



IN PAST CHAPTERS: White Fang, the cub who abandoned the wild to make a covenant with the man-animals, arrives at Fort Yukon with his Indian master, Gray Beaver, at the height of the Klondike gold rush. Gray Beaver has brought furs and realizes a small fortune from the sale of his wares. White Fang, with other Indian dogs, spends his time fighting the dogs brought in on the steamers by gold rushers. His deadly attack attracts the attention of "Beauty" Smith, a monster of man, who by playing Gray Beaver with liquor succeeds in closing his bargain for possession of this wolf dog whose mother was half tame. White Fang resents this change of ownership and fights the transfer to the best of his cunning. But, deserted by Gray Beaver and clubbed into submission he accepts his new master. Under the tutelage of Beauty Smith he becomes more ferocious. He is exhibited as "The Fighting Wolf," and matched for pay against other dogs. He worsts every opponent. Then appears the bulldog.

INSTALLMENT 27. THE CLINGING DEATH.

Beauty Smith slipped the chain from his neck and stepped back. For once White Fang did not make an immediate attack. He stood still, ears pricked forward, alert and curious, surveying the strange animal that faced him. He had never seen such a dog before. Tim Keenan shoved the bulldog forward with a muttered "Go to it." The animal waddled toward the center of the circle, short and ungainly. He came to a stop and blinked across at White Fang.

There were cries from the crowd of "Go to it, Cherokee!" "Slick in, Cherokee!" "Eat 'em up!" But Cherokee did not seem anxious to fight. He turned his head and blinked at the men who shouted, at the same time wagging his stump of a tail good-naturedly. He was not afraid, but merely lazy. Besides, it did not seem to him that it was intended he should fight with the dog he saw before him. He was not used to fighting with that kind of dog, and he was waiting for them to bring on the real dog.

Tim Keenan stepped in and bent over Cherokee, fondling him on both sides of the shoulders with hands that rubbed against the grain of the hair and made slight, pushing-forward movements. These were so many suggestions. Also, their effect was irritating for Cherokee began to growl, very softly, deep down in his throat. There was a correspondence in rhythm between the growls and the movements of the man's hands. The growl arose in the throat with the culmination of each forward pushing movement, and ebbed down to start up afresh with the beginning of the next movement. The end of each movement was the accent of the rhythm, the movement ending abruptly and the growling rising with a jerk.

This was not without its effect on White Fang. The half began to rise on his hind legs and the shoulders. Tim Keenan gave a final shove forward and stepped back again. As the bulldog died down, he continued to go forward of his own volition, in a swift low-legged run. Then White Fang struck. A cry of startled admiration went up. He had covered the distance and gone in more like a cat than a dog, and with the same cat-like swiftness he had slashed with his fangs and leaped clear.

The bulldog was bleeding back of one ear and from a rip in his thick neck. He gave no sign of pain, even snarl, but turned and followed after White Fang. The display on both sides, the quickness of the one and the steadiness of the other, had excited the partisan spirit of the crowd, and the men were making new bets and increasing original bets. Again, and yet again, White Fang sprang in, slashed, and got away untouched, and still his strange foe followed after him, without too great haste, not slowly, but deliberately and determinedly, in a businesslike sort of way. There was purpose in his method—something for him to do that he was intended upon doing and from which nothing could distract him.

His whole demeanor, every action, was stamped with this purpose. It puzzled White Fang. Never had he seen such a dog. It had no hair protection. It was soft and bled easily. There was no thick skin of fur to baffle White Fang's teeth, as there were often baffled by dogs of his own breed. Each time that his teeth struck they sank easily into the yielding flesh, while the animal did not seem able to defend itself. Another disconcerting thing was that it made no outcry, such as he had been accustomed to with the other dogs he had fought. Beyond a growl or a grunt, the dog took its punishment silently. And never did it flag in its pursuit of him.

Not that Cherokee was slow. He could turn and whirl swiftly enough, but White Fang was never there. Cherokee was puzzled, too. He had never fought before with a dog with which he could not close. The desire to close had already been mutual. But here was a dog that kept at a distance, dancing and dodging here and there and all about. And when it did get its teeth into him, it did not hold on but let go instantly and darted away again.

But White Fang could not get at the soft underside of the throat. The bulldog stood too short, while its massive jaws were an added protection. White Fang darted in and out, unsatisfied, while Cherokee's wounds increased. Both sides of his head and neck were ripped and slashed. He bled freely, but showed no signs of being disconcerted. He continued his plodding pursuit, then, once, for the moment baffled, he came to a full stop and blinked at the men wagging his stump of a tail as an expression of his willingness to fight. In that moment White Fang was winking his trimmed remnant of an ear. With a slight manifestation of anger, Cherokee took up his pursuit again, running on the inside of the circle. White Fang was making, and striving to fasten his deadly grip on White Fang's throat. The bulldog missed by a hair's-breadth, and cries of praise went up as White Fang doubled suddenly out of danger in the opposite direction.

The time went by. White Fang still danced on, dodging and doubling, leaping in and out, and ever inflicting damage. And still the bulldog, with grim certitude toiled after him.

Sooner or later he would accomplish his purpose, get the grip that would win the battle. In the meantime he accepted all the punishment the other could deal him. His tufts of ears had become tangles in his neck and shoulders were slashed in a score of places, and his very lips were cut and bleeding—all from those lightning snags that were beyond his foreseeing and guarding.

Time and again White Fang had attempted to knock Cherokee off his feet, but the difference in their height was too great. Cherokee was too squat, too close to the ground. White Fang tried the trick once too often. The chance came in one of his quick doublings and counter circles. He caught Cherokee with his head turned away as he whirled more slowly. His shoulder was exposed. White Fang drove in upon it, but his own shoulder was high above, while he struck with such force that his momentum carried him on across over the other's body. For the first time in his fighting history, men saw White Fang lose his footing. His body turned a half somersault in the air, and he would have landed on his back had he not twisted, catlike, still in the air, in the effort to bring his feet to the earth. As it was, he struck heavily on his side. The next instant he was on his feet, but at that instant, Cherokee's teeth closed on his throat.

It was not a good grip, being too low down toward the chest; but Cherokee held on. White Fang sprang to his feet and tore wildly around, trying to shake off the bulldog's body. It made him frantic, this clinging, dragging weight. It bound his movements, restricted his freedom. It was like the trap, and, as his instincts resented it and revolted against it. It was a mad revolt. For several minutes he was to all intents insane. The basic life that was in him took charge of him. He was dominated by this mere flesh love of life. All intelligence was gone. It was as though he had no brain. His reason was unsundered by the blinding yearning of the flesh to exist and move, at all hazards to move, to continue to move, for movement was the expression of its existence.

Round and round he went, whirling and turning and reversing, trying to shake off the fifty-pound weight that dragged at his throat. The bulldog did little but keep his grip. Sometimes, and rarely, he managed to get his feet to the earth and for a moment to brace himself against White Fang. But the next moment his footing would be lost and he would be dragging around in the whirl of one of White Fang's mad gyrations. Cherokee identified himself with his instinct. He knew that he was doing the right thing by holding on, and there came to him a certain pride in his doing so. At such moments he even closed his eyes and allowed his body to be hurled hither and thither, willy-nilly, careless of what might thereby come to it. That did not count. The grip was the thing, and the grip he kept.

White Fang ceased only when he had used up all the energy he could do nothing, and he could not understand. Never, in all his fighting, had this thing happened. The dogs he had fought with did not fight that way. With them it was snap and slash and get away, snap and slash and get away. He lay partly on his side, panting for breath. Cherokee, still holding his grip, urged against him, trying to get him over entirely on his side. White Fang resisted, and he could feel the laws shifting their grip, slightly relaxing and coming together again in a chewing movement. Each shift brought the grip closer in to his throat. The bulldog's method was to hold what he had, and when opportunity favored to work in for more. Opportunity favored when White Fang remained quiet. When White Fang struggled, Cherokee was content merely to hold on.

The bulging back of Cherokee's neck was the only portion of his body that White Fang's teeth could reach. He got hold toward the base where the neck comes out from the shoulder, but he kept his teeth there, using method of fighting, nor were his jaws adapted to it. He spasmodically ripped and tore with his fangs for a space. Then a change in the position diverted him. The bulldog had managed to roll him over on his back, and still hanging on to his throat, was on top of him. Like a cat, White Fang bowed his hindquarters in, and with the feet digging into his enemy's abdomen above him, he began to claw with long tearing strokes. Cherokee might well have been disembowelled had he not quickly pivoted on his grip and got his body off of White Fang's and at right angles to it.

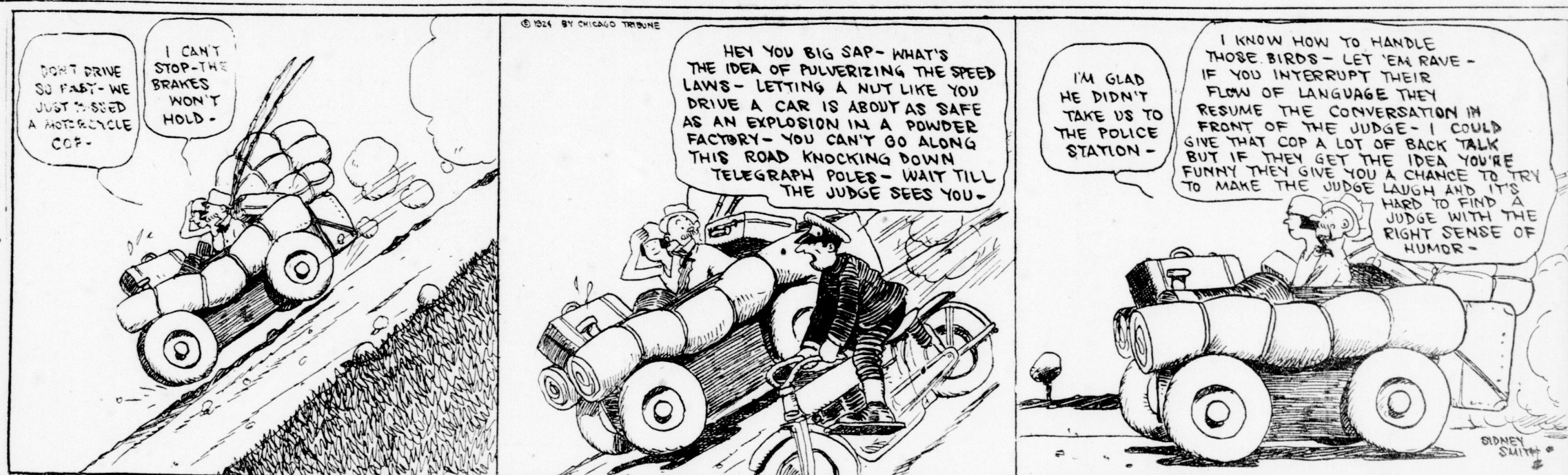
There was no escaping that grip. It was like fate itself, and as inexorable. All that saved White Fang from death was the loose skin of his neck and the thick fur that covered it. This served to form a large roll in Cherokee's mouth, the fur of which he well might have torn teeth bit by bit, whenever the chance offered, he was getting more of the loose skin and fur in his mouth. The result was that he was slowly throttling White Fang. The latter's breath was drawn with greater and greater difficulty as the moments went by.

It began to look as though the battle was over. The backers of Cherokee waxed jubilant and offered ridiculous odds. White Fang's backers were correspondingly depressed, and refused bets of ten to one and twenty to one, though one man was rash enough to close a wager of fifty to one. This man was Beauty Smith. He took a step into the ring and pointed his finger at White Fang. Then he began to laugh derisively and scornfully. This produced the desired effect. White Fang went wild with rage. He called up his reserves of strength and gained his feet. As he struggled around the ring, the fifty pounds of his foe ever dragging on his throat, his anger passed on into panic. The basic life of him dominated him again, and his intelligence fled before the will of his flesh to live. Round and round he went, again, stumbling and falling and rising, even appearing at times on his hind legs and lifting his foe clear of the earth, he struggled vainly to shake off the clinging death.

Tomorrow: The Friend in Need. The "articles for sale" column of The Advertiser classified "Want" ad section will aid the housewife in many economies.

GUMP, GOOGLE & CO., Experts In Laughter

THE GUMPS—GOING DOWN!



BARNEY GOOGLE AND SPARK PLUG

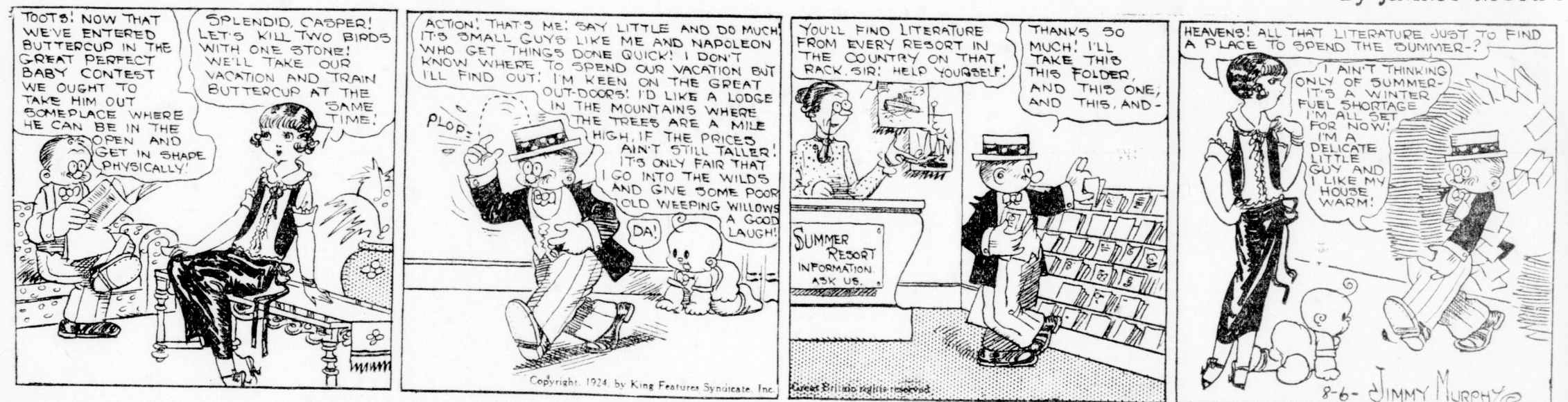
Barney Acquires the Whiskers, But Not the Tongue.

By BILLY DE BECK



TOOTS AND CASPER

By JIMMY MURPHY



MUTT AND JEFF

This Cop Couldn't "Kid" These Two Guys.

By BUD FISHER



REG'LAR FELLERS

Pop Has a Fancy Set of Ears.

By GENE BYRNES

