

have a fuss with a girl anyway, balked at a parlor car fracas with a drunk, dropped the coin back into his pocket, and went on into the combination baggage and express car. Here, just inside the door, was Toddles', or, rather, the News Company's chest. Toddles lifted the lid; and then his eyes shifted slowly and travelled up the car. Things were certainly going badly with Toddles that night.

There were four men in the car: Bob Donkin, coming back from a holiday trip somewhere up the line; Mac-Nicoll, the baggage-master; Nulty, the express messenger—and Hawkeye. Toddles' inventory of the contents of the chest had been hurried—but intimate. A small bunch of six bananas was gone, and Hawkeye was munching them unconcernedly. It wasn't the first time the big, hulking, six-foot conductor had pilfered the boy's chest, not by many—and never paid for the pilfering. That was Hawkeye's idea of a joke.

Hawkeye was talking to Nulty, elaborately simulating ignorance of Toddles' presence—and he was talking about Toddles.

"Sure," said Hawkeye, his mouth full of banana, "he'll be a great railroad man some day! He's the stuff they're made of! You can see it sticking out all over him! He's only selling peanuts now till he grows up and——"

Toddles put down his basket and planted himself before the conductor.

"You pay for those bananas," said Toddles in a low voice—which was high.

"When'll he grow up?" continued Hawkeye, peeling more fruit. "I don't know—you've got me. The first time I saw him two years ago, I'm hanged if he wasn't bigger than he is now—guess he grows backwards. Have a banana?" He offered one to Nulty, who refused it.