

In the first part of our story, Tom recounted the arrival on the farm of the first motor vehicle. This week, the truck with a mind of its own begins to take revenge on its new masters.

It was haying time. And it was manure spreading time. The manure lay in heaps around the barns, and the hay cocks awaited delivery to the mows. What better way to get some practice driving the truck than by bringing the hay in, and the manure out? Another good idea, and another bad mistake.

On its first manoeuver, with Clinton driving and Father as co-pilot, the truck took off like a blue streak. Quite a feat, considering the truck was red. It was fortunate for the house, and everything else around, that the truck was headed in the direction of a fence. It was an old wire fence, and loose. But a bungie-fence it wasn't. It didn't rebound much. Where the coming and going met wasn't all that soft, if you know what I mean. But the fence was strong enough, and springy enough, to stall the truck without doing much damage. Except to egos left in the wake.

The "Bobsy Twins" (Father and Clinton) scrambled from the truck looking embarrassed as hell. And scared. And, of course, the warning went out not to tell anyone. It was some hours before the would-be truckers regained their composure and ventured near the truck again. They seemed to fear that there was something demonic about the monster. And they were quite right to be on guard.

Anyone should have been able to see that this wasn't your usual manure-hauling truck. And because of his high level of sophistication, Clinton didn't like the smell of manure. If I had been at the decision-making level, I don't think I would have



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been so foolhardy as to change the game plan. Certainly not without having consulted the truck first.

It was about this time that the truck's disturbed personality began to manifest itself in earnest. Why else would it flip out of gear and roll into a ditch? Or release its own brake and go someplace else when left unattended? Clinton and Father were never to blame, though they were the only ones allowed near the truck. So, who else? The truck didn't seem to give a damn who they blamed. The bewildered truckers never seemed to be able to anticipate what the truck was going to do next.

The ditches were deep, and the holes were many. Stationary objects and slow-moving creatures were fair game. But it was a sure way of stopping the truck.

The manure piles were no problem. They were nice and soft, and caused little damage when the truck decided to climb one of them.

After its encounter with the bungie-fence, our heroes decided to pull the truck back onto the road with the horses. They weren't about to use the reverse gear. They could get into enough trouble just driving forward. If the truck acted that way in forward gear, what the hell might it do in reverse?

While bringing in the first load of hay, the truck and truckers broke Clifford's arm. Clifford had been given the job of standing on the truck and spreading the hay, while the rest of us (except the drivers) pitched the hay on. Clifford stayed atop the load of hay on the trip to the barn, as the renegades hit every hole and hollow on the way. The truckers were too busy trying to manage the truck to notice, until they arrived at the barn, that they were minus Clifford and half their load of hay. A low branch had swept him off.

When we were able to locate Clifford under the hay, it was obvious that he was in great pain. He was bundled into the Model T, and off to the doctor, amid agony, grief and sympathy. A cloud, not unlike a funeral, enwrapped the homestead. The family was immobilized with grief, awaiting Clifford's return. It was a long wait.

Finally, a cloud of dust appeared on the distant road. There weren't many motorized vehicles around at that time, so we knew that it must be the Model T returning. As the little black truck drew nearer, we recognized Clifford sitting up in the seat, grinning widely. We expected a stretcher case, at best. He tumbled from the truck, almost before it stopped rolling.

Clifford's happy state was difficult to understand, given the big cast that enwrapped his arm, and the extreme pain that he had been in when he left. But the glee on his face was unmistakable. The cast of his arm was big, white, round and smooth. We had never seen anything like it. It was beautiful. And we could see that Clifford's pain had turned to pride in his new plaster wrap, and he played it to the hilt. As for the rest of us, our sympathy was quickly turning to envy. *To be continued.*