



Early History

By T-BONE SLIM

In the beginning there was MAN—and, *there he was*—fat and lousy. Yes indeed, editor, and he was reclining in the shade of a sawdust tree—(you've seen them yourself, haven't you?) The reason Man was in the shade was because the sun had burnt Mr. Oompalala's back—for such was his name, and so, too, he thought himself. "I am Oompalala," he would say in a satisfied way. "I am IT and my most recent wife is the charming Lalapaloosa—the queen of Sawdust grove."

Mr. Oompalala recognized the symptoms of sunburn and with a great show of injured dignity hied himself to the grateful shade of the tree—there to divest himself of a few greybacks that persisted in turning Oompalala's mighty form into a lodging house. "I am Oomapala, the brainy one," he mused. "I have had the exquisite sense to move in out of the sun—but, I am weary. Oompalala would rest—for it is true the contents of Oompalala's head feels heavier today after tapping an alcohol tree. Oompalala would rest, and if them damned sandflies would let him alone, Oompalala WOULD rest."

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Hardby in the pasture frolicked a calf around its stoical mother chewing her cud. The weary eye of Oompalala followed the playful antics of the calf and Oompalala felt a feeling of good will steal over him as he dozed off to slumber—to sleep the sleep of those God-favored creatures who have been well fed. How long he slept, he did not know. He only knew that it was later in the day, now that he had rubbed his eyes—much later.

But, was it the same day? He did not know. The cow was still in the pasture—grazing this time—and even as Oompalala gazed upon her the calf was sucking her. . . .

Oompalala being refreshed by his recent nap reasoned correctly that the calf was having its supper and a great sense of sorrow swept Oompalala's soul for was it not up to him to climb yonder sausage tree for his own meal?

"A man of brain," said he bitterly, "and I've got to climb that tree."

"It's an outrage," he roared, "that's what I calls it."

But hush! Oompalala has a thought.

"What's the matter with me impersonating that calf? What's to prevent me, the mighty Oompalala, getting on my knees and sucking that cow?"

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Oompalala is all excitement. He springs to his feet—congratulates himself by pounding his chest and eases toward the cow. With sundry endearing terms he approaches the cow, "So bossy; that's a good girl—are the flies bothering you?" he murmurs, for Oompalala could be reassuring when the spirit moved him. "This beats running down a board or climbing a tree," reasoned Oompalala, as the 'even half a dozen thoughts,' he was familiar with, went swirling through his head. "I wonder how it will taste and if the damn fool cow don't kick my head off I'm lucky."

Oompalala had made a great discovery. Further laurels had been added to his crown. The brains of the universe had functioned again to save Man's footsteps . . . and the calf had lost its supper; for in the returning plump Oompalala, the fair and buxom Lalapaloosa failed to recognize the idol of her heart.

What of it if the mighty Oompalala had been on his hands and knees gypping the calf "of one meal?" What is one meal anyway—why, anyone would give away a meal. "What's the odds anyway," reasoned he, "and Lalapaloosa don't have to know anything about it."

Thus it was that Lalapaloosa can be pardoned for being slightly "taken" with her charms, for was not the supperless Oompalala more affectionate that night than he had been, since she saved him from the wild and woolly "dinosaurcuss?"

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Oompalala never intended to keep secret the facts of the health giving qualities of cow's milk, although he did resolve to never mention that he, the mighty Oompalala, had impersonated a calf. And let it be known that he being an observing creature had noticed that the rich fluid flowed from the cow's bag at his slightest touch—in fact he had only to hold his mouth open and it would almost strangle him—So, Oompalala would build himself a pail and catch the milk in it—and thus with one operation he could gather enough milk for two or more meals—to have on hand, in case of a rainy day.

Furthermore Oompalala wasn't going to stop there. Indeed not! Oompalala would show Lalapaloosa how to milk and then he himself could catch up with some of the rest he lost chasing that latest bunch of pork chops. Ideas crowded one another in his head and finally he decided to build a three legged stool and train one of Lalapaloosa's children to do the milking for the family on the grounds that the dewey grass is healthy for the kid's feet. That would release him, Oompalala; and her, Lalapaloosa, from all responsibility in regard to the family budget.

They then could if so disposed, work to support the speculators and bankers—which they proceeded to do. And civilization had begun.