

### The Ill-fated Truck

Whether it was revenge for the manure hauling, or the sudden entry into the unconfined world of the open highway, the truck stepped up its high jinks. But I could see that it was going about this revenge thing all wrong. It was doing more damage to its own person, than to that of its tormentors. All it was doing was scaring the hell out of them, while sporting dents, tears, and broken racks of its own. But then, the road may have had something to do with it, too. The crooked, washboard highway was little more than a wagon trail at that time.

At the same time a new phenomena had entered the picture. A phenomena that had the built-in ability to equalize itself. If Father wasn't firing Clinton, Clinton was quitting. It was becoming an almost daily routine. Father would fire Clinton in the morning when he managed to find him, or when he couldn't get him out of bed to go to work. And Clinton would quit in the evening, when Father insisted that they work later, to make up for the late start.

It seems that Clinton didn't like the truck when it had that damned load on it. That was no condition for a recreation vehicle, and apparently the girls didn't like it either. The truck could go faster empty. It must have bored the girls silly with all that gear changing, when the truck was loaded.

It was on their first trip to the mill when, just south of Venosta, the first serious mishap occurred. That particular area of the highway had an exotic name of its very own. The ravine was known as the "blue cut", because of the type of clay on which it was built.

Though the "cut" terrified the pair, I don't think there had been an accident on that part of the road before. Father, son, and the truck were about to change all that.

They would have been better to have stuck to horses. the would-be adventurers hadn't yet developed to the stage whereby they should have been involved with a mechanical vehicle of this proportion. The truck was ahead of its time. The truckers lacked this element.

Apparently the first loading went well. The truck showed no signs of any intention to cause trouble. But, of course, the would-be truckers



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were nervous wrecks by this time, and in no condition to be trying to navigate this monstrous highway. I think at this point the pair were beginning to seriously regret that the truck had entered their previously serene lives. But they were determined. You'll have to say that for them. They hung in there.

To hear the younger member of the team tell it, when they came to the troublesome part of the road, Father insisted on driving the truck through the Cut. He considered the road, at this point, too dangerous for Clinton to navigate. And I suppose he was worried about the truck's changing moods.

The Cut had a tricky hill and curve at the south end. And I guess, I can only guess here, Father practically knew if he got up enough speed going down the hill, and as long as he turned the steering wheel in the right direction, the truck should make it up the other hill. No problem there. Father, bravely, or otherwise, we will never know, took the wheel. And Clinton hung on. Father had shot rapids before in his perilous career, and I suppose he felt that this odyssey couldn't be much more dangerous. Things didn't turn out as planned. Father, the truck and all, skipped blithely over the fence, and, after flipping a few times, landed in the pasture below. At least they were in familiar surroundings, among the worried cows.

The truck had accomplished its mission, and the racks and the load had protected the living quarters. About all the residents lost was their pride, their load, and their nerve. Not bad, considering. The truck landed on its wheels. They don't make trucks with that kind of agility nowadays. So it was just a matter of sitting around and waiting for the trembling to stop, and to figure out where was up, and then to find a gate whereby to escape from the pasture, unnoticed.

And, by gosh, if the two didn't get back into the truck and drive it away. Well, we don't know if they both drove it away. But we do know that there was very close cooperation between the two enterprisers, as they frantically tried to get the load back on the truck before anyone spied them. The nosy neighbours came along. And just in time too. His cows were beginning to nose their way through the broken fence.

It was a dark and stormy night, not long after that, that the truck decided to spend some time moseying around among the head stones in a local grave yard. Perhaps in r of some long-gone friend. The only trouble was, this wasn't a truck graveyard. But more likely the truck wanted to end its misery once and for all and this was just another attempt at suicide. The truck stalled on a railroad crossing adjacent to the cemetery.

Now, anyone who knows anything at all about locomotives, knows that they don't like pretentious trucks blocking their way. It was just about train time, so there wasn't much waiting around to do.

The situation gets a bit murky here. Perhaps caused by the dark and stormy night. I don't have all the information here. And the truckers were as tight lipped as ever. I have the suspicion that the occupants were standing well clear of the truck when the locomotive struck. Anyway, they again escaped unscathed.

The truck wasn't long back on the road, when it again started scheming to end this nonsense once and for all. It just wasn't planning these attempted suicides well enough. I guess it thought. The next time would be different. I guess it thought again. And I can only guess, that the truck decided to heat things up a bit, and go out in a blaze of glory. And rid itself of its tormentors for good. For some reason the truckers decided to haul hay in the middle of an unstormy clear night. Why this was, was never satisfactorily explained. But it couldn't have worked into the truck's plans better.

I awoke to the reflection of the dancing flames on the bedroom walls. And the loud talking. We all rushed outside to see the truck engulfed in flames.

When the fire subsided, I thought I heard the truck's final moan. It sounded like, "Baker's scrap yard, hear I come".