

## "Strange Frank" —

"Well Frank," I said inquisitively. "Yes Derik," he answered unexpectedly. "Well Frank, looks like you'll be all right now; eh Frank?" "Yes Derik, I guess so." Now as I think back to those good old days with Frank it strikes me as rather strange he died the way he did, especially after he guessed he would be all right.

Frank always was sort of strange though, walking around the way he did: one foot after the other all the time. Everyone that knew him always used to say: "Frank really is rather strange, walking around the way he does, one foot after the other all the time." Frank didn't have many friends — probably because of his being so strange all the time or something — but that didn't bother him, at least it didn't appear to. Every time there was a party everyone used to sit around and cut up Frank to his back or leg or arm — whatever was most convenient — and he just sat there and was very strange.

Sometimes Frank and I used to go sit in the park or walk around or something because I sort of liked him, except when he walked, because he was always putting one foot in front of the other, and that seemed pretty strange to me. Well, one day we were sitting in the park or walking around or something when he asked me if I knew what would happen if everyone turned into prunes. Quickly I answered no and passed it off as another strangeness because I figured anyone who walks the way he does — putting one foot in front of the other all the time — is liable to say anything, and that's just what he did. "Anything," he screamed into my ear. "Anything," he yelled up my nose. "Anything! Anything! Anything!" I passed that off too, thinking to myself: "That's pretty strange," and it was.

He got kind of hung up on anything and that's all he said for about three years so eventually he was arrested for walking around — putting one foot in front of the other all the time — saying "anything" in public places. I thought that was rather strange too but then Frank was Frank because he sure wasn't Clarence. It wasn't very long before he was released though, because the police weren't going to have anything to do with someone that walked around the way he did — put-

ting one foot in front of the other all the time.

After he got out he vowed he would never say "anything" again, and he didn't. Frank didn't speak for about ten years, but no one thought it too peculiar because, well, you know Frank. When he did start talking again people used to say to him: "Shut your mouth Frank, you're always talking," which wasn't true because he hadn't said anything in ten years, but no one liked him very much because he was rather strange, especially when he walked — putting one foot in front of the other all the time — so they kept saying: "Shut your mouth Frank, you're always talking." He didn't shut his mouth though, which is a good thing because some people would have probably started some rumors about him and he might have gotten a complex or a cold or something.

One day, as I was getting an eye ache from watching Frank's tongue flapping

around, I noticed someone had cut his left ear off. I didn't want to say anything at first, for fear that that word would bring back terrible prison memories, but then I remembered he was never in prison, so I thought it my duty to inform him of his misfortune, especially because he was bleeding all over the shirt I had loaned him. "Did you know someone cut your left ear off?" I said. "No I didn't," he answered me. "Oh, well, someone cut your left ear off and it looks sort of disgusting, a big hole in your head where your ear should be, and blood pouring out all over my shirt," I told him. I knew he'd get self conscious about it, and he did. So from then on he walked around with his hand over the spot where his ear used to be, and as a result, now looked really strange, especially when he walked the way he did — putting one foot in front of the other all the time.

Frank always thought he had friends, which he didn't because, don't forget, he was pretty strange, and he never thought anyone cut him up until he lost that ear. After that happened he started getting kind of depressed; but, being his usually strange self, he didn't feel bad for very long and soon he was walking around again — putting one foot in front of the other all the time and holding his hand over the spot where his ear used to be — looking very strange indeed.

Then finally it happened. Frank walked up to me — putting one foot in front of the other all the time and holding his hand over the spot where his ear used to be — with a knife in his hand. "Here Frank, let me take that out for you," I said as I slipped the blade out of his chest. "Thanks," he said, "I bet that must have looked pretty strange." I knew that he was thinking that he guessed he'd be alright now because he told me so. The funny thing was, though, he fell down and died. I thought to myself: "He was right. That knife did look rather strange when it was sticking in his chest." "I knew this would happen," I said as I watched the bugs gather around the bloody hole that the knife had left in him. "Frank always was rather strange. I knew it as soon as I saw the way he walked — putting one foot in front of the other all the time."

By PETER TOROKVEI

