled Turkey, struggling in Bob's hefty grasp. "I didn't mean that—!"

"I did!" answered Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, haddocks! Oh, crumbs! Wow!" roared Turkey as he was helped out of the study, and sat in the passage with a bump. "Ow! wow! ow! ow!"

The door of the corner study closed on James Smyth Tuck. From within that study came a sound of laughter. But Turkey did not feel like laughing as he heaved himself to his feet. He gurgled for breath, shook a fat fist at the study door, and rolled away. He did not want any more helping-out from that study.

It was borne in upon Turkey's fat mind that if anyone was going to perform the rather risky feat of clambering in at a Sixth-form study window, and retrieving a bundle of crackers confiscated by a prefect, that one had to be Turkey himself.

Turkey Tuck was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. He would have preferred some other fellow to perform that rather risky feat. But he made up his fat mind to it and rolled out into the quad.

The wintry dusk was thickening and it was close on 11 o'clock. That favoured Turkey: there was no one



about as he sidled along cautiously to the Sixth-form study windows. Langley's window was still open, as he had seen it last. The stone sill was rather high from the ground. Turkey was just able to grasp it by extending his fat hands to the limit.

He grasped it and heaved up.

He gasped and panted as he heaved. The law of gravitation was telling on Turkey's extensive weight. With infinite exertion, the fat Turkey got one elbow on the sill. With tremendous effort he landed the other. Then he had to pause and recover his wind before he pushed on.

He hung breathless.

Just as he was about to renew his efforts and heave up, there was a footstep on the gravel path under the windows.

"Oh, haddocks!" breathed Turkey as he heard it.

Hanging on by his elbows, Turkey squinted round in alarm. He squinted at the astonished face of Mr. Ducas, master of the Fourth.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Roger Ducas. "Is that Tuck?" He peered at Turkey in the dusk. "What are you doing there, Tuck?"

Turkey could have groaned. The coast had been clear a few minutes ago. But he had been too long about it. He goggled at Roger Ducas in dismay. Roger's brow grew stern.

"How dare you climb in at a study window, Tuck? Get down at once! Go to your study and write fifty lines. Bring me the lines before preparation."

"I—I—I—" stuttered Turkey.

"At once!" rapped Roger.

A dispirited Turkey dropped from the window-sill of Langley's study. In the lowest of spirits, Turkey rolled back into the House. And for the next hour he was busy in his study, transcribing Latin lines from "Conticuere omnes" to "ingentem viribus hastam," and never had James Smyth Tuck seen fewer charms in the deathless verse of P. Vergilius Maro!

### III

"OH, HADDOCKS!" breathed Turkey. He grinned.

His gooseberry eyes danced.

Turkey was in luck at last! At least, he had no doubt that he was. He peered into the Sixth-form passage. There was not a soul about. At long, long last the way was open for Turkey to recapture that bundle of crackers.

It was after prep. There was a Form meeting of the Sixth that evening in the Prefect's Room. So Turkey had learned, with infinite

satisfaction. For that meant that all the Sixth would be gathered in the Prefect's Room: not a man in the studies till the meeting broke up.

Squinting along the corridor, Turkey could see that the door of the Prefect's Room, at the other end, was closed. All he had to do was to tiptoe down the passage to Langley's study, whip in, grab the bundle of crackers and depart on his highest gear. Later on he could carry out his plans against Gunther—what mattered now was getting possession of his crackers. And with a grinning fat face, Turkey tiptoed along to Langley's study.

He fairly shot into that study when he reached it.

It was dark within: the night, outside, was as black as a hat. Only the faintest glimmer came in from the light along the passage. Turkey blinked round like an owl in the dark. He dared not switch on a light.

But really, he did not need one. He could grope across the study to the shelf in the alcove, where that little bundle lay among books, and papers, and odds and ends of all sorts. And he had matches in his pocket. One match would be enough to show him what he wanted. It was all quite simple.

Grinning, Turkey groped his way. An extended fat hand contacted something in the dark, and there was a thud, as an inkpot rolled from the table. He stopped, his fat heart beating fast.

Probably there was a sea of ink on Langley's carpet. But that did not matter, so long as the fall of the inkpot had not been heard. He was soon reassured. He groped on, and reached the alcove in the corner.

There was another thud as he groped at the shelf. A displaced dictionary dropped—on Turkey's toe.

"Wow!" gasped Turkey.

He caught his breath, and listened intently. But again he was in luck: that thud had reached no other ears.

He groped in his pocket for his match-box. He struck a match and held it up to squint over the shelf for his bundle of crackers.

In the flickering light of the match, he squinted to and fro. For the moment he did not see what he sought, and an awful doubt smote him that he had had his trouble for nothing, and that Langley had thrown them away. Then he discerned a bunch of fuses sticking out from under a Greek lexicon. Langley, evidently, had pitched that book on the shelf on top of Turkey's

little bundle. But he had found it now.

Holding up the match in his right hand, Turkey reached over with his left and threw the lexicon aside. There was the bundle of crackers. In another moment, Turkey's fat hand would have clutched it.

In his eagerness, he had not noted that the match was burning down fast. He noticed it, at that moment, as the flame reached his fat finger and thumb.

"Yaroooh!" howled Turkey, and he dropped the match.

He sucked finger and thumb frantically. But he forgot even that, a moment later, as there was a sudden sputtering of sparks in the dark.

Fizzzzzzzzzz!

"Oh, haddocks!" gasped Turkey. "What—"

It was only later that Turkey realised that he had dropped the burning match on the bunched fuses of the crackers. At the moment, he was too wildly confused to realise that or anything else.

Bang! bang! bang! bang!

"Oh, crikey! Oh, crumbs! Oh, haddocks! Oh—!"

Bang! bang! bang!

"Oh, lor! The crackers—"

Bang! Bang! Bang! BANG!

Turkey staggered back, stumbled over a chair and sat down in a pool of ink on Langley's carpet. He sat and spluttered, hardly aware whether he was on his head or his heels, as the roar of exploding fireworks filled the room with din and resounded all over the House. There were footsteps and startled voices in the passage: the light switched on at the door and Langley of the Sixth, with a crowd of other Sixth-form men behind him, stared into the study.

BANG!

It was the last of the crackers! Langley stared into a haze of smoke, a smell of gunpowder.

"What—?" he ejaculated.

He said no more. He rushed into the study. With his left, he grasped Turkey's collar and jerked him to his feet. With his right, he grabbed up the ashplant from the table. After which, there was a sound in Langley's study as of the beating of carpet, though a series of frantic yells made it clear that it was not carpet that was being beaten! It was a sad, sorrowful Turkey that wriggled away to the Fourth-form studies. Gunter of the Sixth never knew what a narrow escape he had had of fireworks in his study. Turkey wholly, entirely, and completely abandoned that idea. He was fed up with fireworks.