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Features

# The Advocate

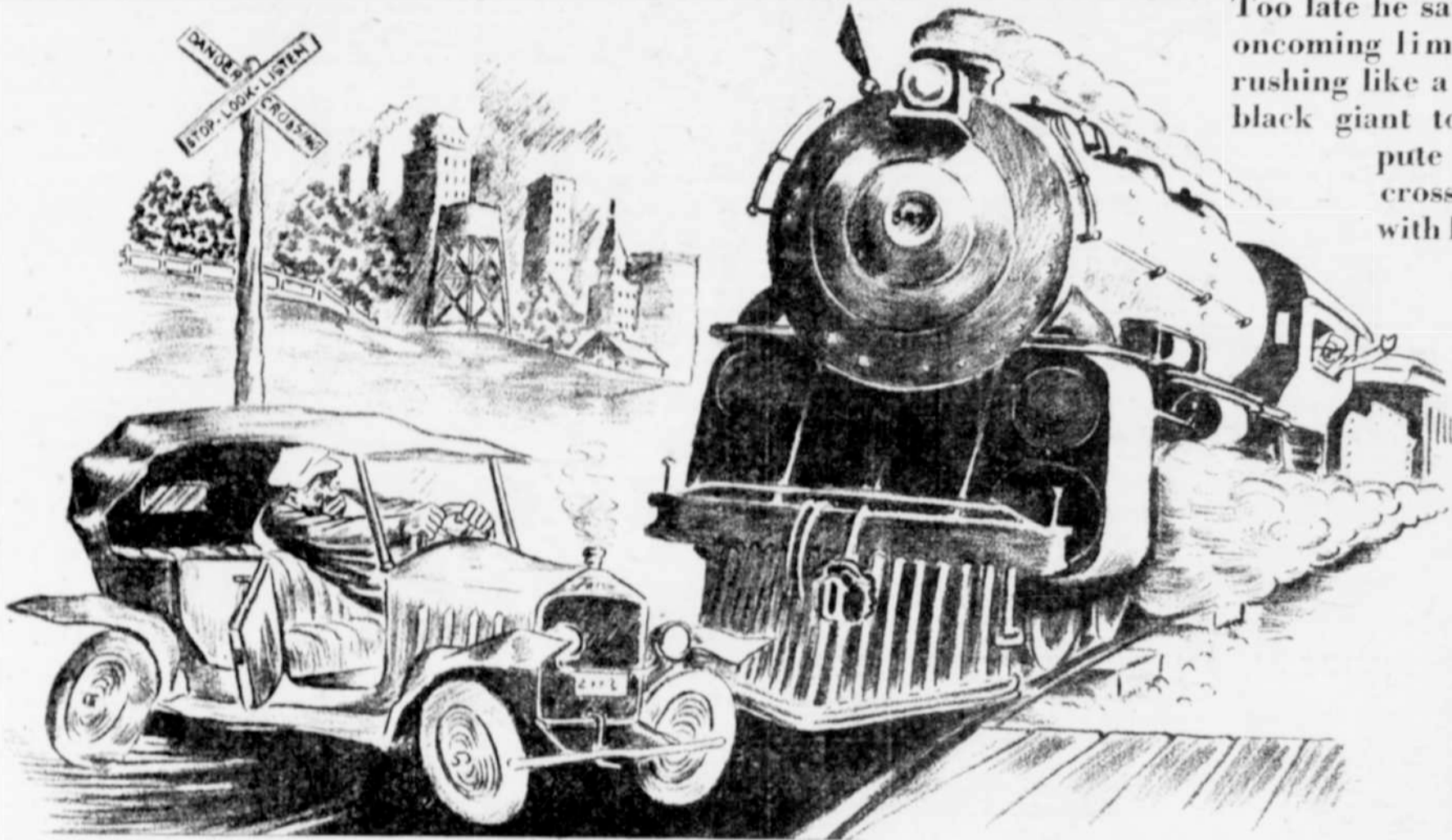
True Stories  
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## "TAKE AN' PROCEED"



Too late he saw the oncoming limited, rushing like a huge black giant to dispute the crossing with him.

By C. A. CONNER

Booker T. Jones was not a psychic but he had a strong premonition that something was about to befall him. His ordinarily glossy dark color had given way to one of a more or less vivid green, sharply contrasting with a pair of protruding eyeballs and a desperately locked set of gleaming ivories.

A pair of enormous hands, glued to the steering wheel,

threatened to tear it from its columns, while his number eights simultaneously shoved low reverse and brake pedals through the already sagging floor boards.

The immediate cause of Booker's presentiment lay almost in front of him in the form of the Night Limited. It had whistled for the crossing, but no such sound had reached his ear, possibly due to the many conflicting noises and groans that his recently acquired chariot had been sending forth as it protested vainly against the heavy foot upon the accelerator.

And now with flapping doors and sliding tires, the good ship Lizzie, with one Booker T. Jones, frozen to the controls, was rapidly approaching a far worse fate than she had but recently escaped at the hands of Simon Goldberg, Hebrew owner of the Star Auto Wrecking Company — Booker was literally staring through a knot hole into the undertaker's.

The whole ill-fated venture now rose sharply and clearly in his memory. Booker had ambled into the Jew's emporium just as the latter was about to dissect and file the few remaining usable parts of Lizzie's carcass. Goldberg had promptly coaxed from Booker's pocket, as a down payment, a ten-dollar bill earned by long hours of tedious labor. The balance of forty-two dollars and ninety cents had been made payable in weekly installments.

The fact that the greater portion of the balance was composed of "interest and brokerage charges" had been completely overlooked in Booker's mind by the overpowering urge of ownership. He had long cherished a desire to own an automobile and this had seemed his opportunity.

The mortgage had been duly drawn up and signed, although Jones had

been dubious of that formidable document and had labored suspiciously to assimilate that clause which read:

"If the party of the second part, Simon Goldberg shall feel insecure or unsafe in this security, then and in such case, the second party, Simon Goldberg, may immediately take and proceed without notice to sell the said property or any part thereof."

Booker had signed upon the Hebrew's glib assurance that it was all "merely a matter of form." He had then been given some very meagre instructions as to the operation of the vehicle. While Goldberg accompanied Booker to the opposite running board, his able assistant perceiving the broad back of Mr. Jones to be turned, stole the few remaining tools from the tool-box.

Goldberg had eased him to a position behind the wheel, solicitously wished him bon voyage and sped him merrily on his way.

After two blocks of fairly successful manipulation the car had suddenly wheezed asthmatically and completely expired in the midst of a busy intersection. All the abuse and caustic advice which had been heaped upon him by a frantic traffic cop had left him undaunted, but had brought rather forcibly to his attention the urgent and immediate need of gasoline. While operating the car to the curb he had produced over ways and means of purchase of the coveted fluid, the transaction with Goldberg having completely and entirely exhausted his finances.

By dint of much persuasion, plus the deposit of the spare tire, he had filled the empty tank and again braved the perils of downtown traffic. Having passed safely through the suburbs, he had settled back in the seat, king of all he surveyed, and watched

the country road roll up at him with a feeling of sublime exhilaration.

A low, rakish roadster had slipped noiselessly from behind and vanished down the highway, leaving Mr. Jones with a mouthful of dust and a reaction akin to that of a bull to a red flag. Obsessed by the spirit of Barney Oldfield, Mercury, et al, he had thrown caution to the winds, tightened his grip on the wheel, thrust his jaw forward, pulled the hand throttle to the bottom, pushed the foot-peg to its limit. And, despite the greatly increased laments of the charger, in full hue and cry he pursued.

Too late he saw the oncoming Limited, rushing like a huge, black giant to dispute the crossing with him.

A shrieking of brakes, a sickening crash, a body hurling through space, a gathering of white-faced crew and passengers. Mr. Jones painfully un-

draped his anatomy from the friendly embrace of a spreading oak on the opposite side of the track and slid to the ground.

Among the first to meet him was no less a personage than Simon Goldberg, who had boarded the train in the city. He recognized Mr. Jones, then his glance flew instantly to the remains of the luckless car spattered thickly over the scenery. A deep, heart-breaking groan arose from the innermost depths of his soul.

"Oh, Lawdy, oh, Lawdy!" groaned Booker T., his angry gaze resting first on the wreck and then on the gesticulating Jew. Shortly a great light burst upon him and a smile transfigured his bruised face. Turning to Mr. Goldberg, the party of the second part, he said:

"Go 'head, Mistah Goldberg, take an' proceed!"

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