

Today's True Story

RAILROADER

By Denis Morrison



THE first morning out from Chicago westbound on the Transcontinental Limited, Jerry Fallon sat reading his paper when the conductor arrived to collect his ticket.

Fallon observed that the conductor eyed him narrowly. He felt himself tempted to open a conversation but resisted the urge. Not many items escaped Fallon's attention. Back on the line they called him Eagle-Eye Fallon and for good reasons. He bided his time.

The conductor passed to and fro in the train repeatedly and each trip Fallon felt the searching gaze on him. It got to be a game. Finally the conductor sat down on the seat beside him and said:

"How come you're paying your way? Why aren't you riding on a pa-

Fallon's eyes twinkled.

"I knew you had me pegged," he said. "You're exactly right. It's something about the eyes."

"Now, if you had handed me a pass I wouldn't have been in any doubt at all. But when a railroader shows me a paid-up first-class ticket with a compartment on an extra-fare train, then I get to wonderin' how he got in bad—or what?"

JERRY FALLON chuckled good-humoredly and drew out his wallet.

"Read that," he said, "and weep. You're looking at the luckiest man in the world."

The conductor took the newspaper clipping that Fallon offered him and read a headline that said in large type:

SUBWAY GUARD
WINS \$100,000
SWEEPS PRIZE

The story under the heading said: "Jeremiah Fallon, 58-year-old veteran of the I. R. T., today was receiving the congratulations of his fellow workers on holding a ticket on Bellophon, winner of the Leicestershire handicap. An employee of the I. R. T. for 37 years, Fallon told interviewers today that he plans to turn in his uniform and spend a year in travel before settling down in a cottage in the Bronx for the remainder of his days."

THE conductor read the clipping through. Fallon handed him others, a whole dossier of them, some with his picture. He swelled with pride as the other man devoured what was written about him. His pride was considerably deflated when he placed the clippings and picture in his wallet.

"I took you at first for a real railroader," the conductor said.

"What do you mean, a real railroader?"

"Why—like myself. You fellows are only moles. I'd rather be a gopher on a horsecar, a brakeman on a work train, than push a 7 of cars down there under the sun in a—what-do-you-call-it?—goggone catacomb."

"I was a railroader—what you call railroader—too," Jerry Fallon said with some heat. "I started in the Central at Binghamton years ago. Began by lightin' fires on the locomotives. Got to be a foreman. Then firemen down to New York and went to the L. R. T. back around 1900. And, boy, for real life, for excitement, fun—give me the subways any old time."

"And you never got any higher than third in all those years? Must be a tough racket for promotion."

"I got higher than guard. I was a conductor 18 years. One night pulled into 14th-st about 3 o'clock in the morning—well, I hurt my right eye. See, it's a little off even now."

"There was a fire," said Jerry Fallon. "Excitement. People being tramped and so forth. A bad situation. Some silly guy poked a thumb in my eye. He didn't mean to do it, but it was important to me. They took me off the front end of the train. Had to. Believe me, buddy, when you're slidin' out of the Atlantic station in Brooklyn and you know you only got so much time to get your jug all the way out to New Lots and back to Manhattan again—well, you step down on that jug and you watch the curves. You mister, you got to be a real railroader."

FALLON was a model slow mover. He did not tell this was his clothing that he had been snatched from him. A disguised panic in his bed in the last car. He did not tell him, either, that he had a check to his name, a savings account, and a half a million in the bank.

"I was two days rackin' my memory to piece that young lady," he told the conductor. "I know I had seen her before. A long time ago. I knew it had something to do with cryin' and sheddin' tears."

"I knew it the minute she came to me weeping because her money had been stolen. Well, this morning it came back. In Times Square the ps call her Weeping Annie. She is a fake faint and when some 'ow hurries to her rescue she has a hand into his pocket and 'ow his wallet. I caught her g'ung stung once on my car."

"I said the train conductor, 'you're a hell of a good e even if you're not a rail-just subway mole.'

"Fallon smiled, too.

"It is fun just like Jerry said."

THE END.

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

—By Ahern



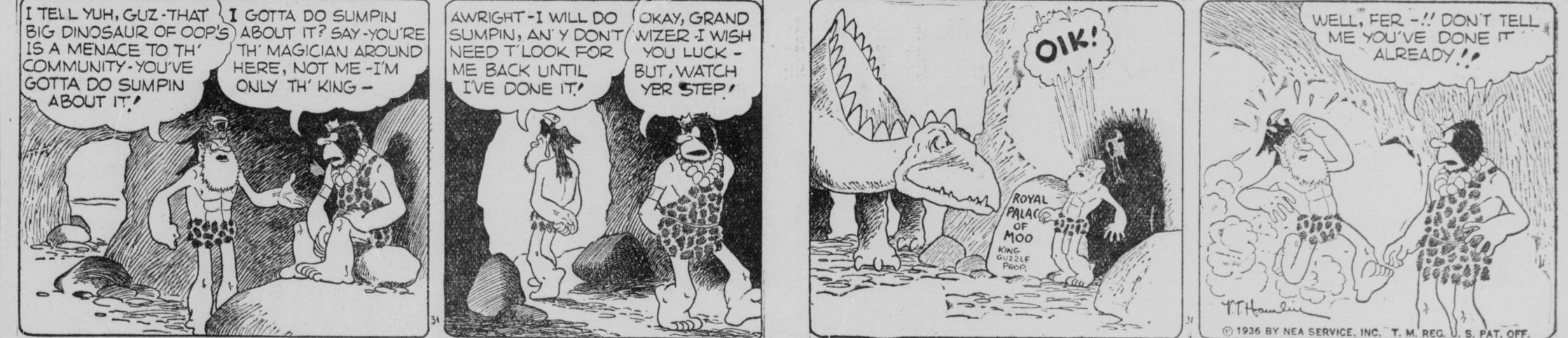
FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASHINGTON TUBBS II



ALLEY OOP



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



THE TARZAN TWINS



When Dick realized that the ferocious hunting lion was upon him, he swiftly obeyed the first impulse that seized him. He wheeled about, facing the animal he could not see, and thrust his spear violently outward in the direction of that blood-curdling growl.

At the same instant he felt a heavy body strike the weapon, and the poor boy was hurled to the ground. Nearby, his cousin heard that frightful turmoil, followed by a deafening, earthshaking roar. "Dick! Dick!" he called frantically. But there was no answer!

Dick's encounter with the lion had at least the virtue of swiftness, whereas Tarzan's plight was almost upon the mad beast. Gudah knew he must rid himself of the man-thing and face his elephant foe. His great trunk whipped downward to dash Tarzan to the ground. This, thought the Jungle Lord, was the end!

Now the elephant Tantor, the ape-man's friend, was almost upon the mad beast. Gudah knew he must rid himself of the man-thing and face his elephant foe. His great trunk whipped downward to dash Tarzan to the ground. This, thought the Jungle Lord, was the end!

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