

WHAT'S ON

Classical Music Conference
Organiser: Shudhul Sangnet
Proshar Ghosh
Venue: Bidhwa Shahitya Kendra, Dhaka
Date: Jan 16-18
Time: 6pm (Jan 16-17) & 8am (Jan 18)

Group Print Exhibition
Title: Chhagol Chhobi-2
Venue: Guller Koya, Uttara
Date: Jan 19-30
Time: 11am-8pm

Chobi Mela VII
Festival of Photography
Organiser: Disk Gallery and Pathshala
Venue: Disk Gallery, Shilpakala Academy, DU premises and more
Date: Jan 25-Feb 7

6th International Children's Film Festival
Venue: Central Public Library, Shahbagh
Date: Jan 19-25
Time: 11am onwards

Theatre
Play: Raktkarabi
Troupe: Nagarik Natya Sampradaya
Venue: National Theatre-Hall, Shilpakala Academy
Date: Jan 17
Time: 7pm

Group Art Exhibition
Title: Pentagon: An Exploration of the Five Senses
Venue: Athena Gallery of Fine Arts, Al Heights, Cha-72/10, 2nd Floor, Progoti Shorani, Uttar Badda
Date: Dec 22- Jan 22

Solo Art Exhibition
Artist: Rocman How
Venue: Auditorium Gallery, Dhaka Cantt Girls' Public School & College
Date: Jan 1-23
Time: 10am-7pm

Solo Photography Exhibition
Title: Buddhist Heritage in South Asia
Venue: Bengal Art Lounge, H-40, R-131, Gulshan 1
Date: Jan 16-28

Of Lullabies and Lalon Geeti

British-Bangladeshi folk fusion in Dhaka



Seamless fusion: (from left) Arko Sumon, Sam Lee, Francesca Ter-Berg, Rob Fokir and Camilo Tirado

FAHMIM FERDOUS

One of the best things about music is that it dissolves boundaries -- of language, cultures and geographical borders. A great demonstration of that was flamboyantly brought about by fourteen British and Bangladeshi musicians at Rabindra Sarobar in Dhanmondi, Dhaka in front of a surprisingly formidable crowd on a midweek evening.

"Folk Nations" -- the British Council initiative with assistance from the City Bank, Bengal Foundation, The Daily Star and Channel i -- has brought four accomplished musicians from Britain and ten Bangladeshi artists together for a three-year project of collaborative musical work, combining the East and the West. Folk singer-song collector Sam Lee, award-winning multi-instrumentalist Jonah Brody, klezmer cellist Francesca Ter-Berg and composer-percussionist Camilomatas Tirado from Britain joined hands with singer-composers Labik Kamal Gaurob and Shayan Chowdhury Arnob, Baul Rob Fokir, flautist Jalal Ahmed, dhul player Shofiq Miah, multi-string instrumentalist Arko Sumon, guitarist Saadul Islam, singer Nobonita Chowdhury, bassist Bart Nandit Areng and drummer Tarek Bin Taher from Bangladesh.

The whole group spent four days in a workshop at a resort in Cox's Bazar -- sharing and collaborating with their music. The concert on January 15 began with a 400-year old gypsy song from England that speaks of a rebel, coupled with "Ekbar biday de ma ghure ashi" inspired by Bengali revolutionary Khudiram. The cello, tabla, esraj and mandolin blended together in a beautiful melody, with the lyrical intertwining providing for a euphoric feel. Over the next two hours, percussion shakers, cajon, ukelele, Jew's harp, shruti box and koto teamed up with dotara, dhul and mandolin -- producing beautiful melodies to back up Scottish lullabies, thousand-year old Southern English shepherds' songs, gypsy songs, along with our own Lalon Geeti, Murshidi, Hason Raja songs and folk songs from Chittagong and Sylhet.

The upside of the collaboration was the musical connection between Rob Fokir and Camilo Tirado, or Sam Lee and Shofiq Miah, who could only communicate through their instruments, and played in marvellous harmony. However, after a certain stage, the participation of the Bangladeshi artists seemed slightly overpowering. Also, since most of the Bangladeshi musicians on the project are primarily from Dhaka, who interpret folk music from an urban perspective, with heavy use of electric guitar, bass guitar and drums, one might question how "folk" is their version of folk? A cover of a Rabindra Sangeet by Arnob also seemed out of place at a concert titled "Folk Nations".

With all that said, the initiative to bring together musicians and genres that are geographically distant, yet could be potentially soul mates, is certainly commendable. In three years the project could become an excellent platform for cultural exchange, and more importantly, generate interest in folk music among young music lovers.

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Jasim Polli Mela resonates with pastoral life in Faridpur

REZAUL KARIM, Faridpur

A fortnight long 'Jasim Polli Mela', by the Kumar river at Govindapur village under Ambikapur union in Faridpur, resonates with the pastoral life.

The two-week long fair has been jointly organised by the Faridpur district administration and Jasim Foundation with support of BSIC on the occasion of the 110th birth anniversary of poet Jasimuddin.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Engineer Khandoker Mosharraf Hossain inaugurated the fair on January 12.

Inaugurating the fair, Mosharraf Hossain said that Jasimuddin's writings depicted the life, culture, joys and sorrows of the simple rural folk vividly that was unmatched. To preserve the creations of Jasimuddin, the work of 'Jasim Complex' is nearing completion on the premises of the ancestral house of the late poet. A mausoleum and a research centre will be set up at the complex, the minister added.

At 'Jasim Mancha', a discussion was held following

the recitation of Jasimuddin's well-known poem "Nimonttron", where the poet beckoned in his verse:

Tumi jabey bhai jabey mor shathey amader chhoto gaye?
Faridpur Deputy

Commissioner Mainuddin Ahmed chaired the function. The fair offers visitors a variety of entertainment, including folk songs such as Jari Gaan, Kobi Gaan, Lalon Geeti, recitation, dance, puppet shows and circus.

At Jasim Macha, on the eastern part of the Jasim Udayan (park), well-known artistes and cultural groups from different districts are performing every afternoon drawing a sizeable audience.

Literary works, photos and items used by the poet are being displayed at 'Moni Mala, the poet's house.

Two hundred and seven stalls display handicrafts, everyday items used by rural folk, agricultural tools, delectable sweets, cakes, scented betel leaf and nuts.

Enthusiastic visitors from different districts of the country along with the locals flock to the fair everyday to acquaint themselves with the pastoral beauty of the villages.

Eminent litterateur, musicologist Abdus Shakur passes away



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent litterateur, musicologist and an expert on roses, Abdus Shakur, passed away on January 15 at his Dhanmondi residence in Dhaka of old age complications. He was 72.

Shakur was born in Noakhali in 1941. He is the author of several novels, short story books, travelogues and essay books. He started his career at Dhaka University as a lecturer in the English Department, and later joined the then Pakistan Civil Service. He retired in 2000 as a secretary to the Bangladesh government.

About Shakur, eminent poet Mahadev Saha said, "Shakur was a truly cultured person. He was man of simple habits and lived an ordinary life. He was a Tagore expert and had vast knowledge of all the genres of music. He has left behind a number of research books that are outstanding."

Poet Rabiul Husain said, "I first met him in

the late 1980s in Dhaka. He was very close to poet Belal Chowdhury, who introduced me to him. The first writing by him that I read was on roses, published in the literary magazine 'Miznur Rahman-er Troimashik Patrika'. His style was unique. Most of his writings were research-based. He was secular and true to his Bengali roots."

Senior journalist and literary critic Mahfuz Ahmed Khan said, "The approach, formation and psychological subtlety of his stories made him popular among discerning readers in our country."

Some of Shakur's notable works are "Golap Sangraha", "Mohan Srota", "Mohamohim Rabindranath", "Epitaph" and "Bangali-r Mukti Gaan". He received the Bangla Academy Award in 1979, Amibhushon Award from West Bengal (India) in 2003 and Aloko Sahitya Puroshkar in 2008 for his immense contribution to Bengali literature.

What helps a film more: a Globe or an Oscar?



The millions that studios spend on Oscar campaigns are often worth it in the reflected "nominations bump", and the extra tickets sold at the box office when films become Oscar nominees. But over at Reuters, Edmund Helmer made a surprising discovery: The Golden Globes bump may be more lucrative.

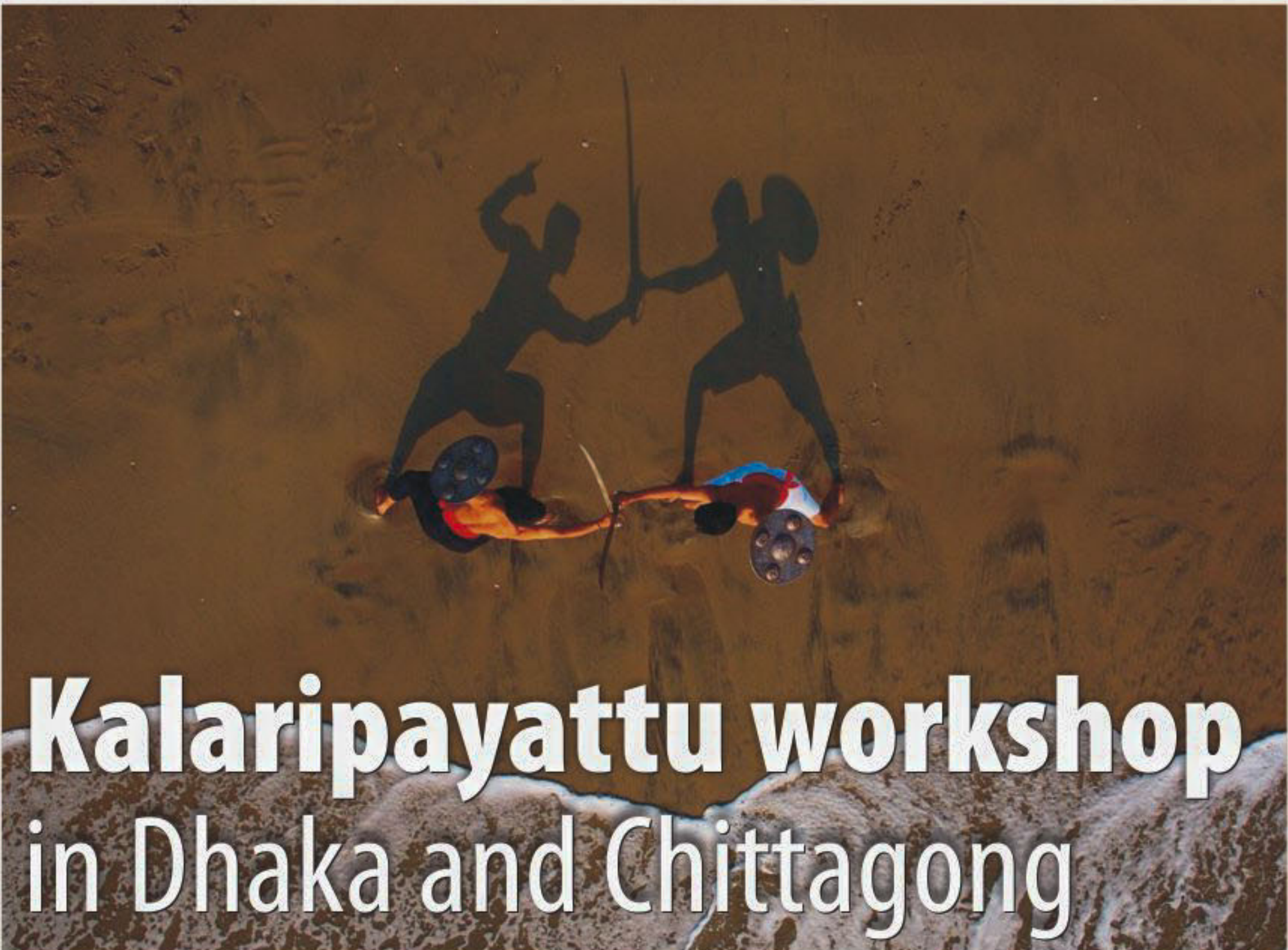
Wins at the Globes "result in a bigger box-office boost than Academy Award wins -- \$14.2 million per film, on average, versus \$3 million," he writes. He studied box-office receipts for both sets of award-nominated films for the last dozen years, concluding that Globe winners do better than mere nominees in every category except original song and best comedy.

And when he compared Globes winners and Oscar winners, the results were definitively in the Globes' favour, which may explain why award maestros like Harvey Weinstein heavily court the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which bestows the Globes, even in lieu of larding attention on other groups. (This year, his "Django Unchained" got Globes love but nothing from the SAGs.)

As for why this is, that's a thornier question, with multiple potential answers. "The first is simply that, because Golden Globes occur earlier in the lifetime of the films they award, the impact of a Globe award is magnified," writes Helmer, a graduate student in statistics at Stanford who runs the site Box Office Quant. (That is not necessarily true this year, when Oscar nominations preceded the Globes.)

"The second is that Golden Globes are in fact trial runs for the Oscar race, and films that get a nod in these trials end up getting massive free press as potential Oscar contenders." In other words, the value of the Globes is burnished by mere association with the Oscars. That could be salvaged for the Academy, or it could be fodder for an even more heated competition.

Source: The New York Times



Kalaripayattu workshop in Dhaka and Chittagong

'Nrityojog' -- the Bangladesh chapter of World Dance Alliance-Asia Pacific -- has arranged a workshop on 'Kalaripayattu', to be conducted by renowned dancer of Kolkata (India), Kajal Hazra, according to a press release.

The workshop will be held from January 19 till January 28 and has been divided into two parts. The first four days (January 19-22) of the workshop will be held in Dhaka, at the rehearsal room of Nrityashala building, Bangladesh Shilpakala

Academy. The director general of Shilpakala Academy, Liakat Ali Lucky, will inaugurate the workshop. The second half of the workshop will be held in Chittagong (January 24-28) at the local Shilpakala Academy. Dance students from all over Bangladesh are likely to attend the workshop.

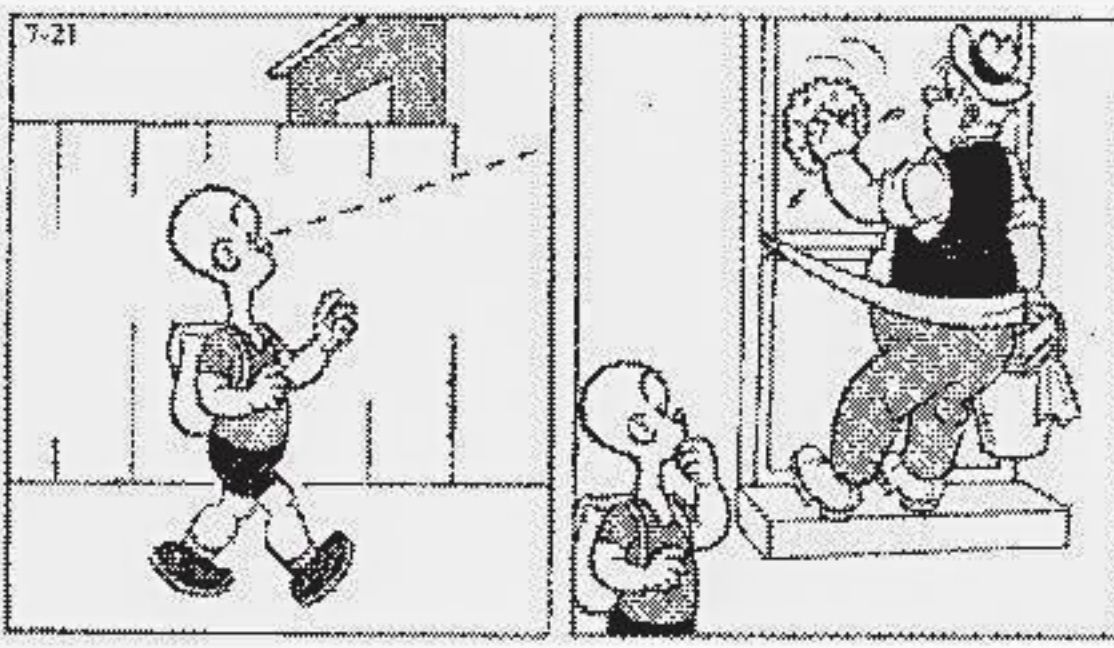
Kalaripayattu is an Indian martial art from the southern state of Kerala. One of the oldest fighting systems in existence, it is practiced in Kerala and

contiguous parts of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It includes strikes, kicks, grappling, preset forms, weaponry and healing methods. Some of the choreographed sparring in the martial art can be applied to dance, and Kathakali dancers who knew martial arts were believed to be markedly better than the other performers. Some traditional Indian dance schools still incorporate Kalaripayattu as part of their exercise regimen.

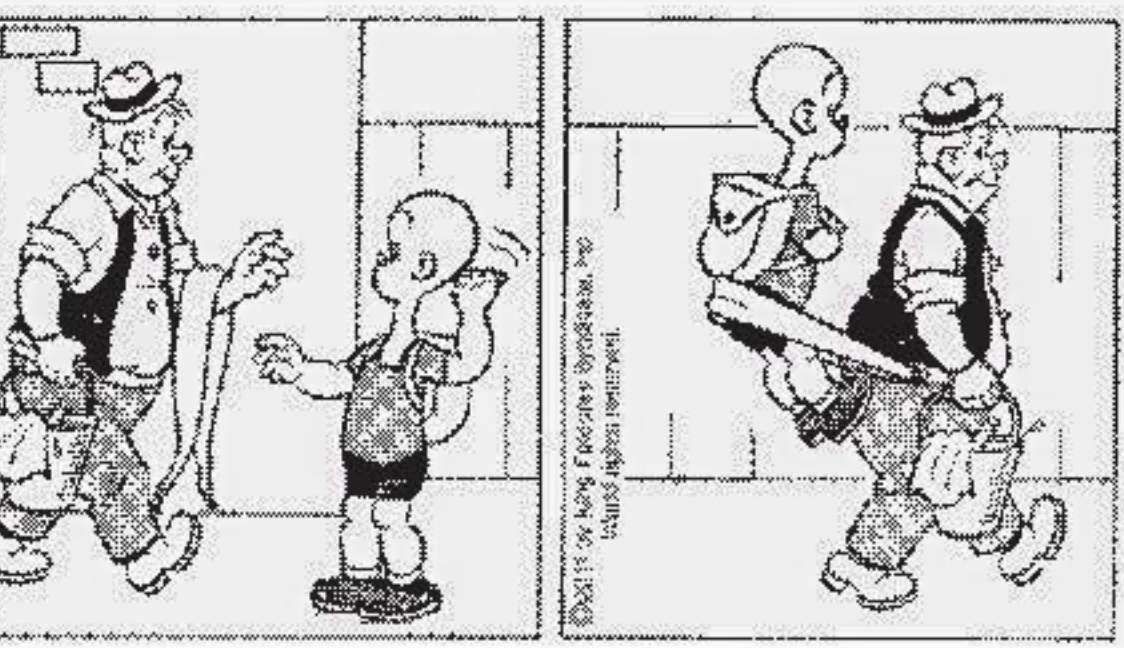
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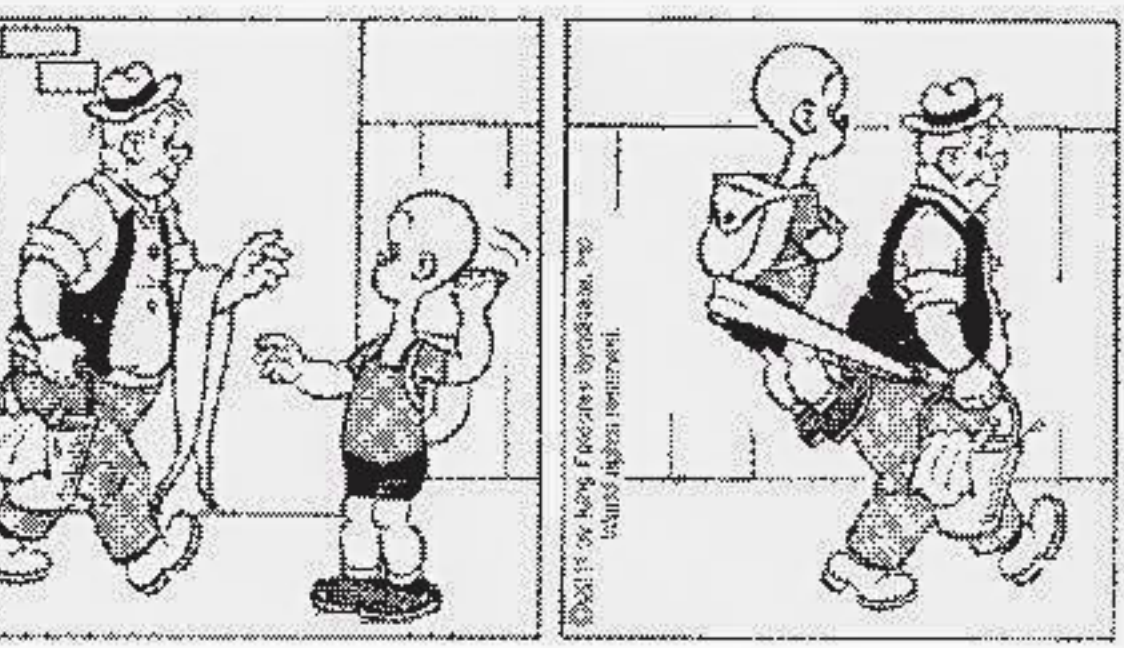
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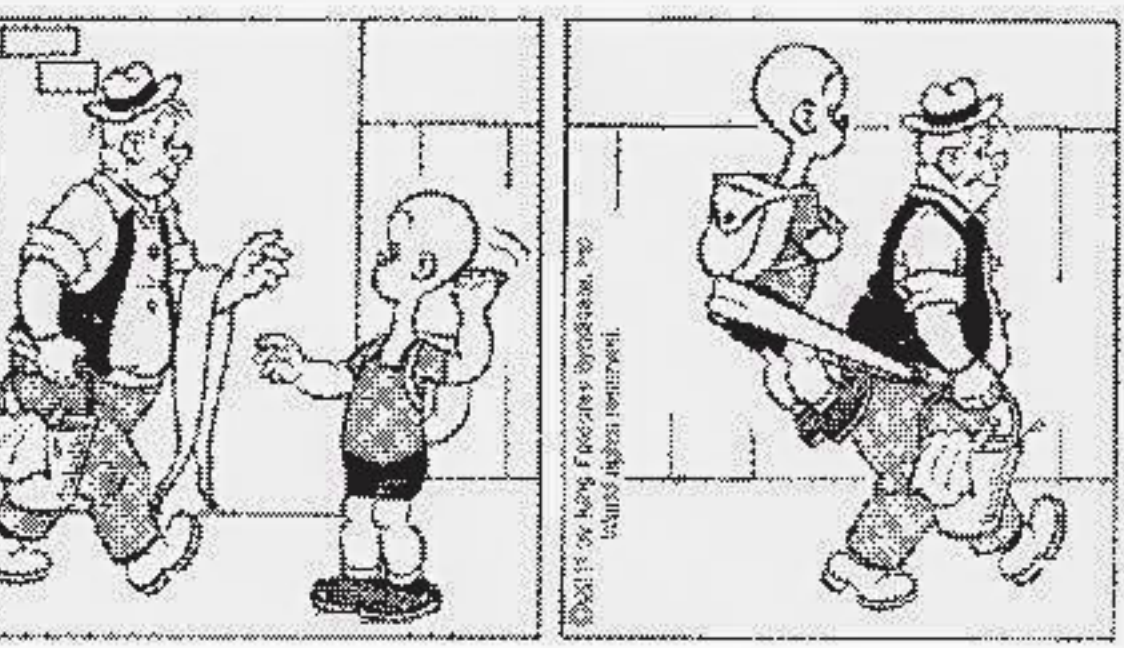
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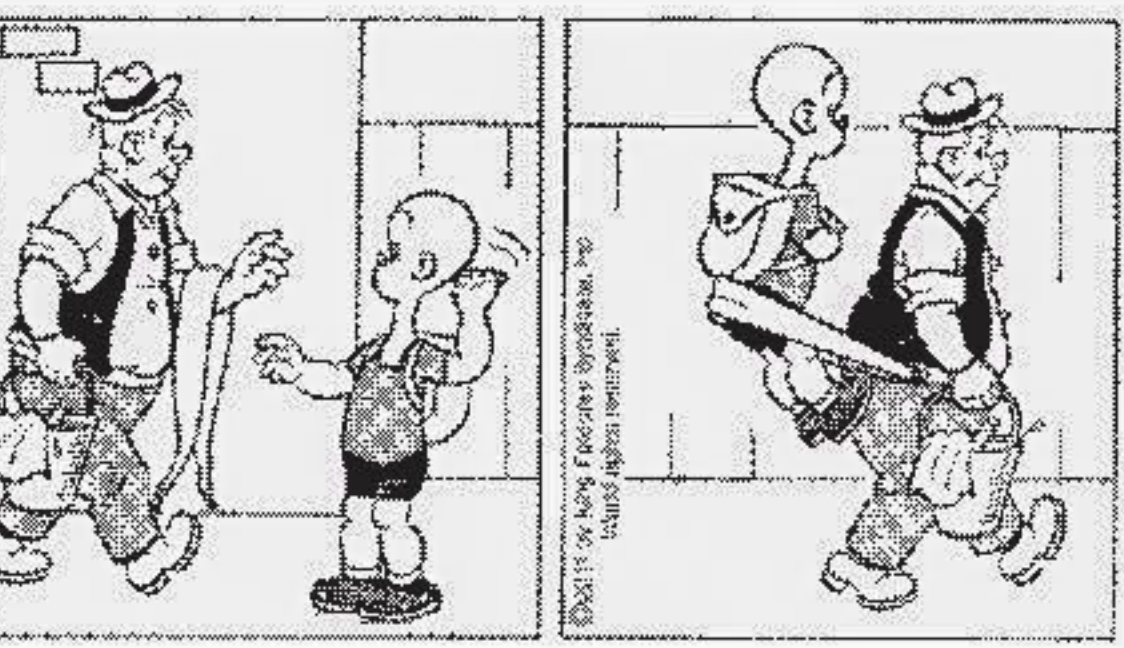
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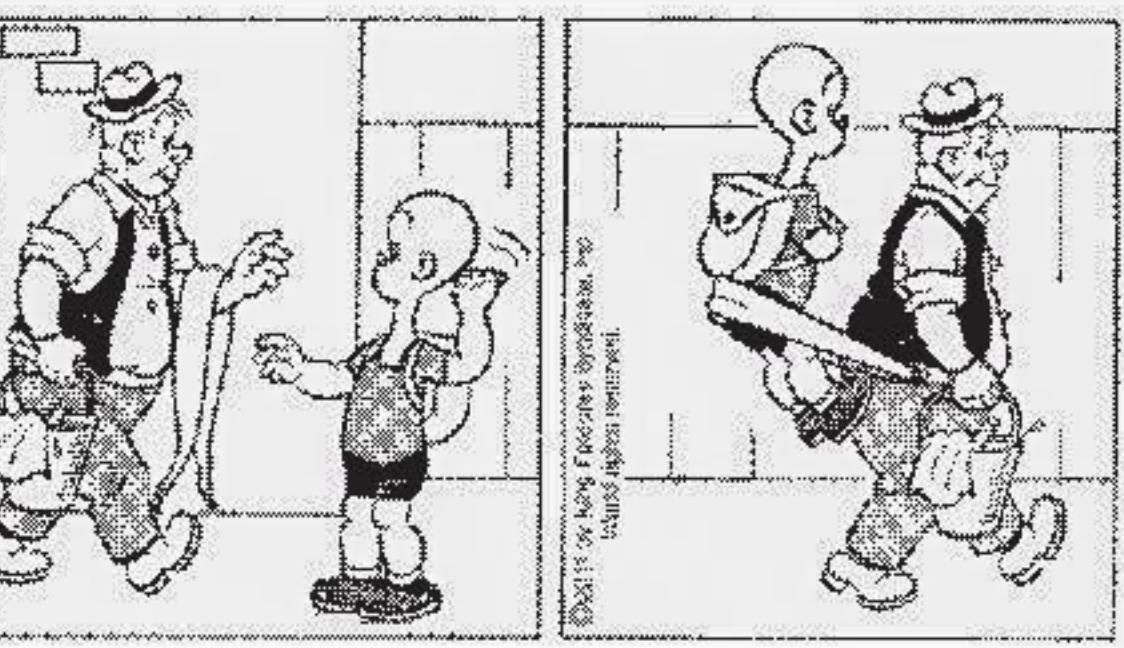
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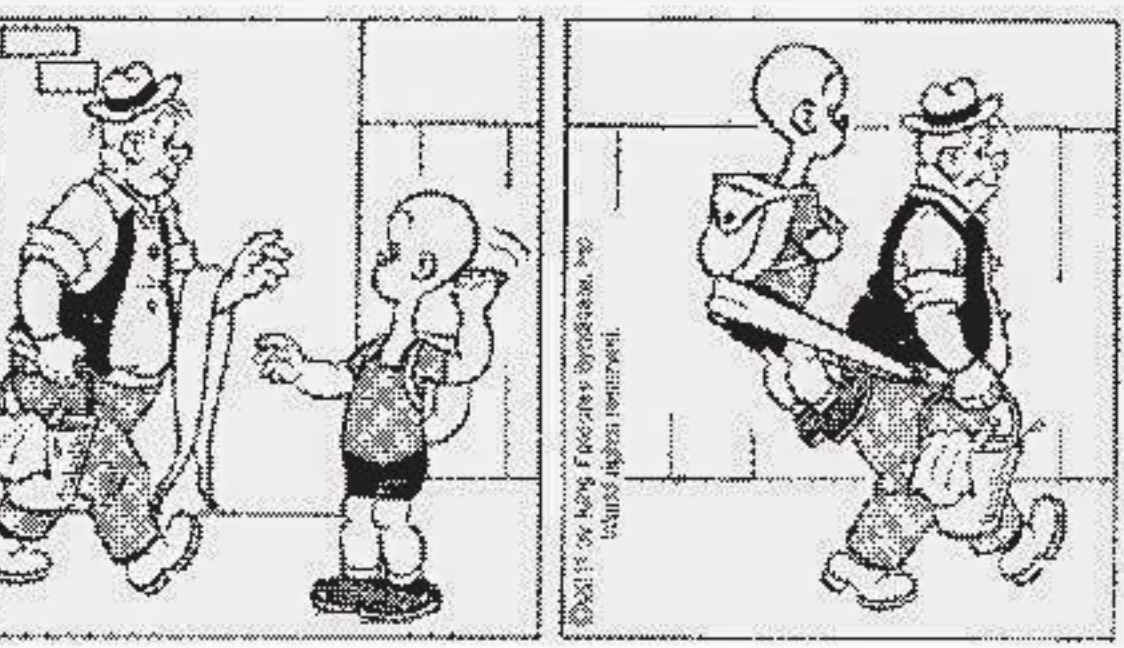
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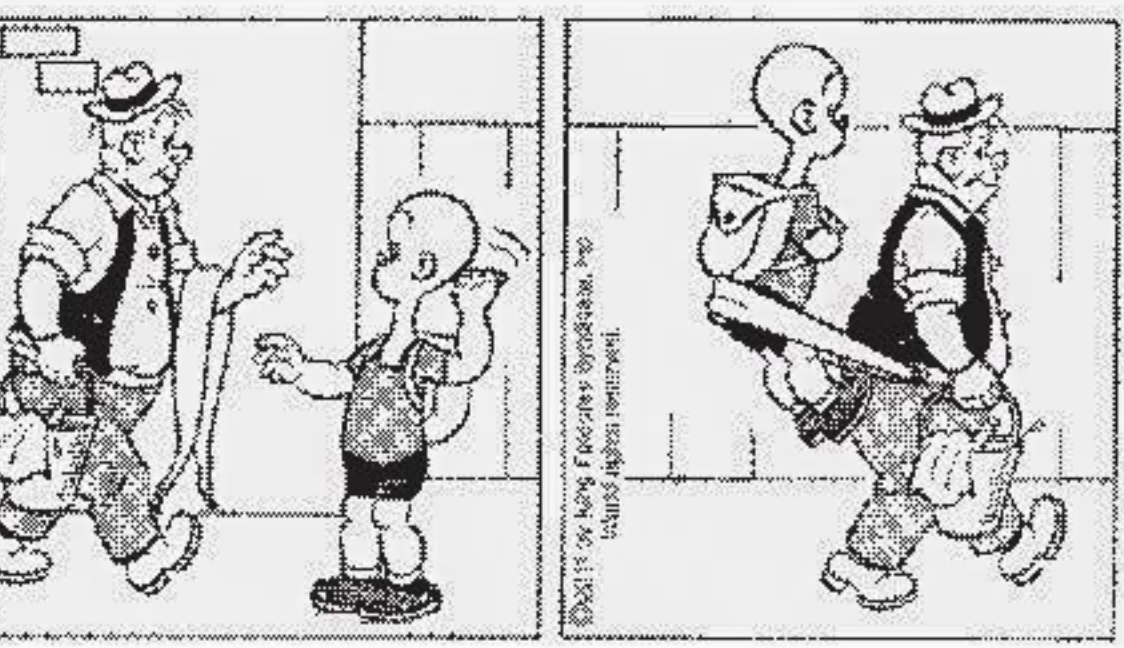
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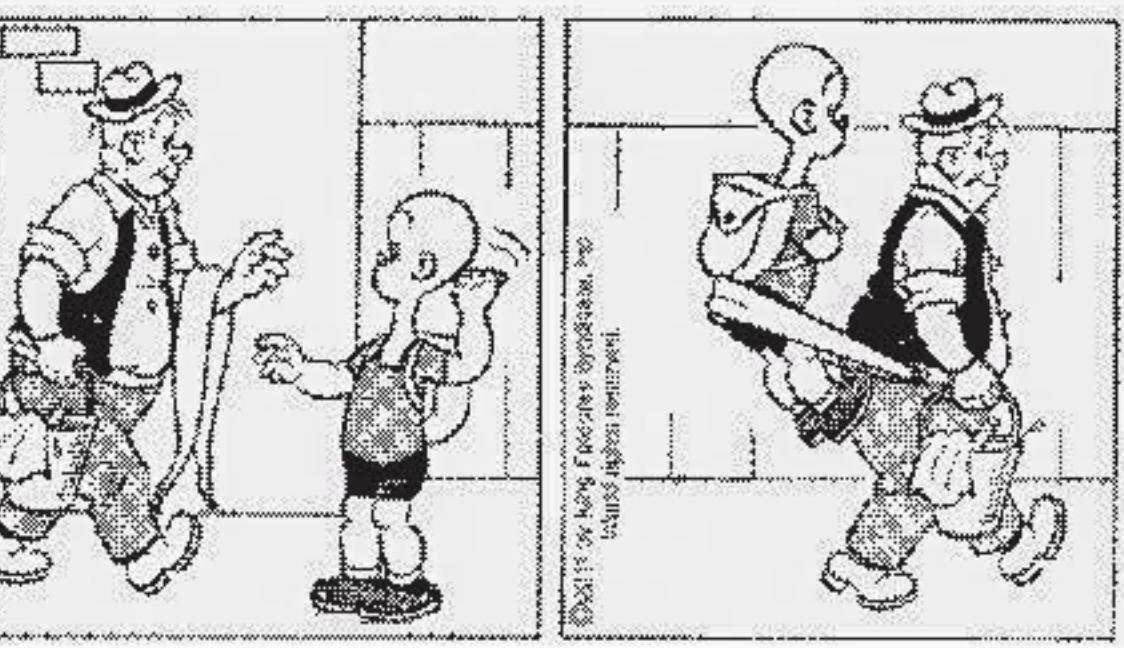
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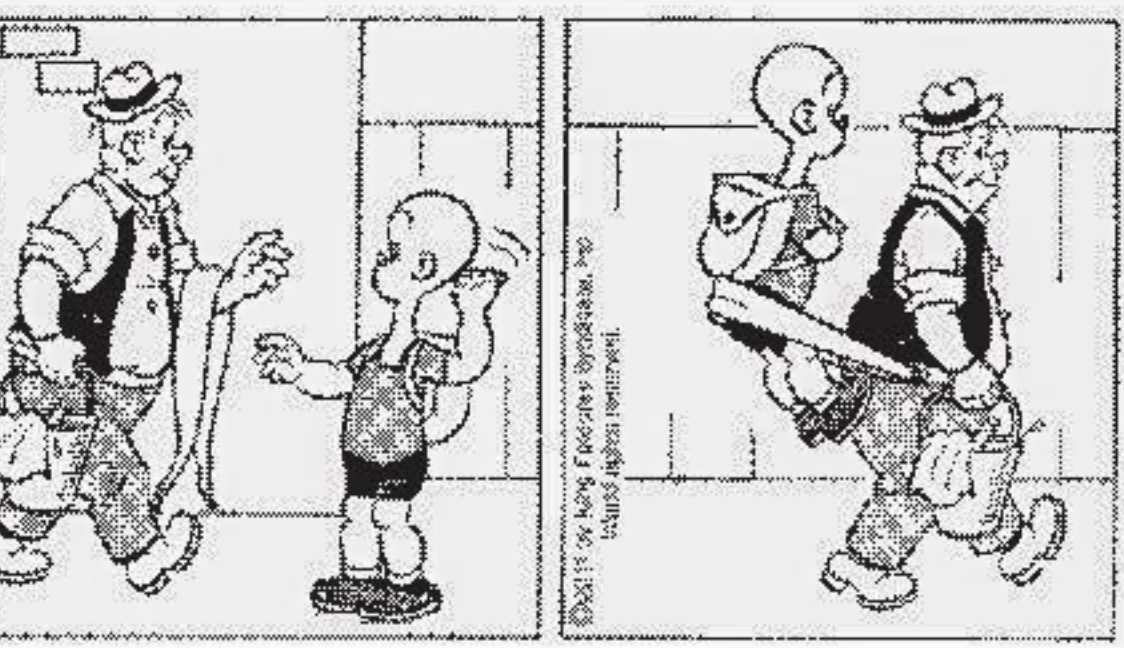
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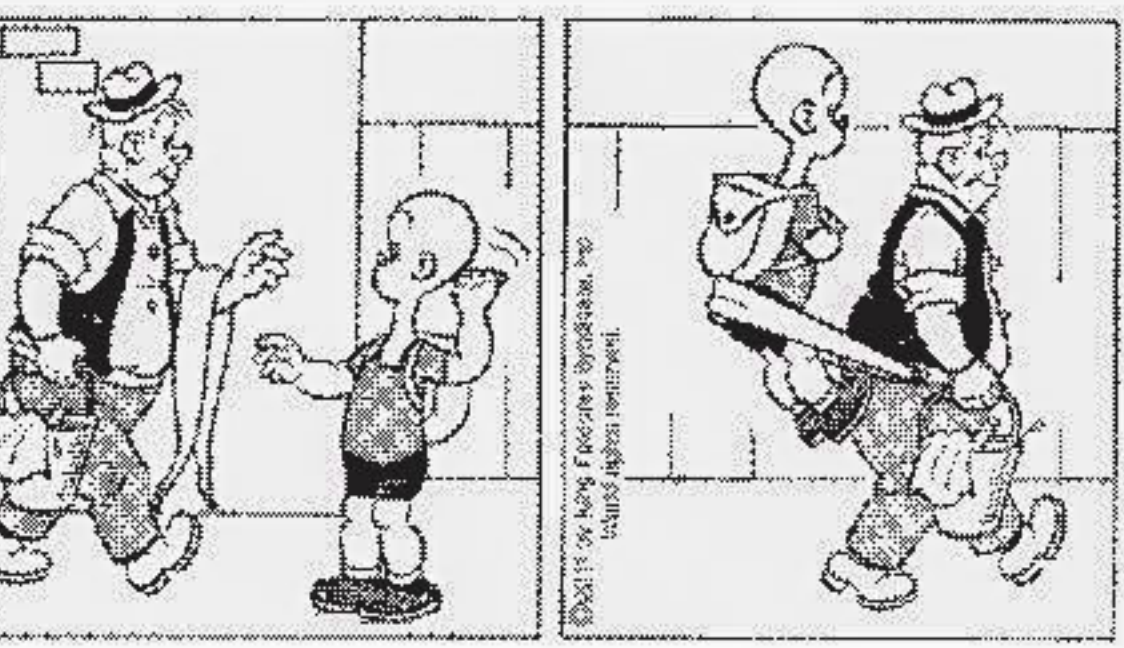
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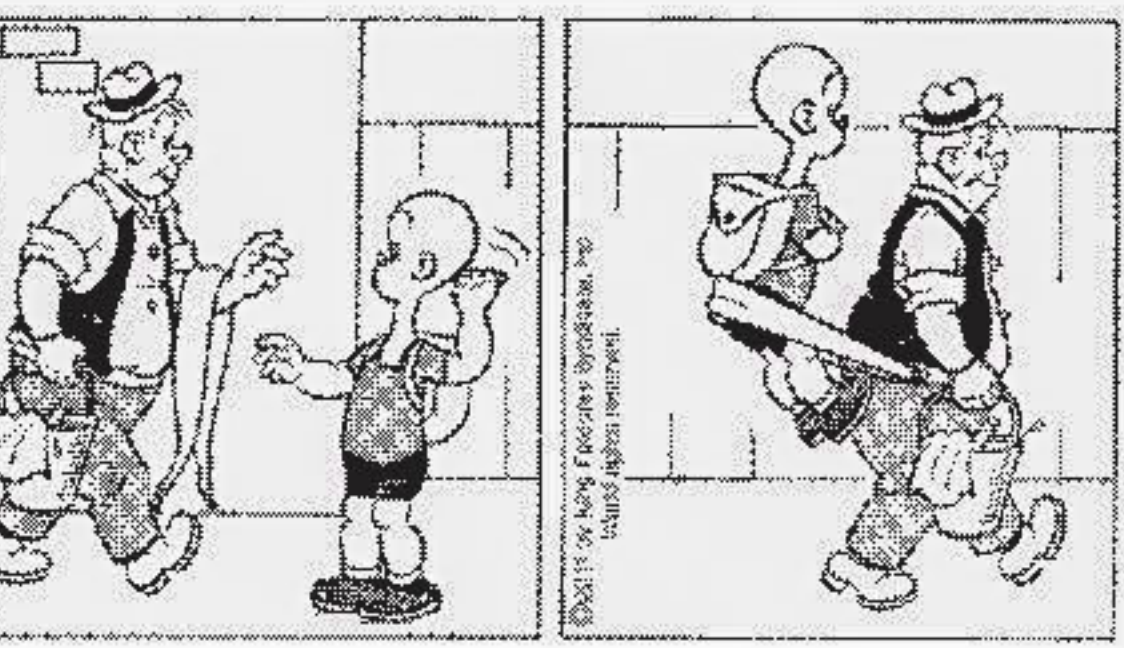
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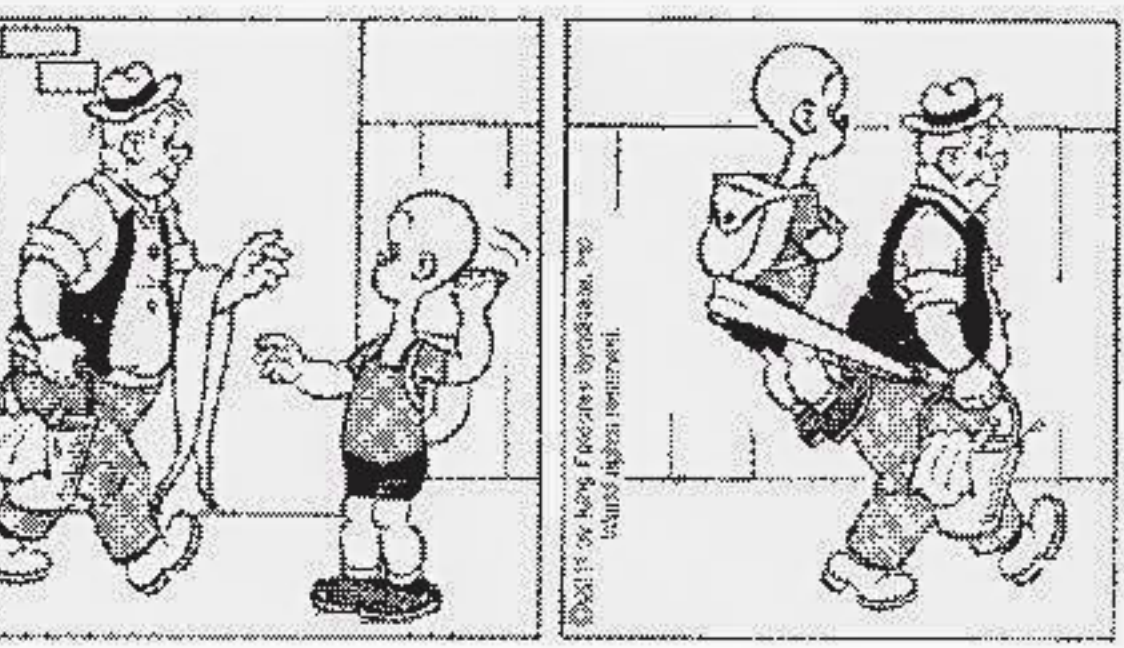
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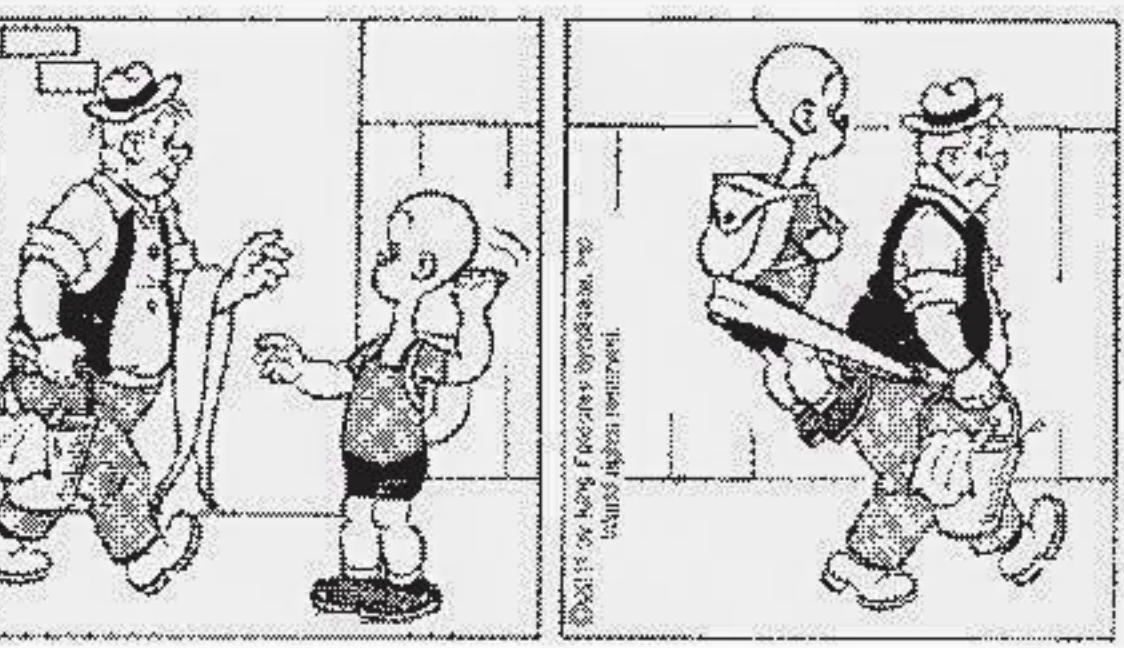
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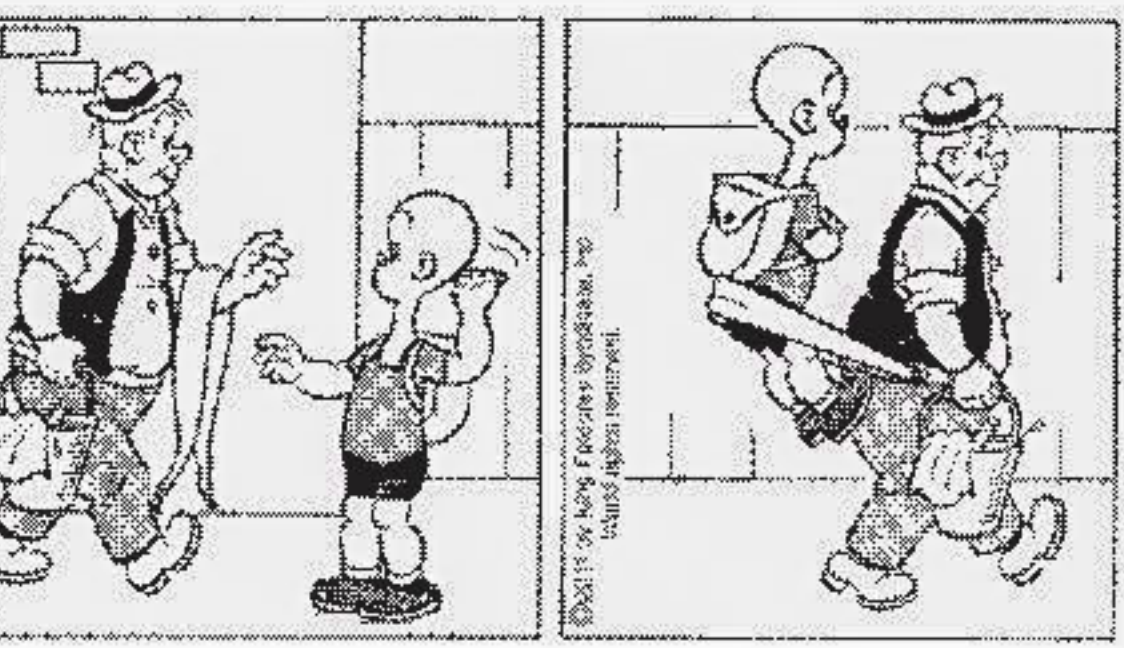
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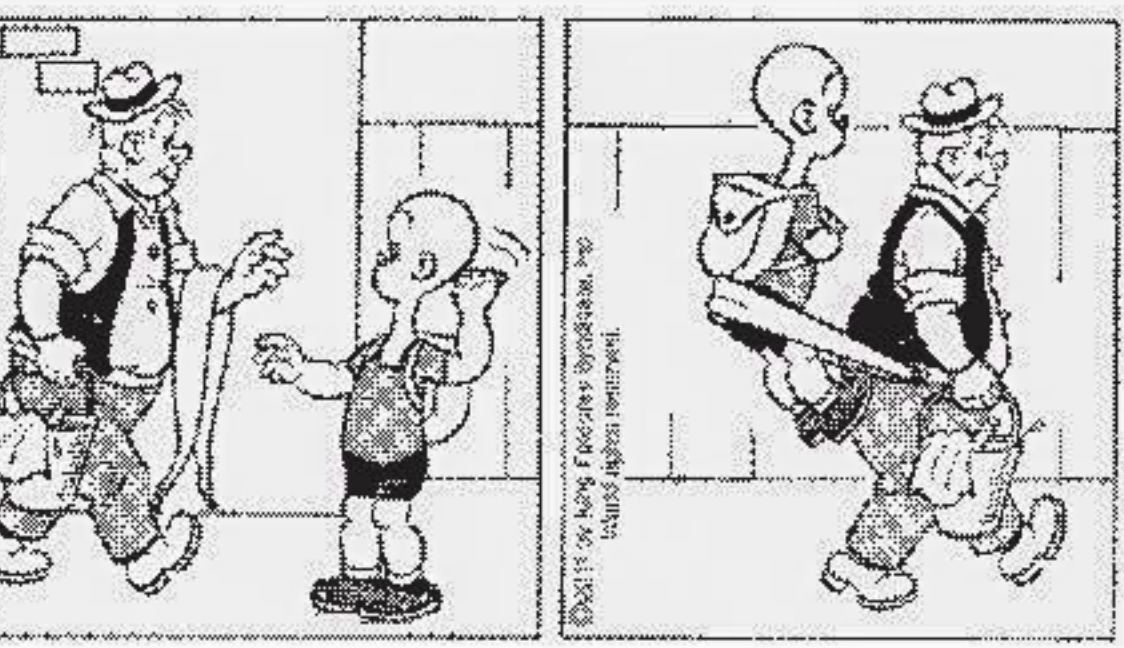
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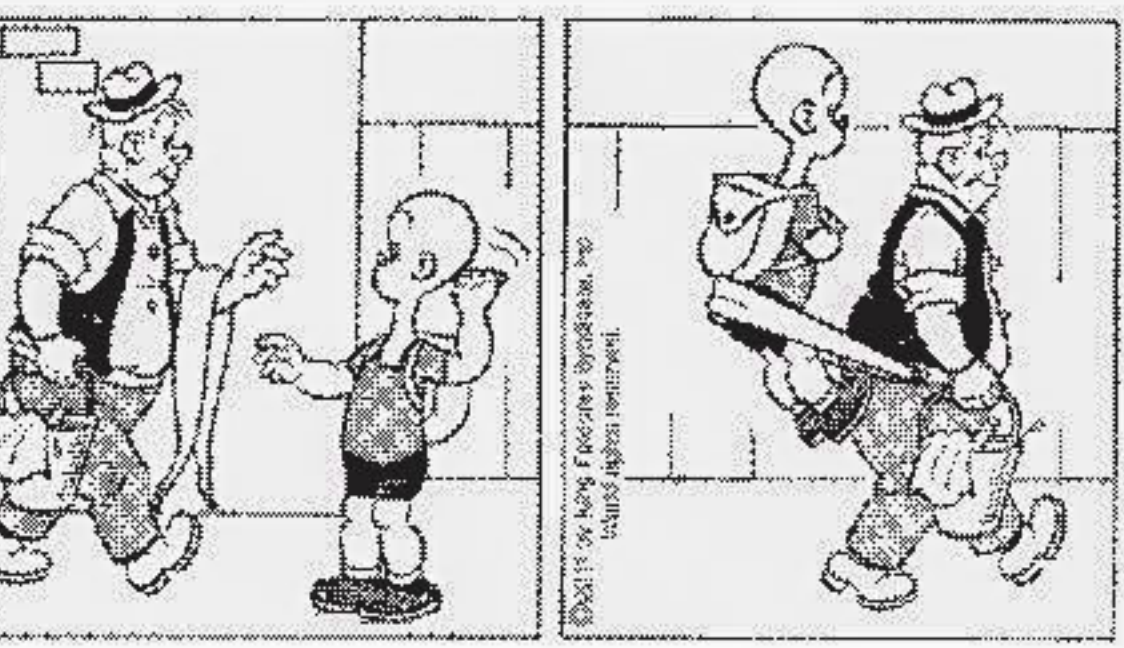
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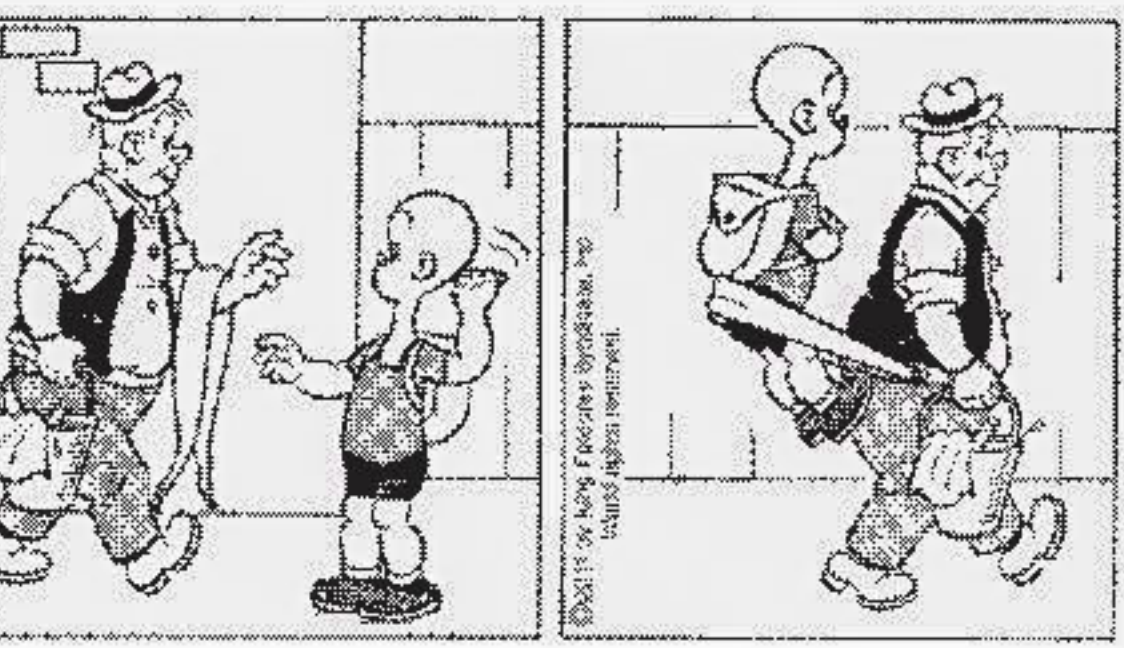
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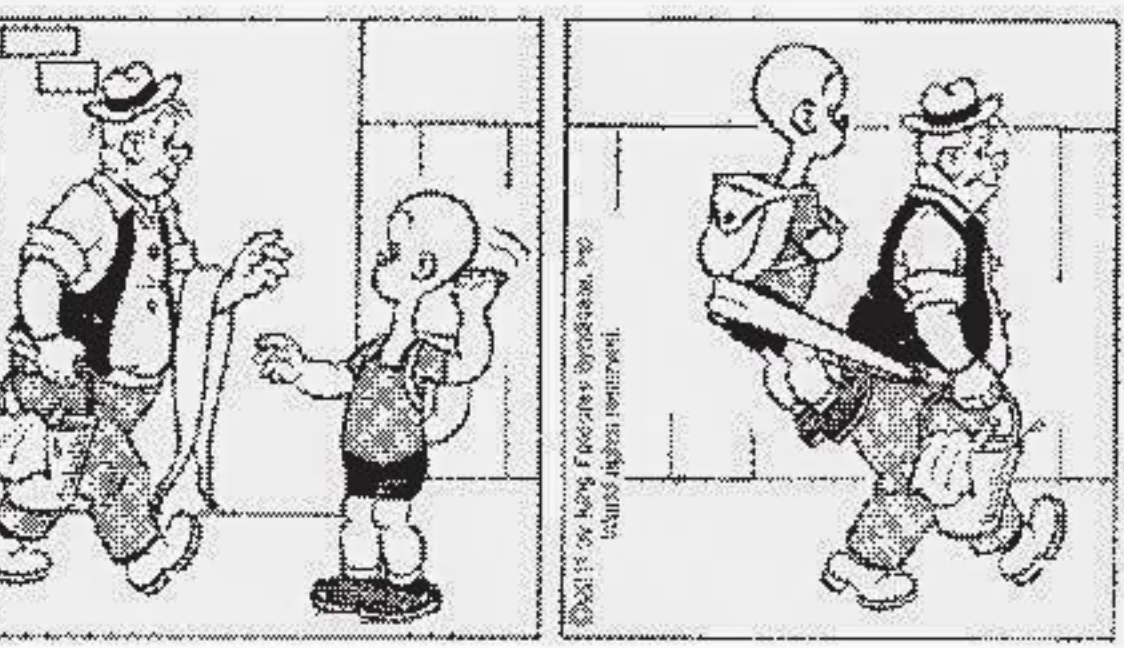
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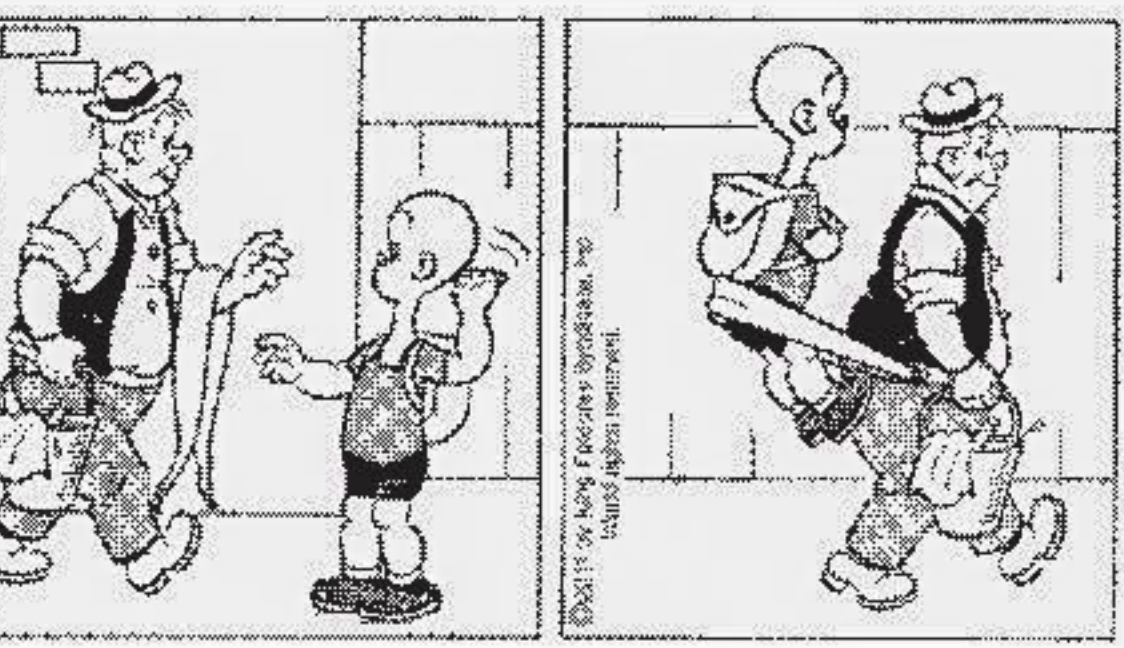
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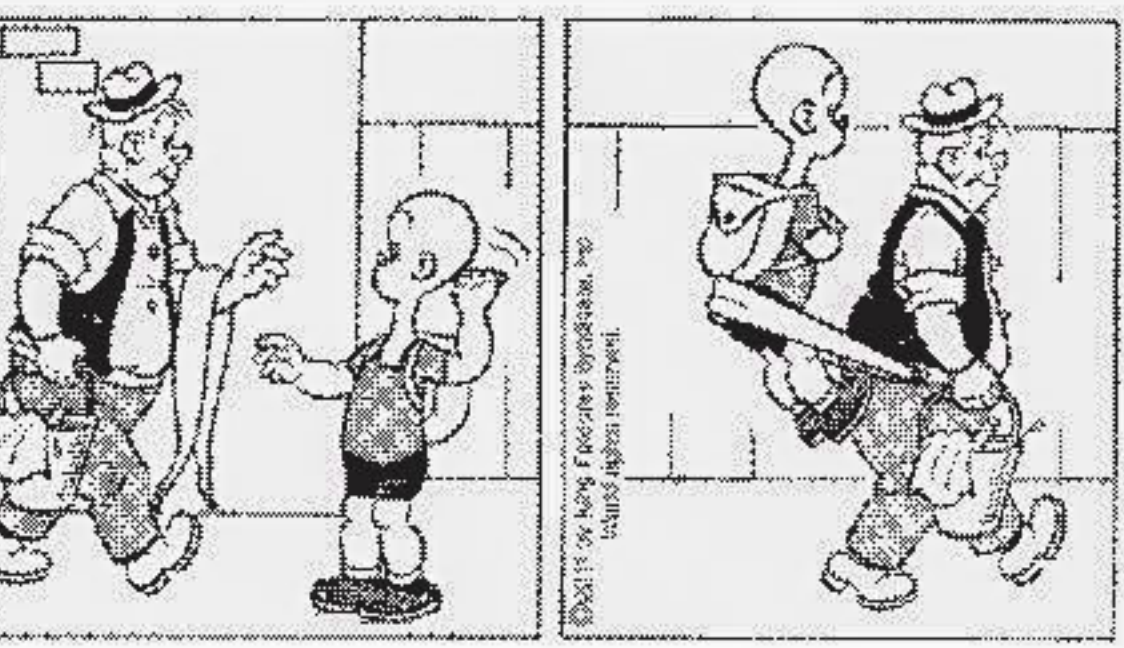
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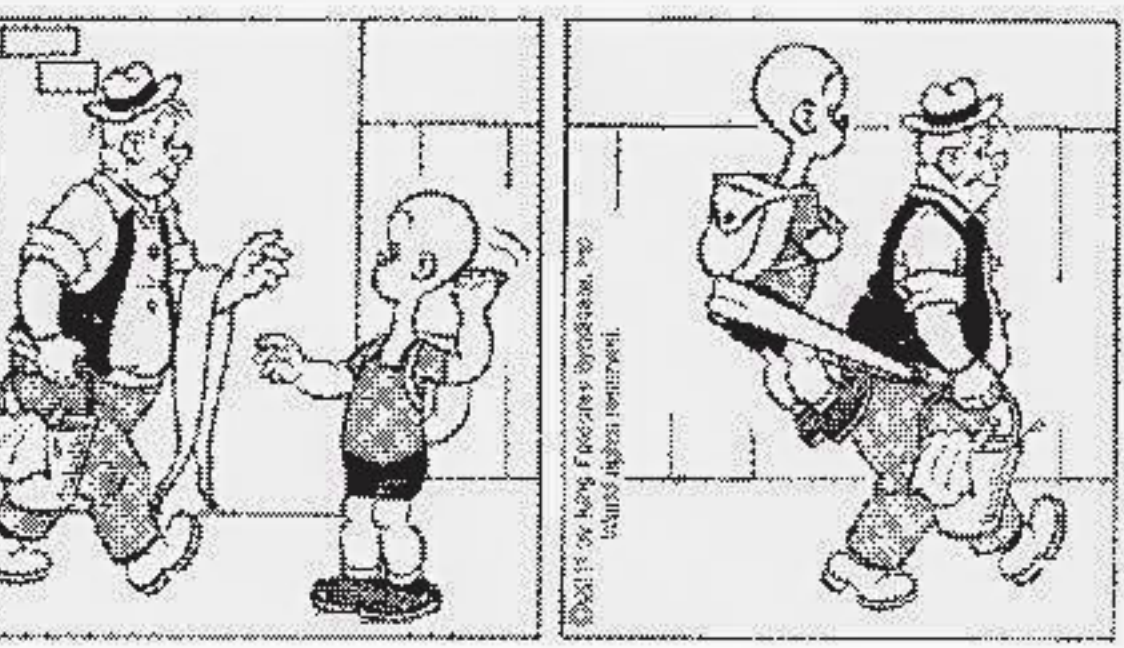
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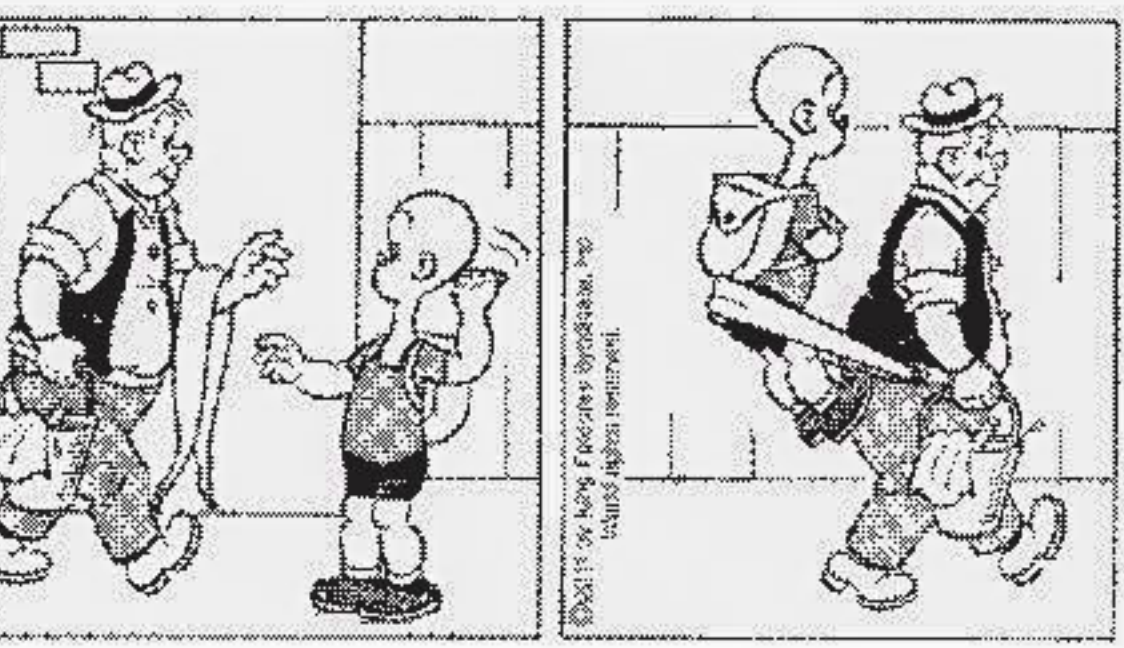
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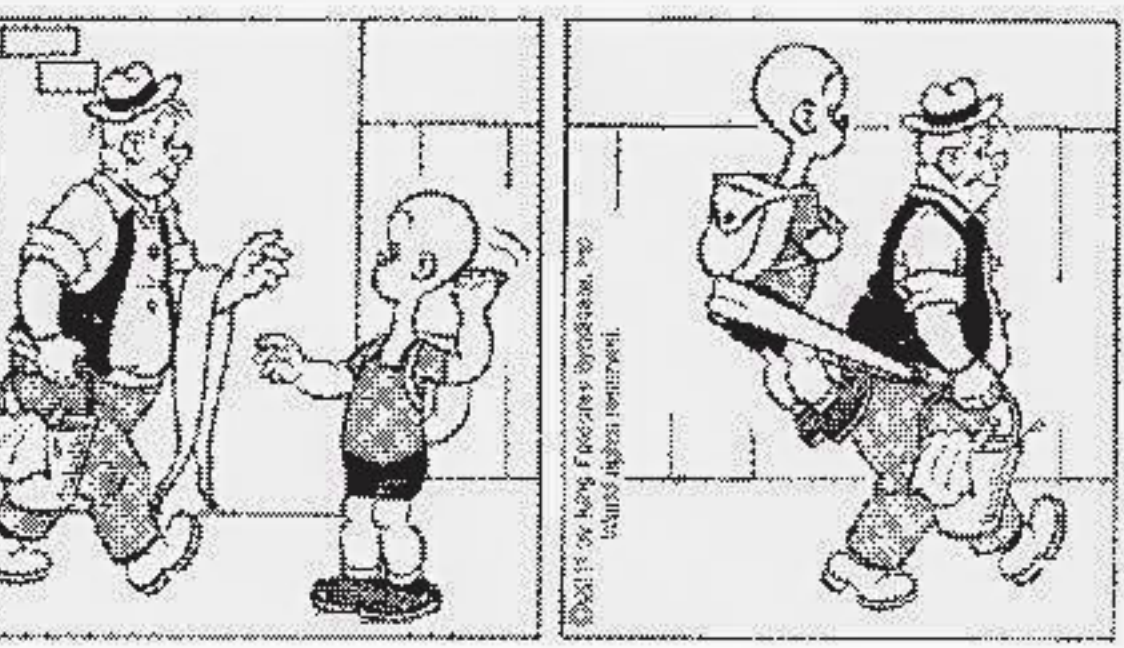
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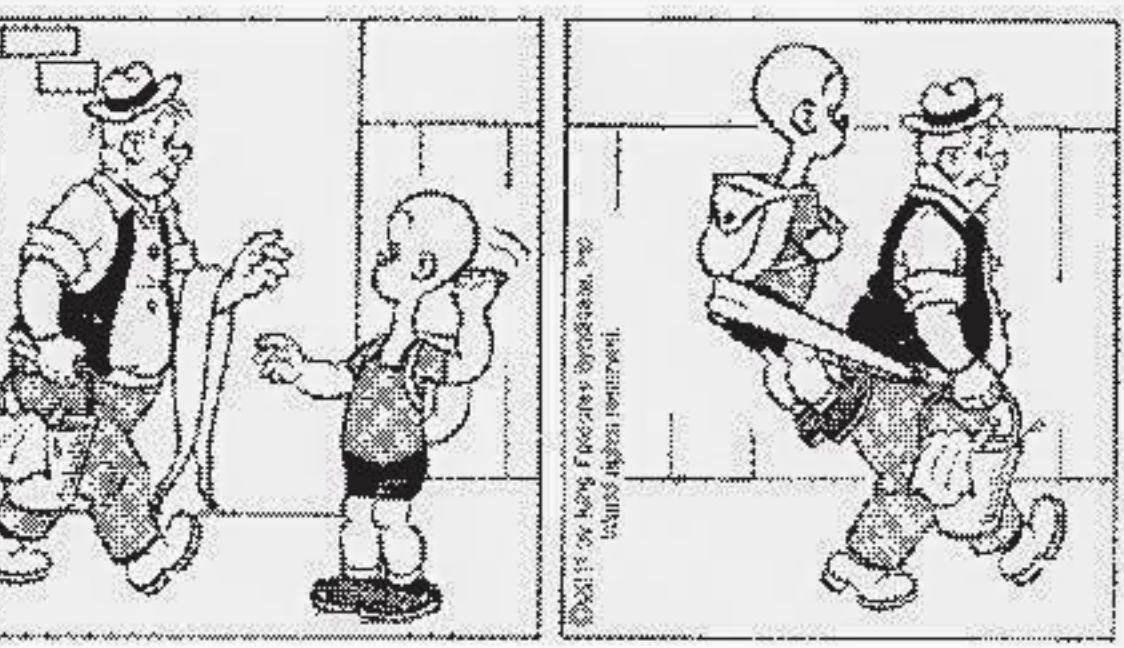
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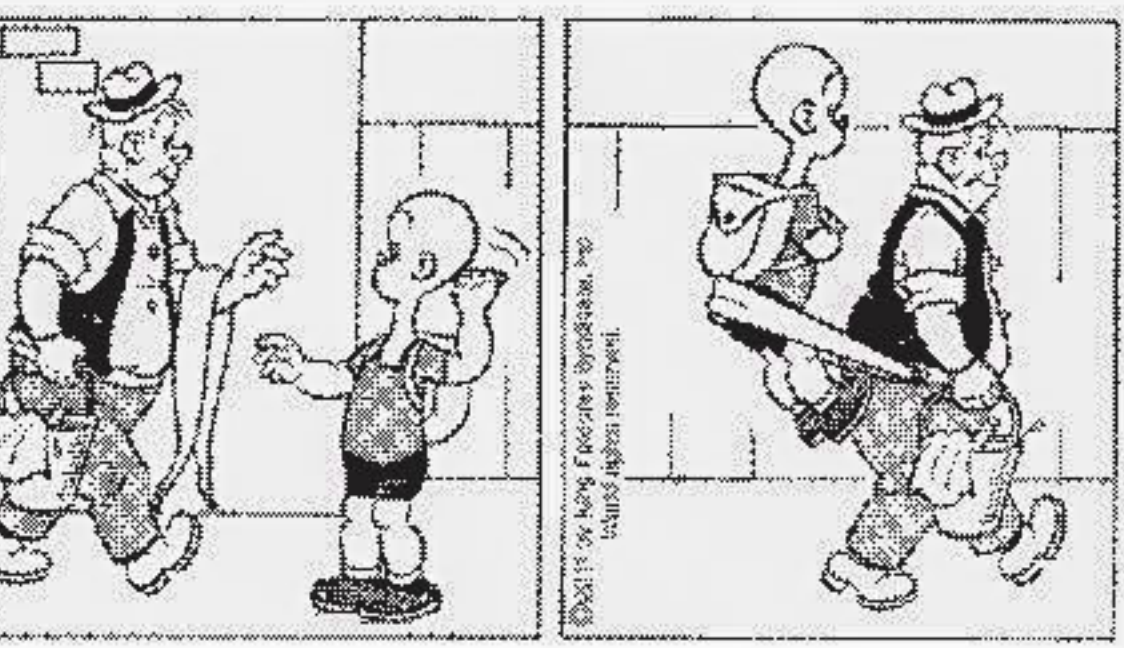
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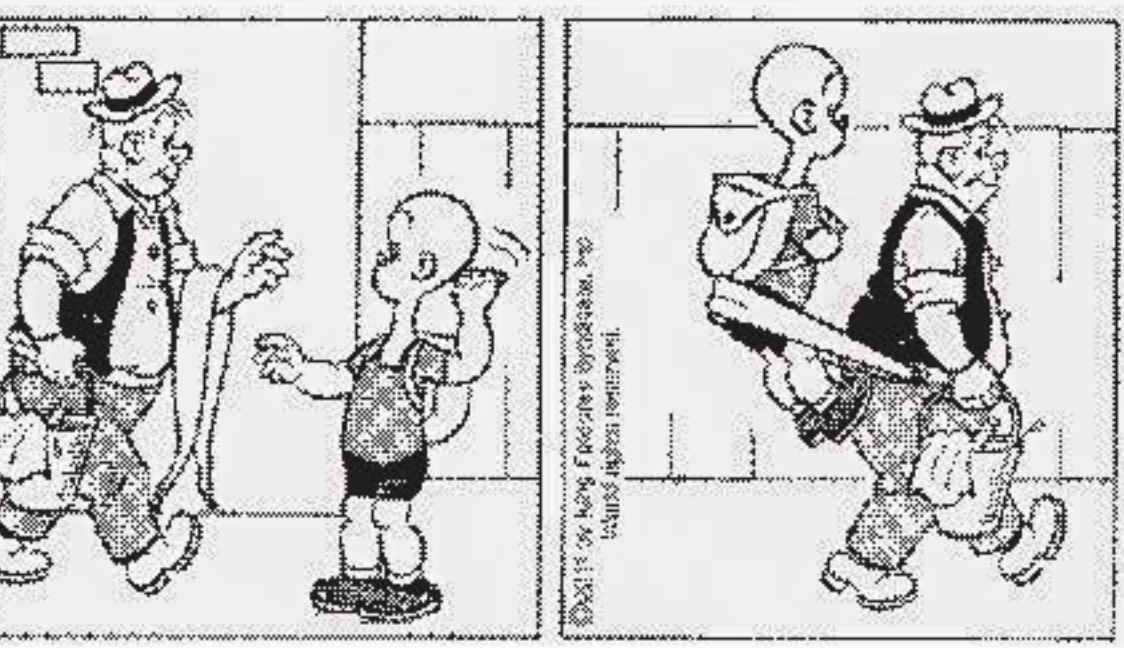
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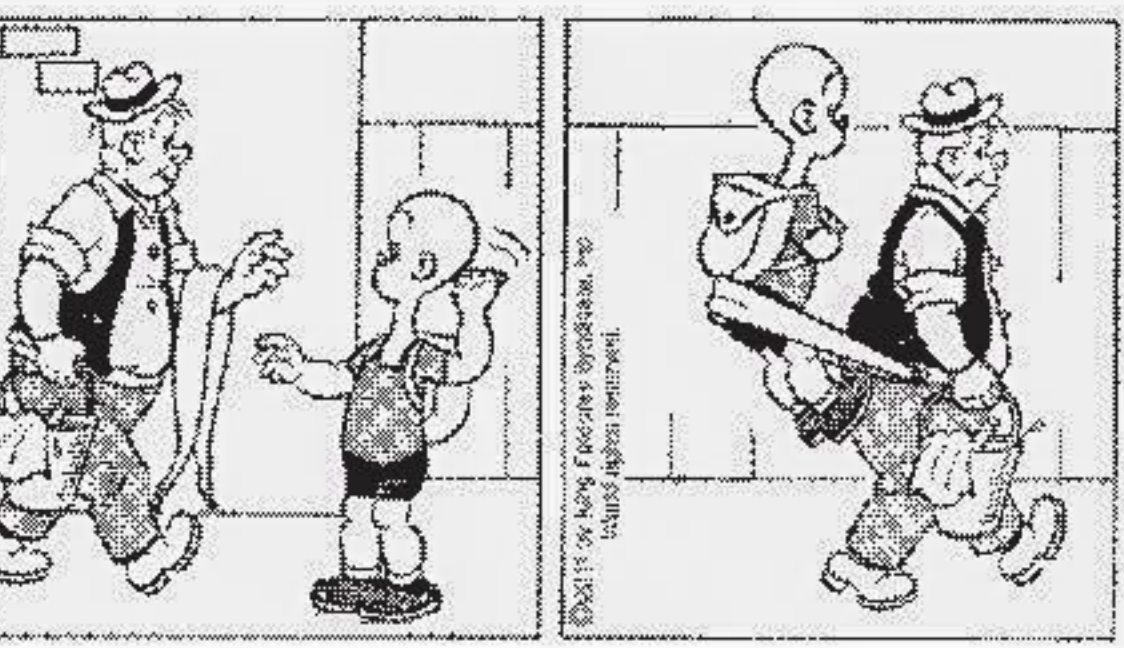
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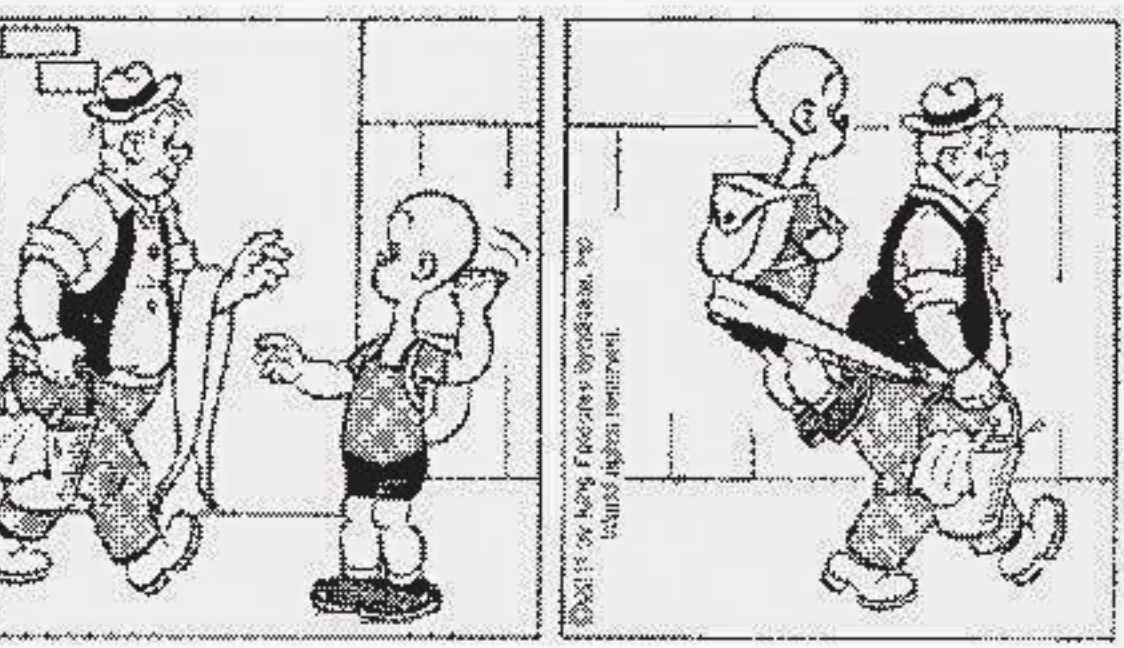
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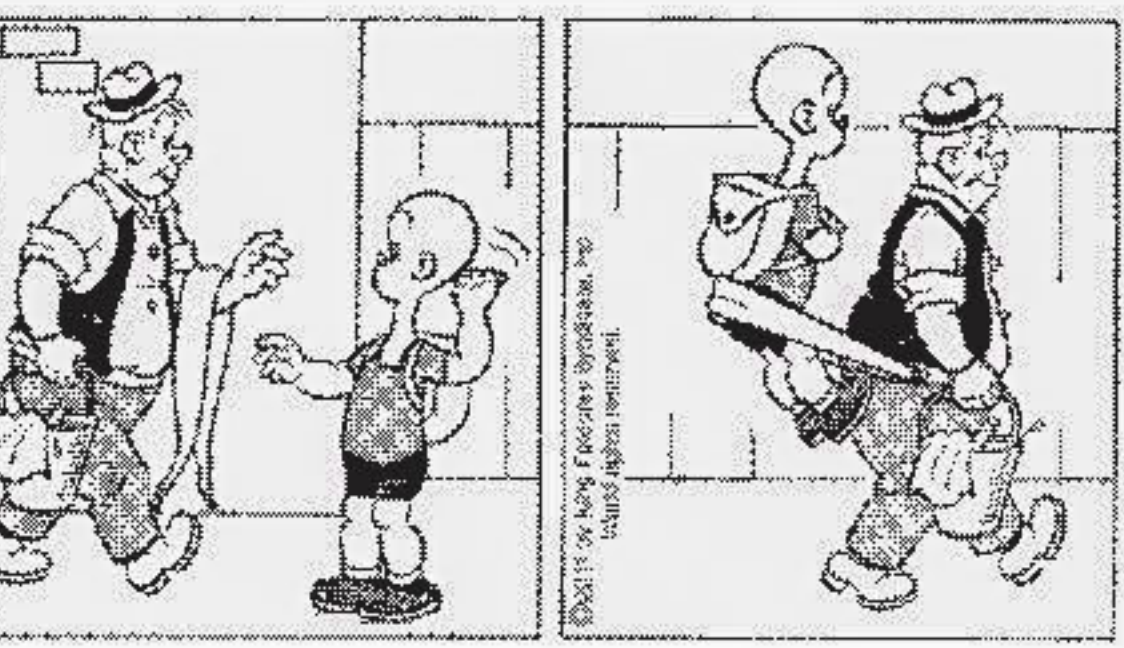
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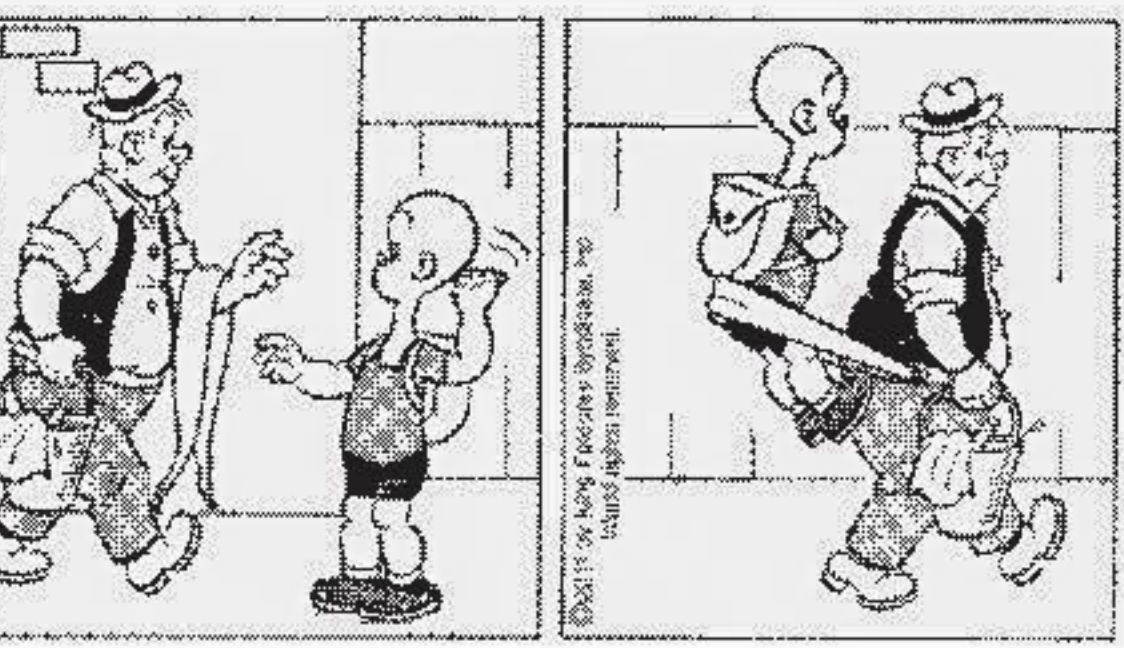
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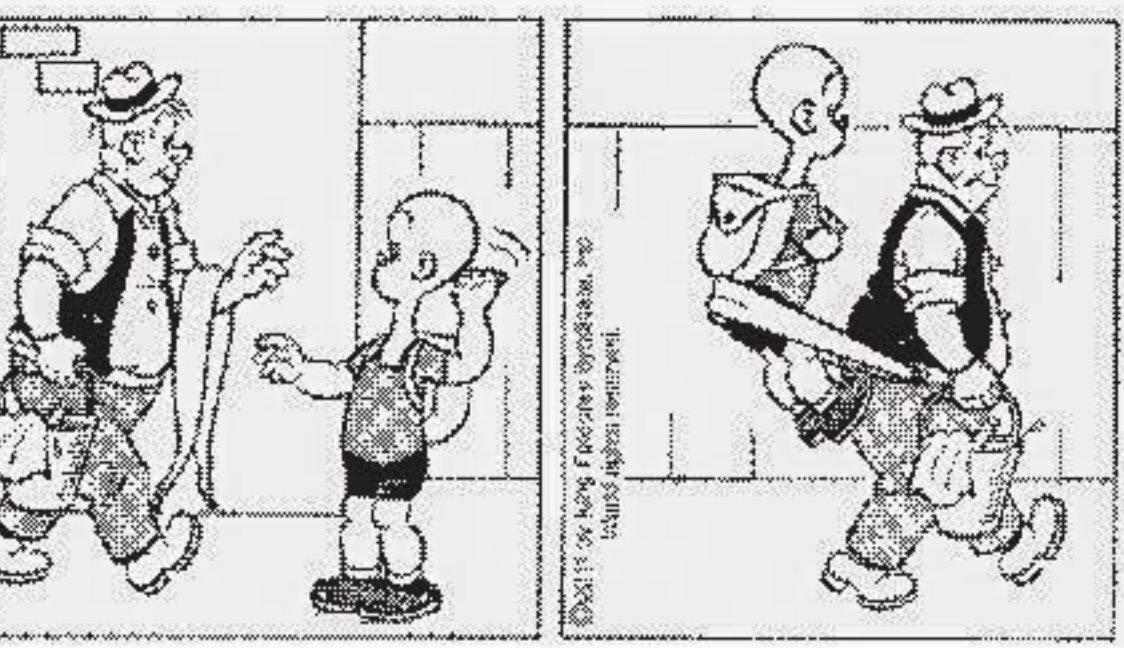
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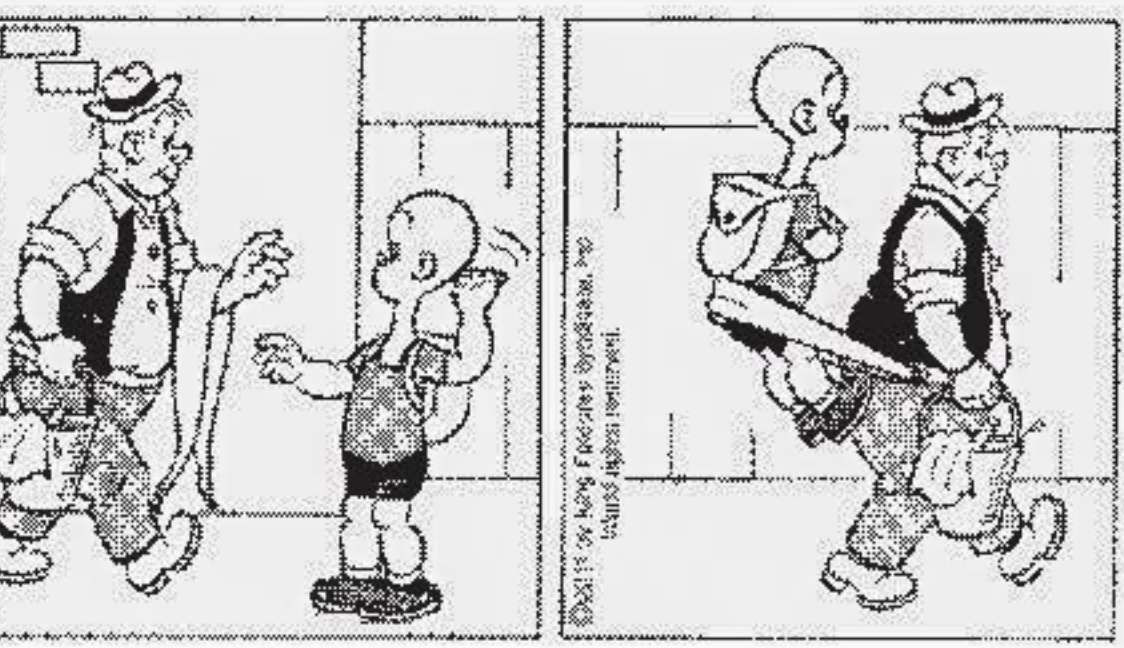
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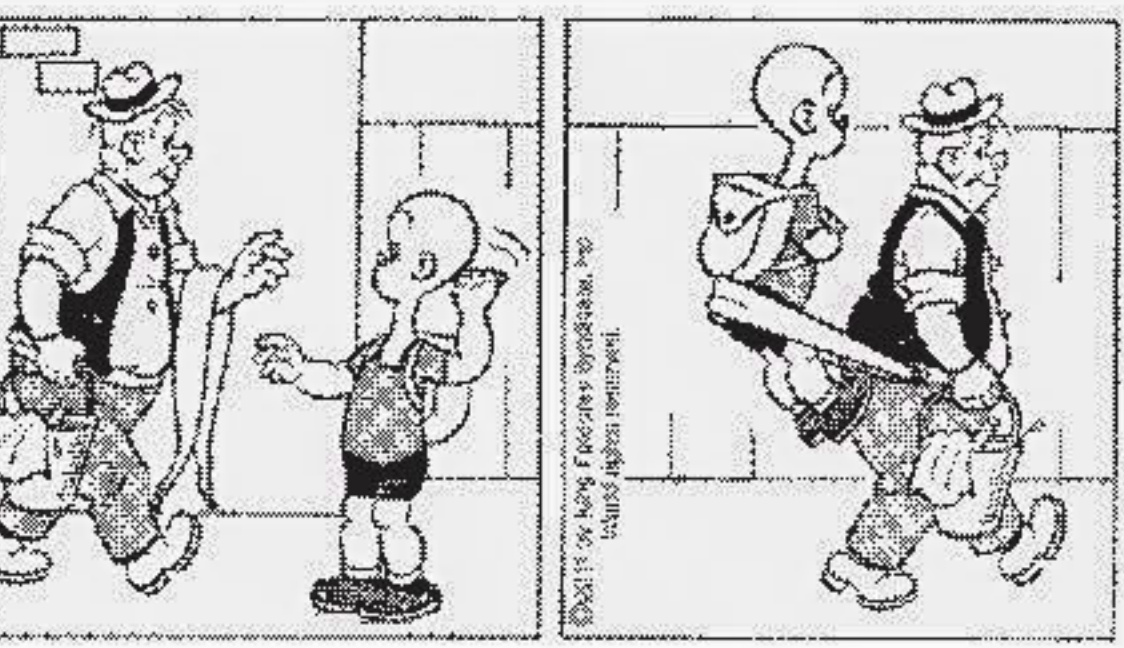
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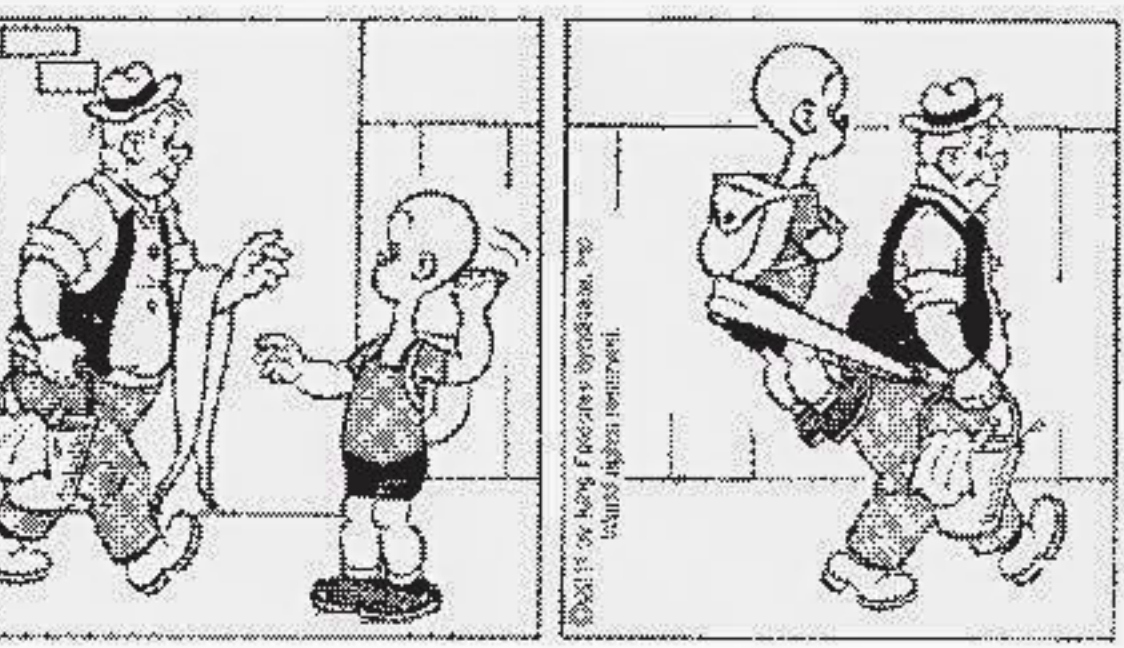
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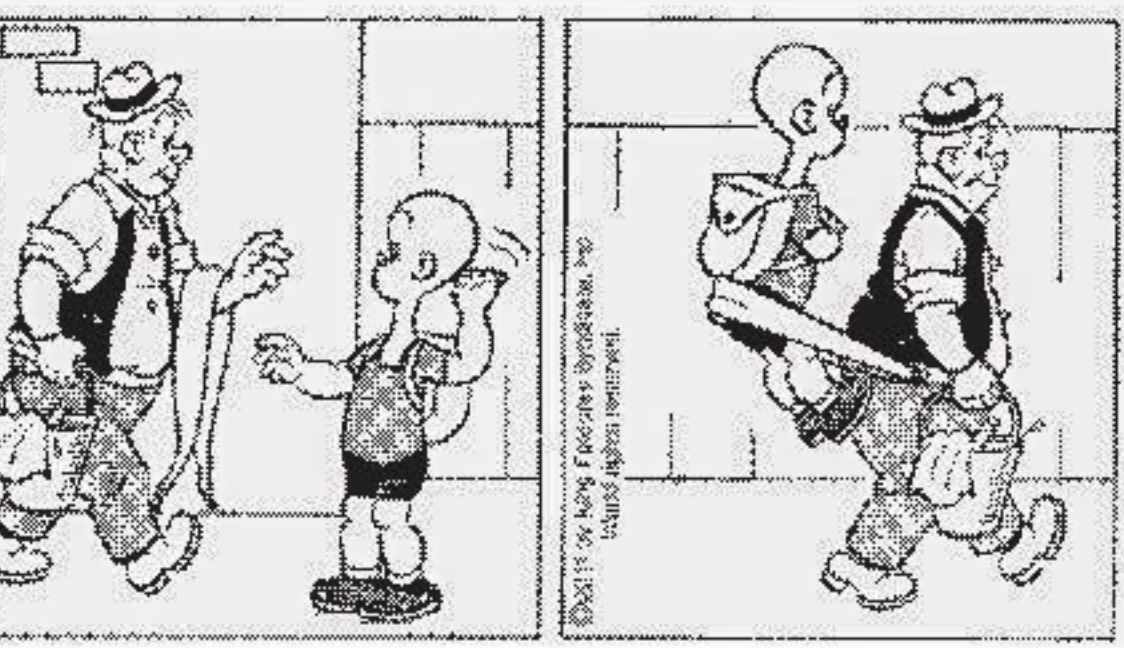
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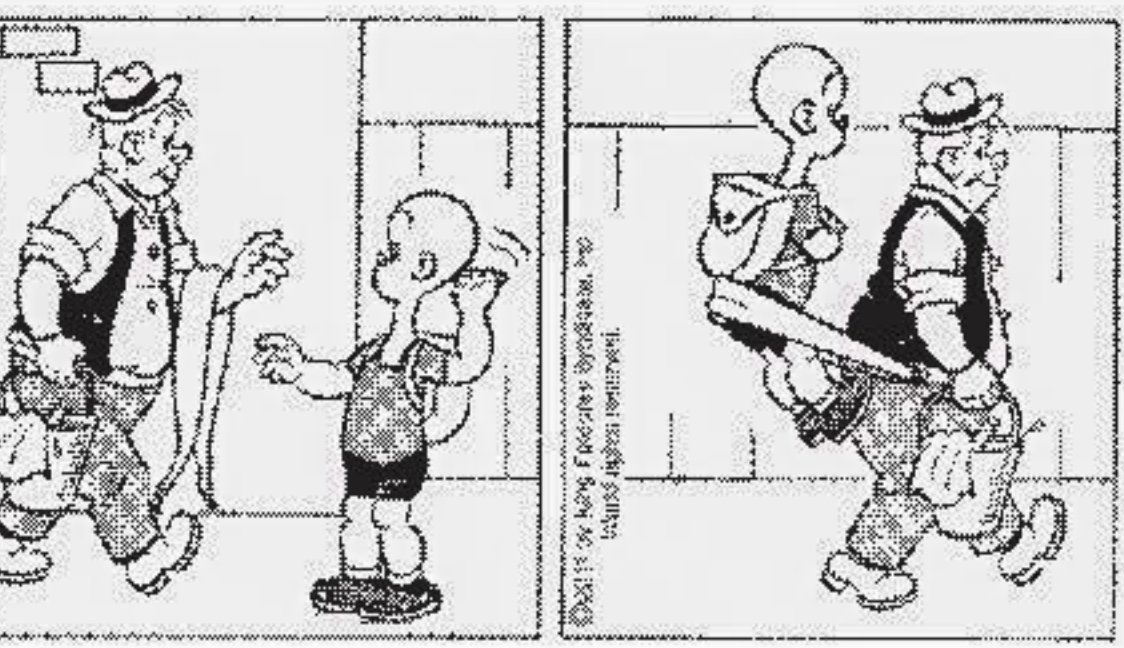
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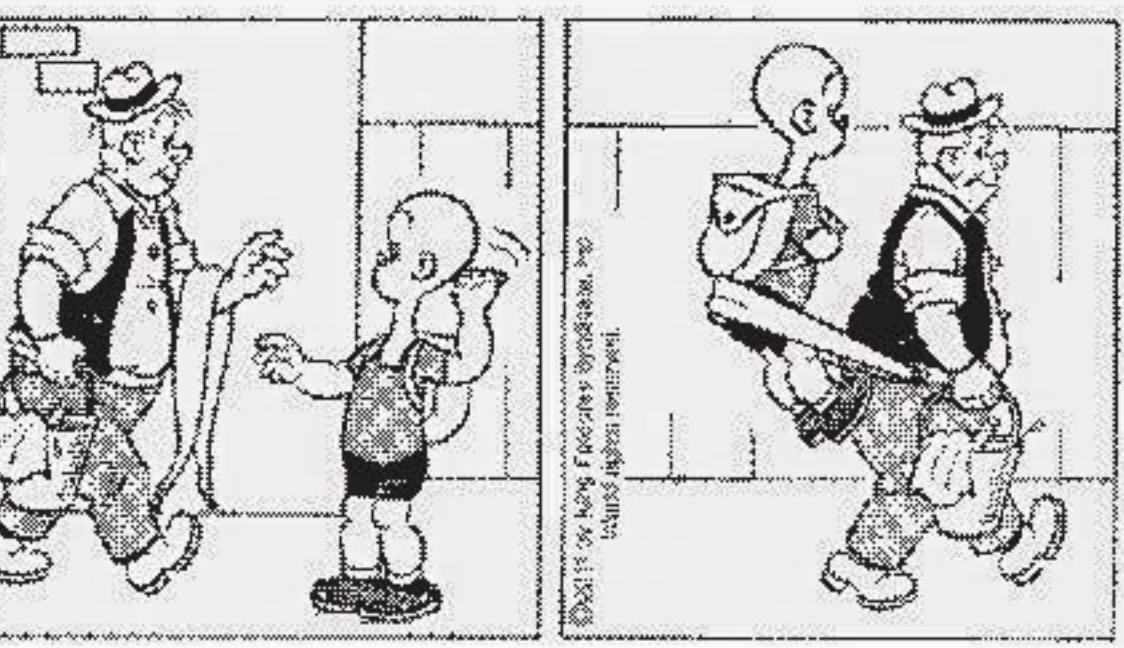
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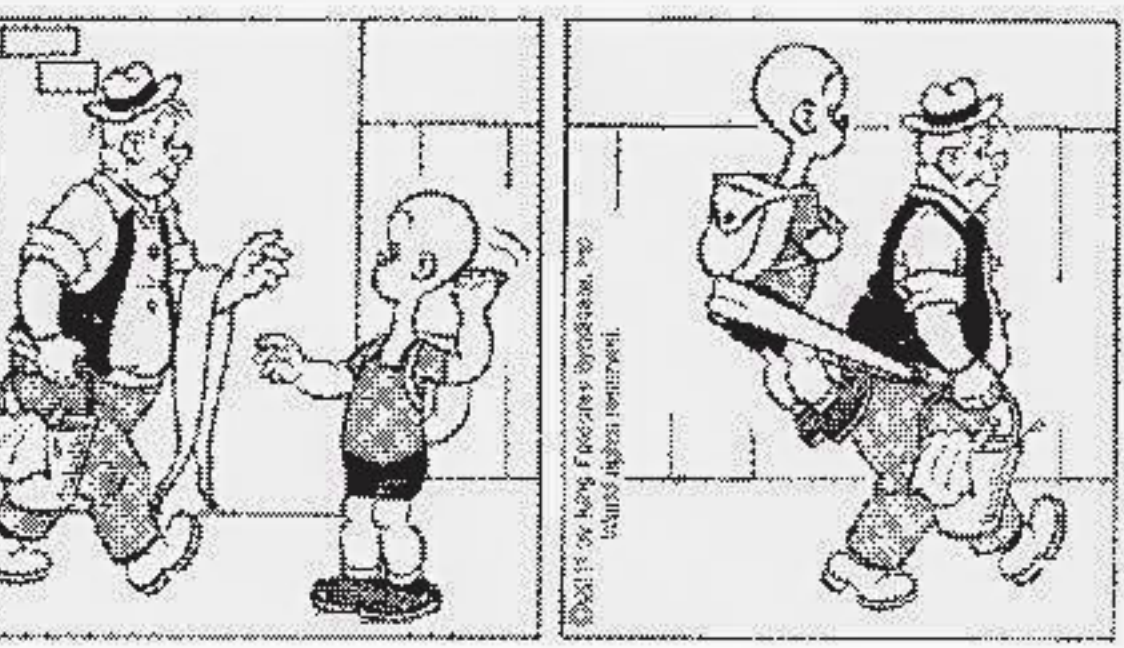
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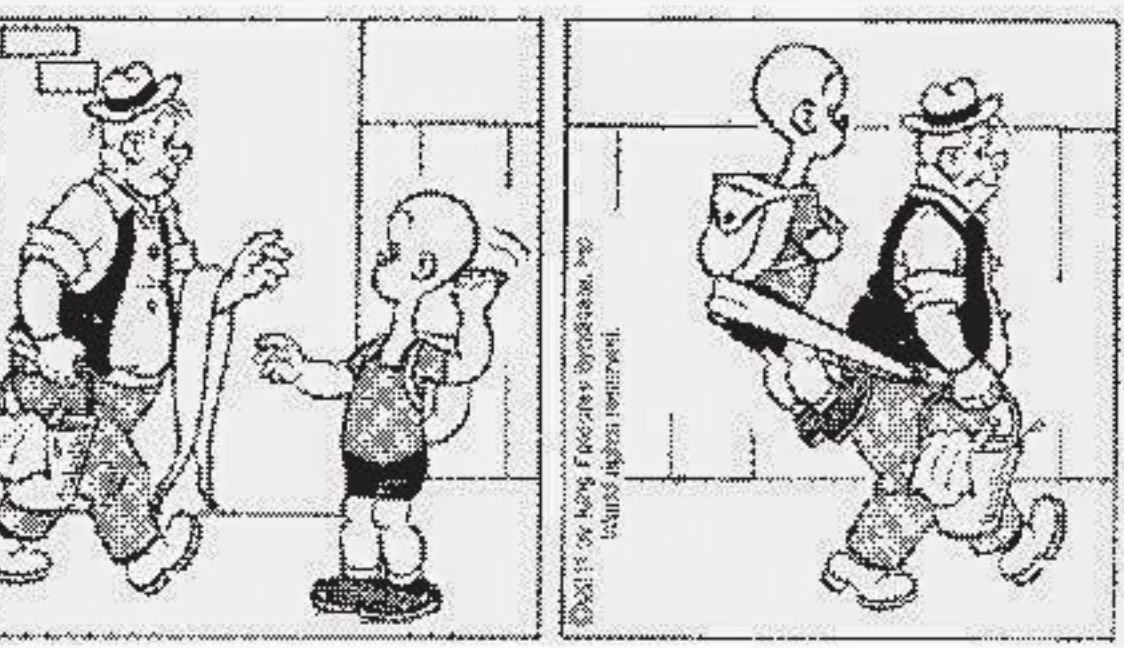
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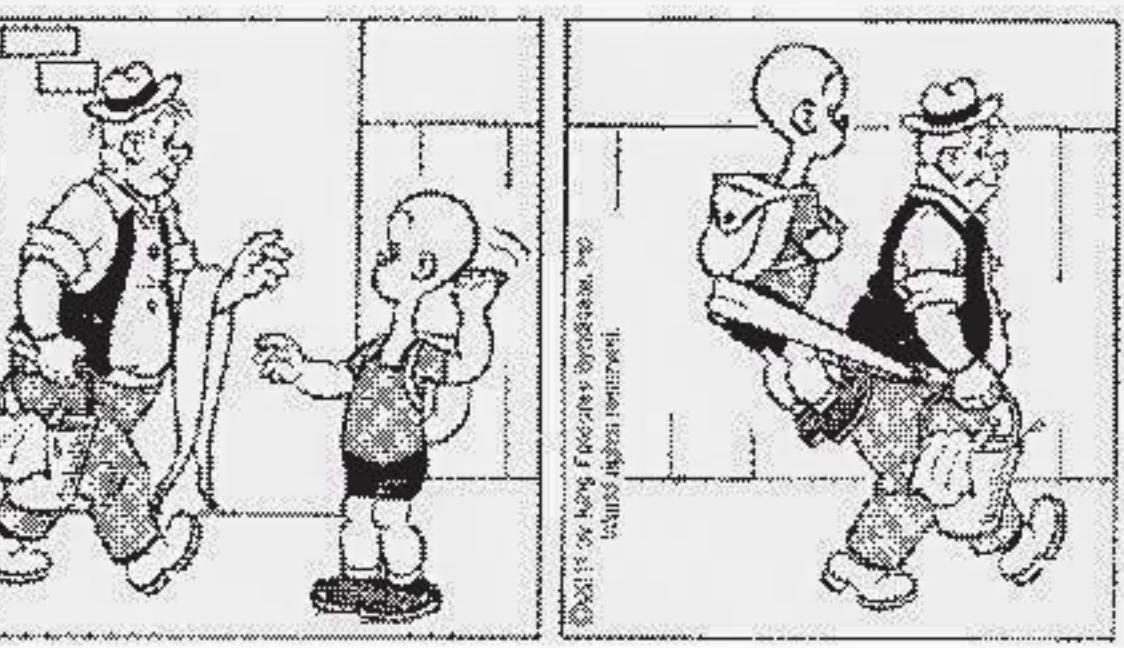
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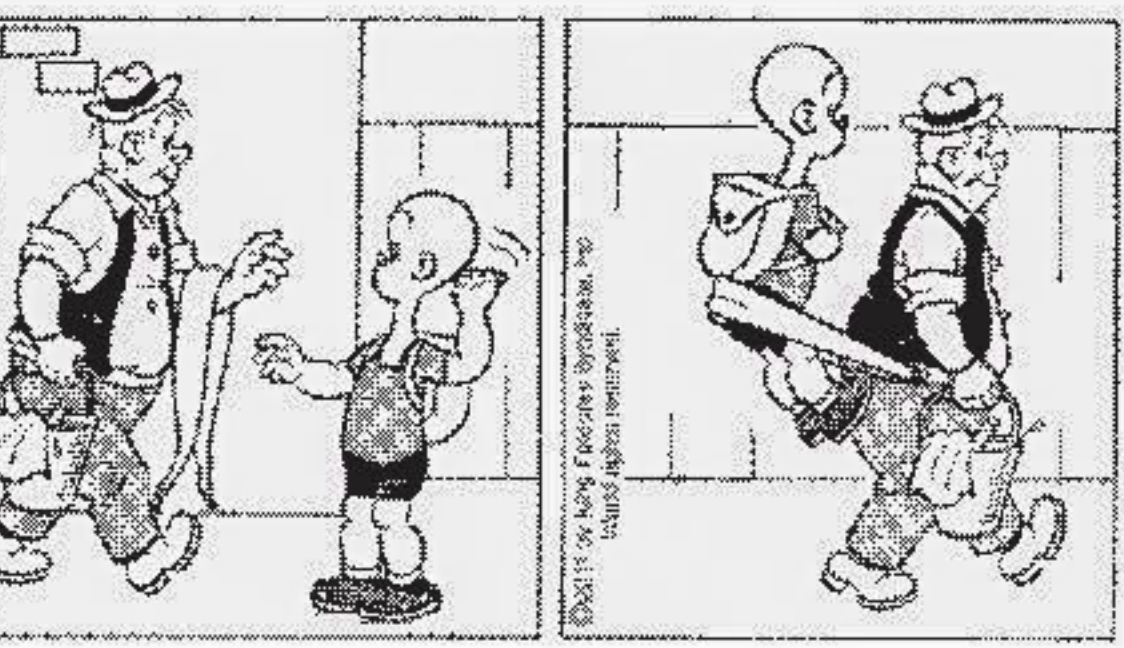
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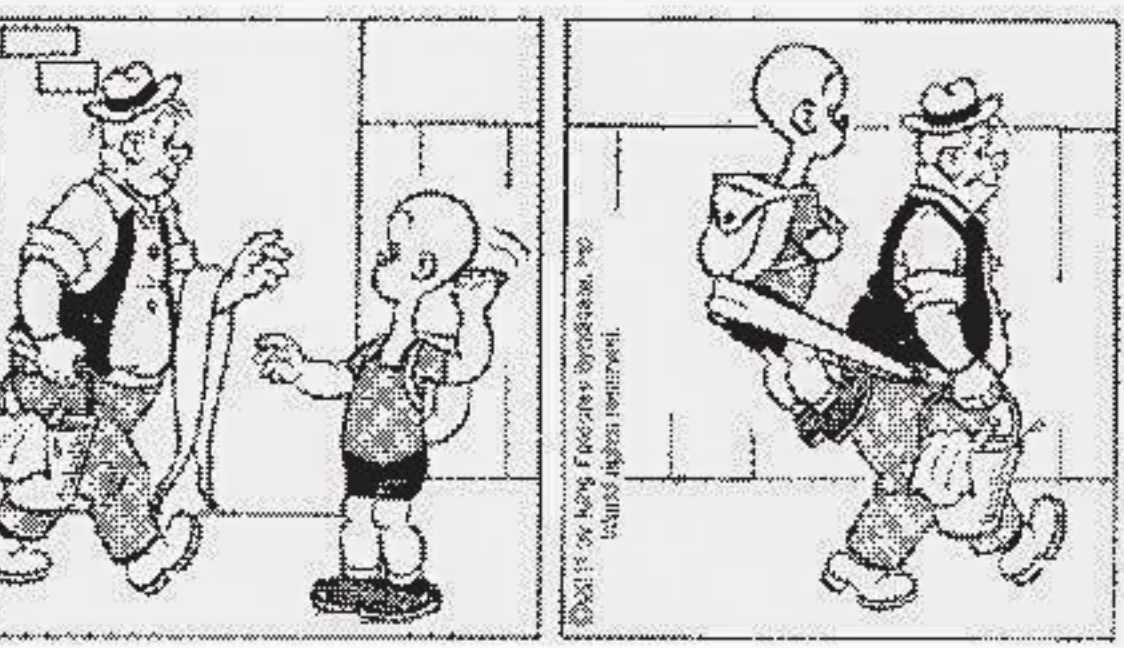
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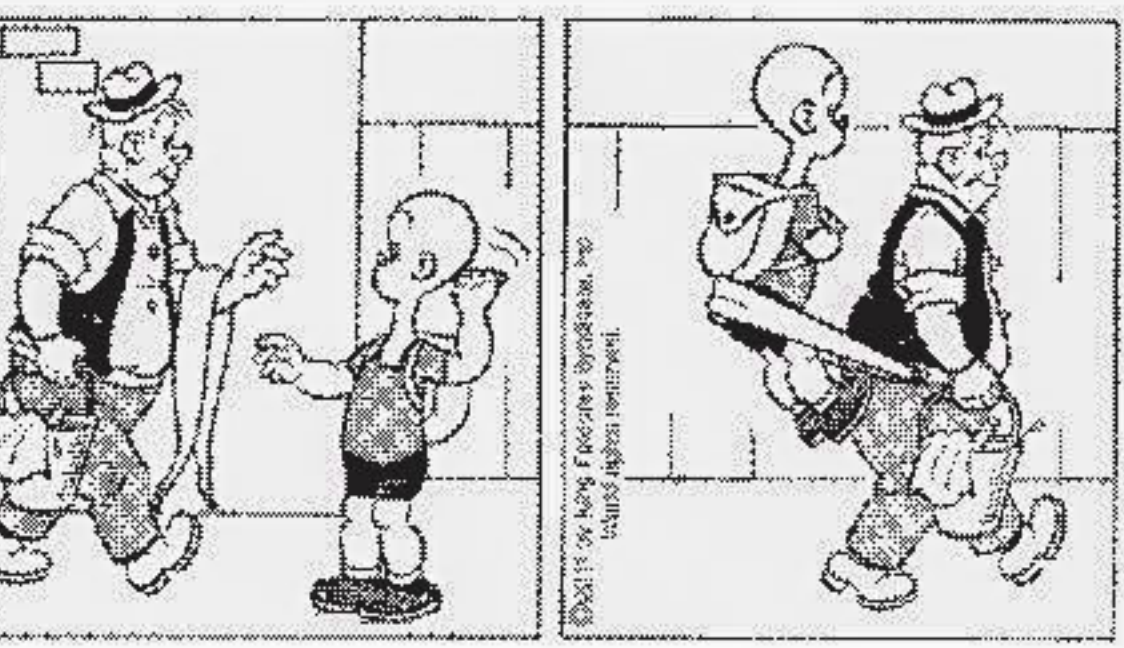
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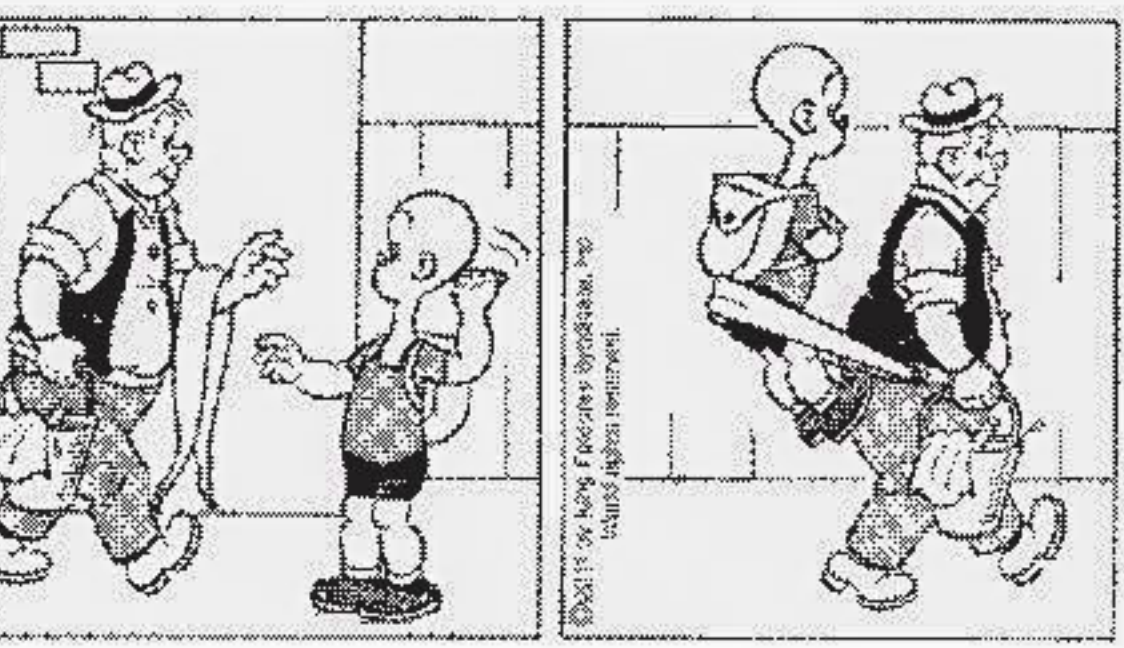
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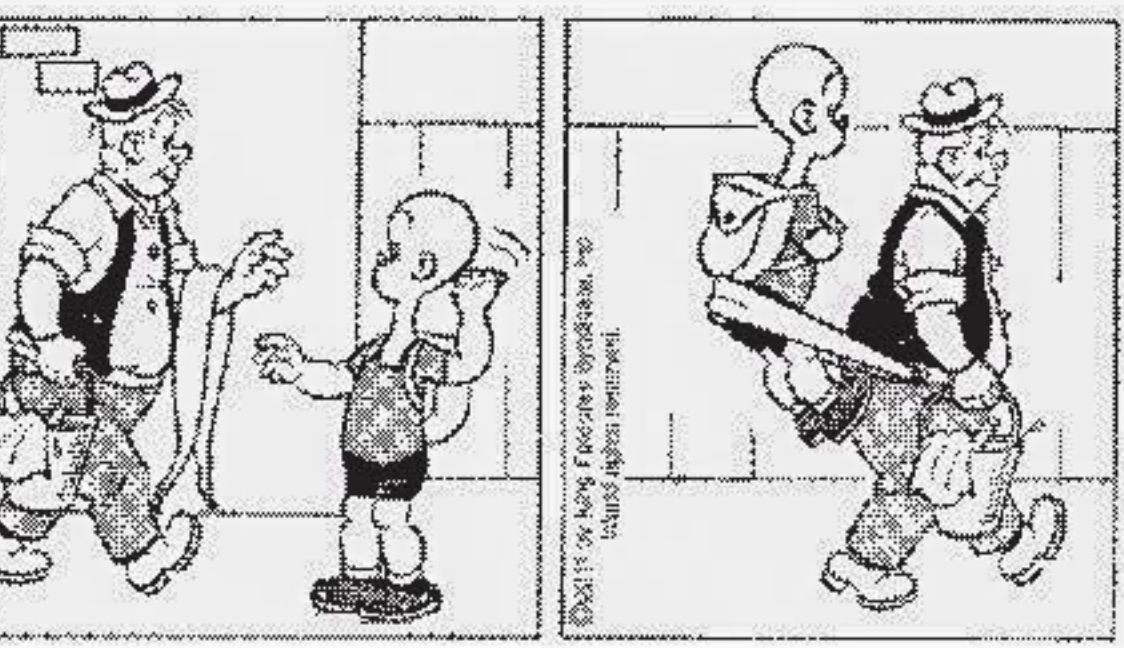
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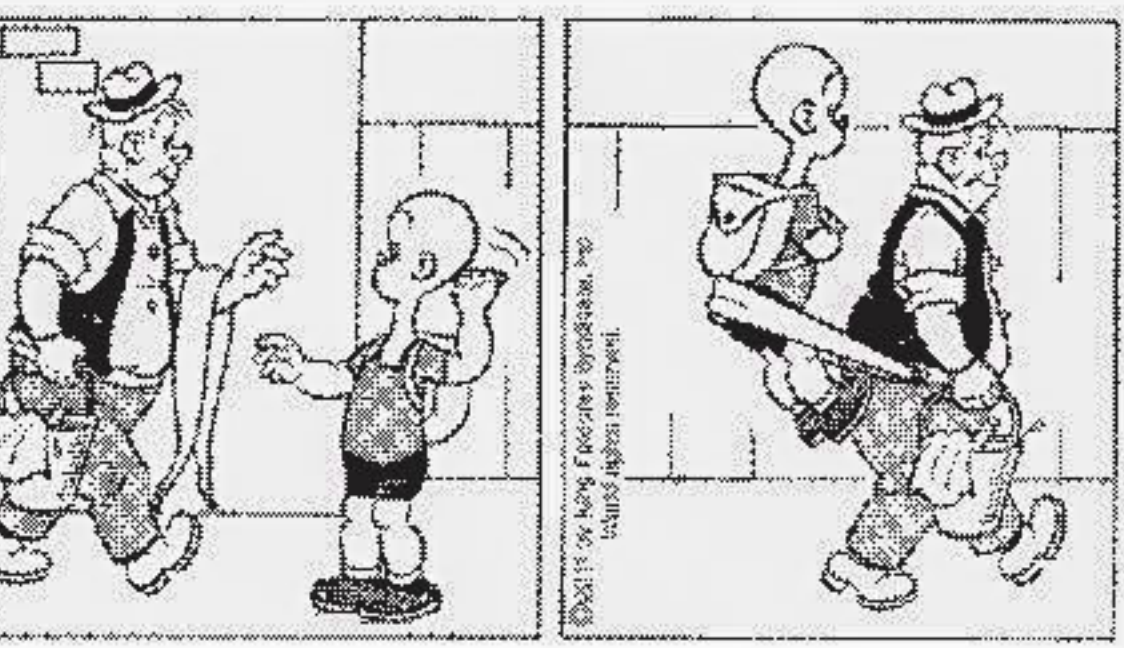
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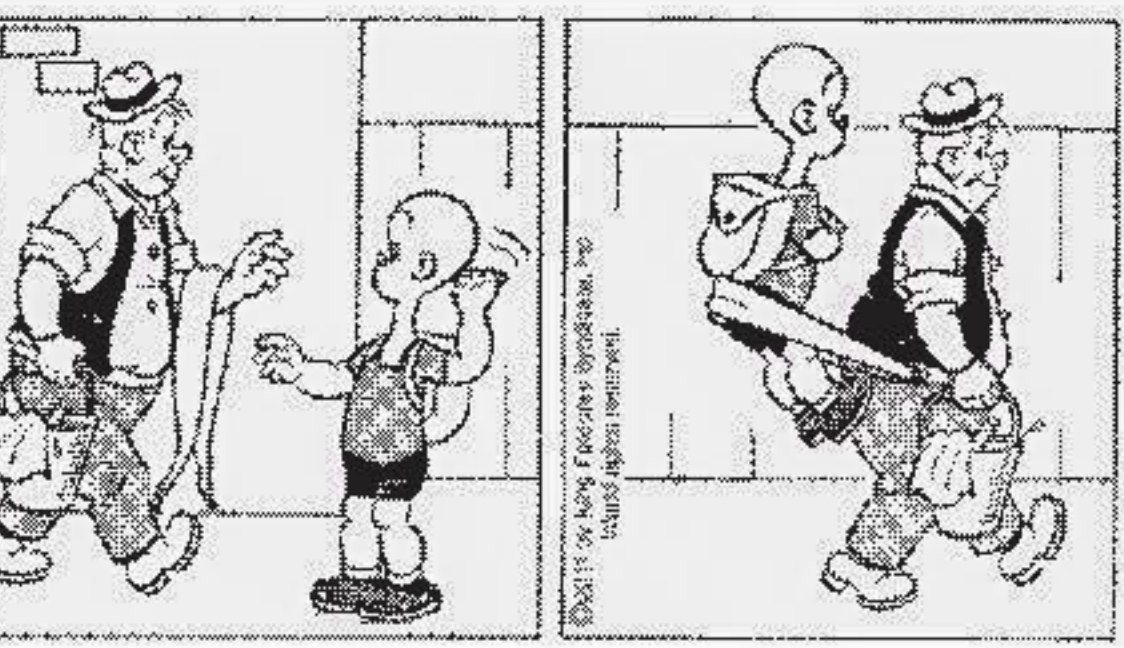
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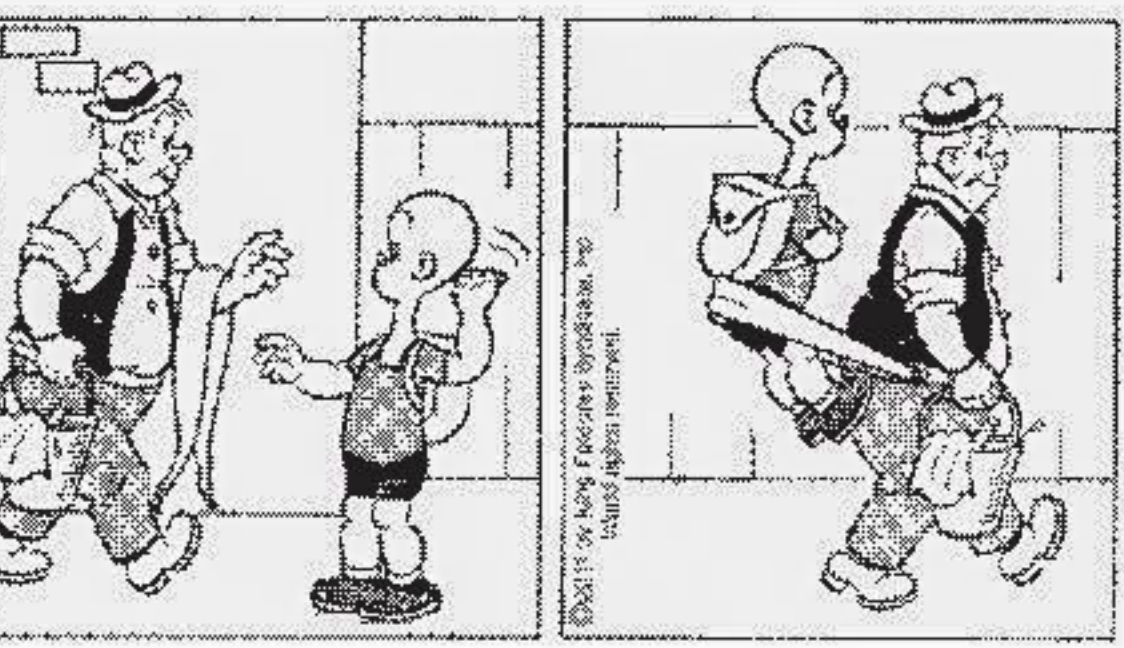
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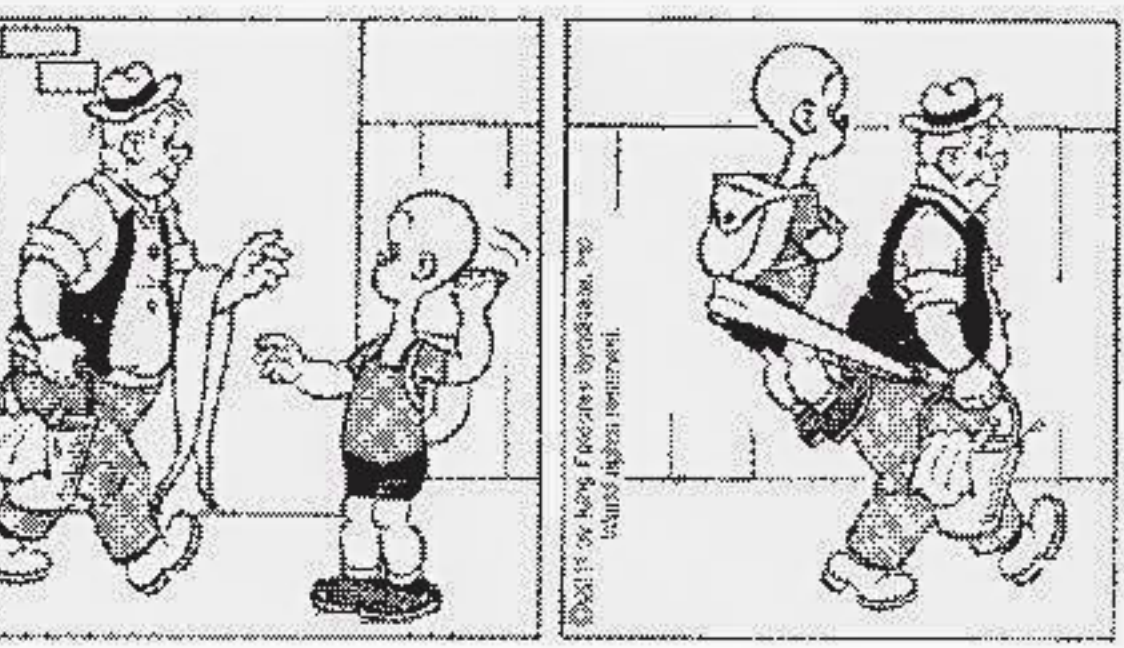
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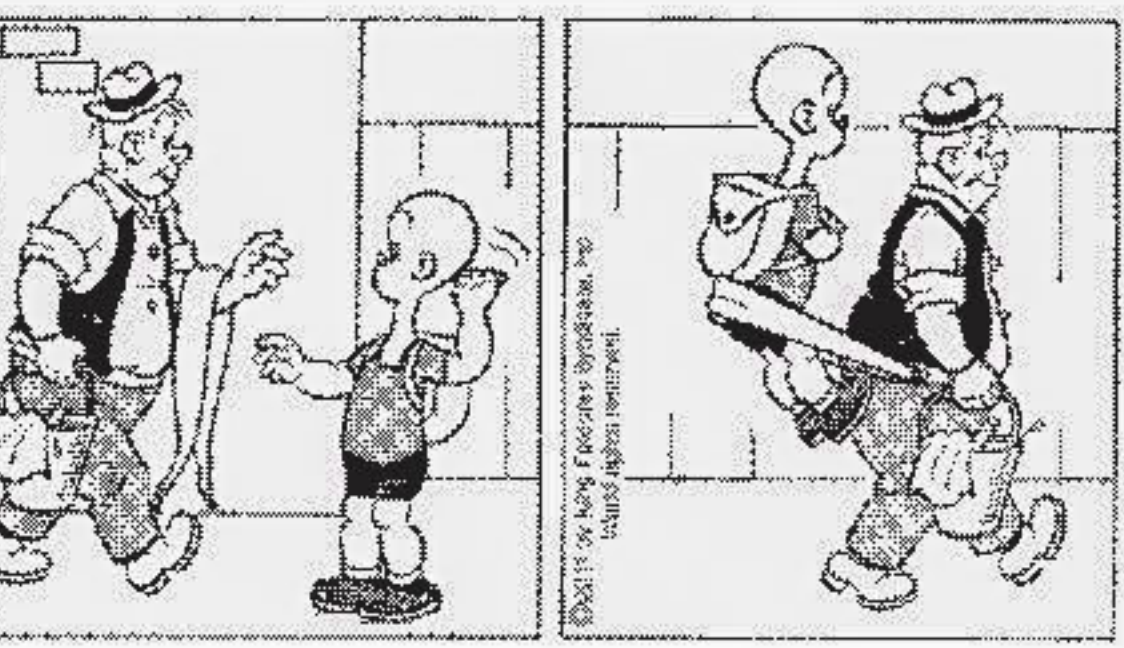
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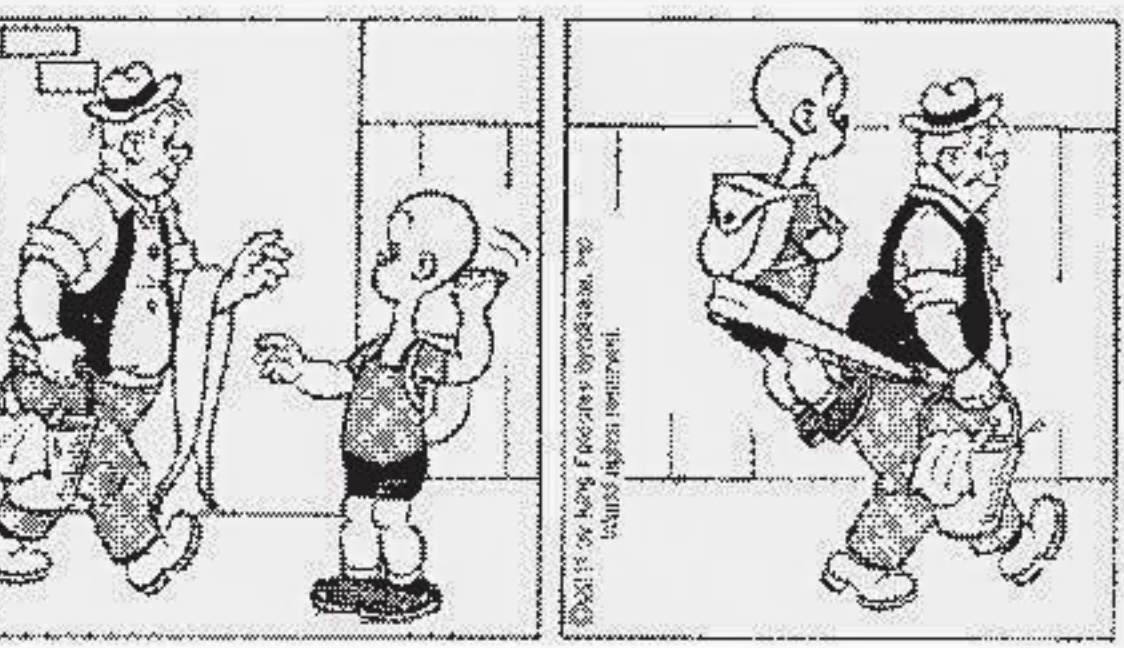
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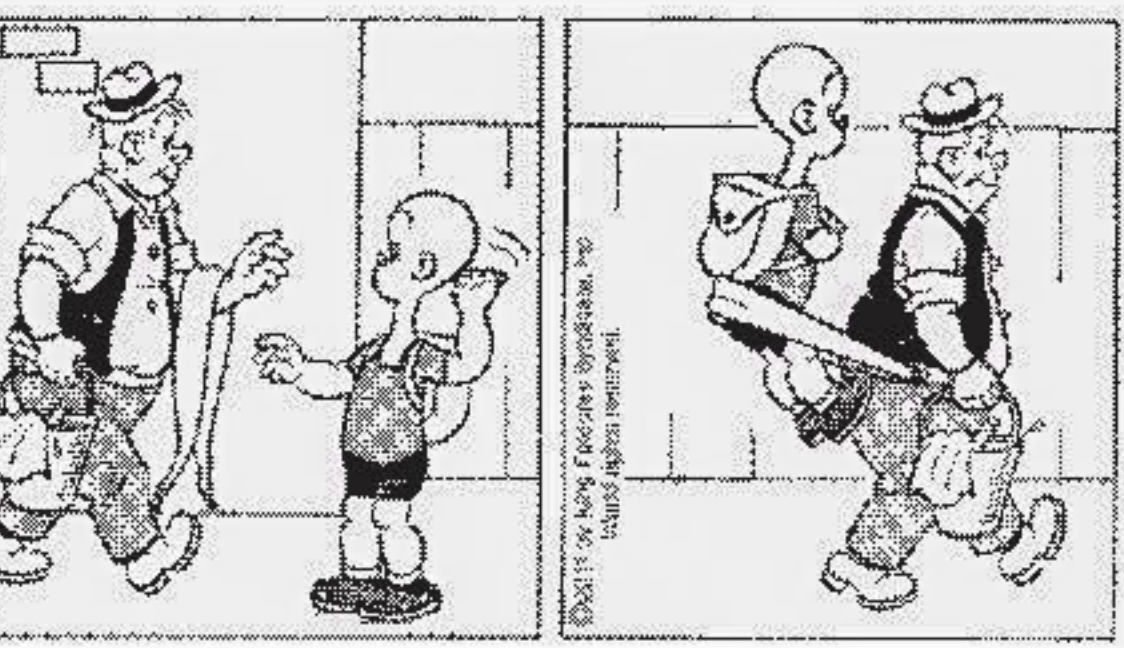
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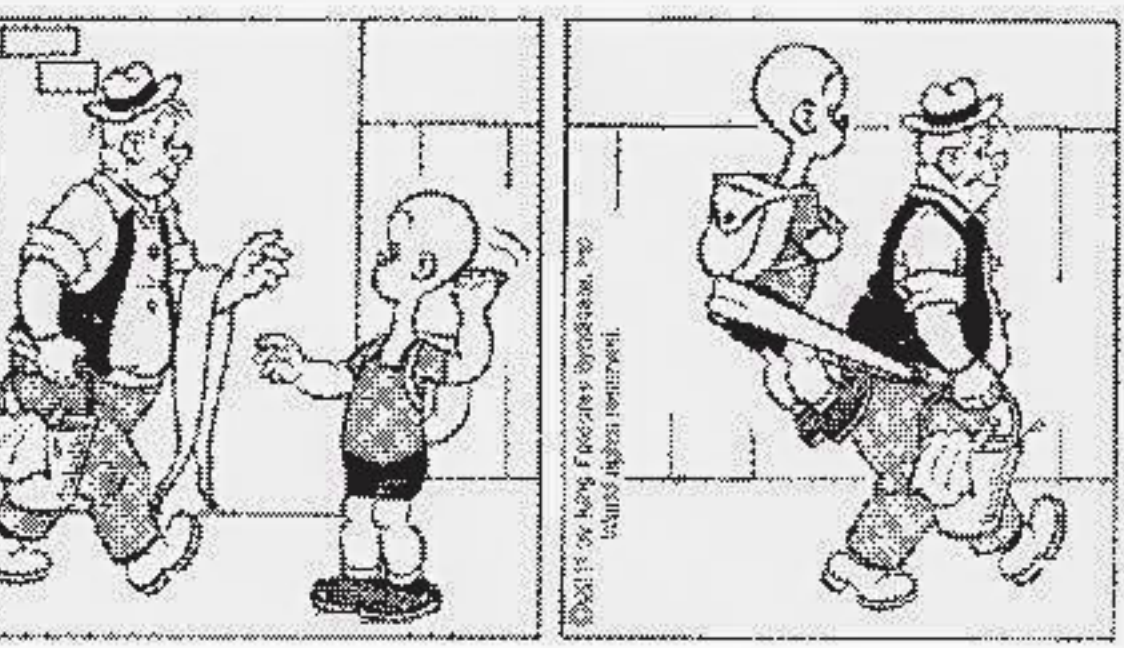
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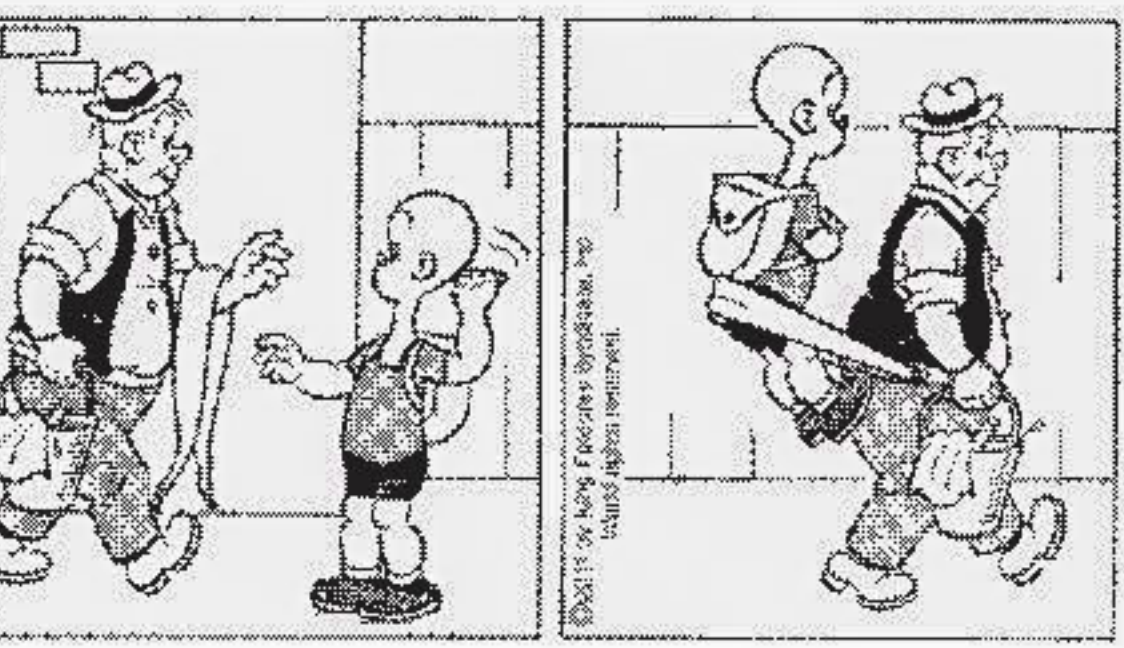
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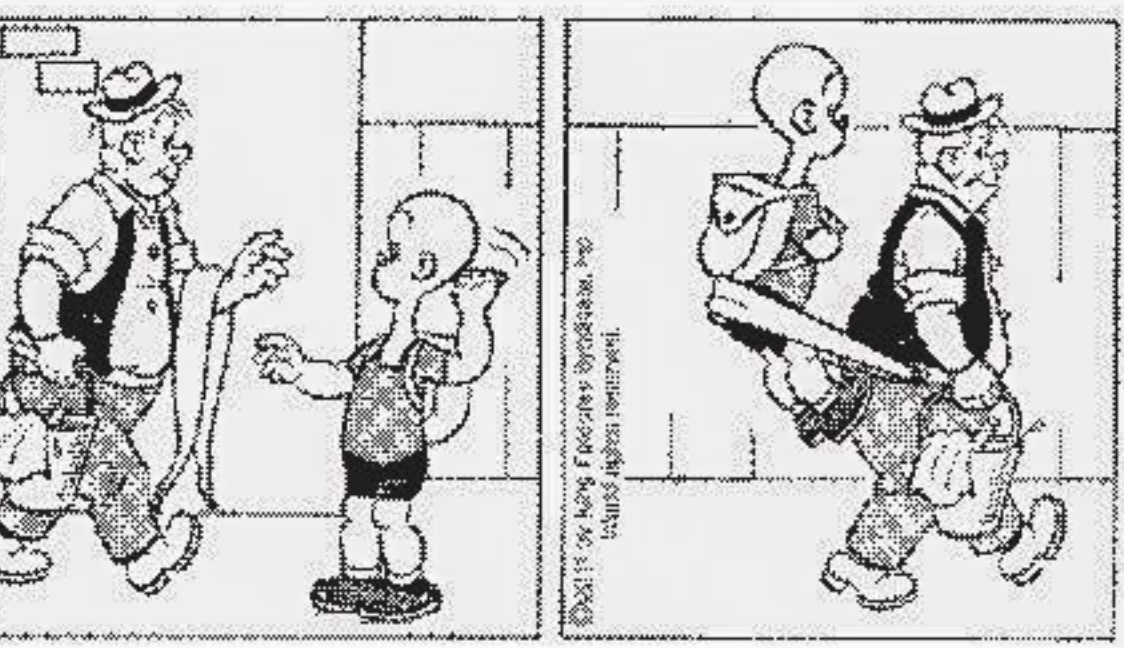
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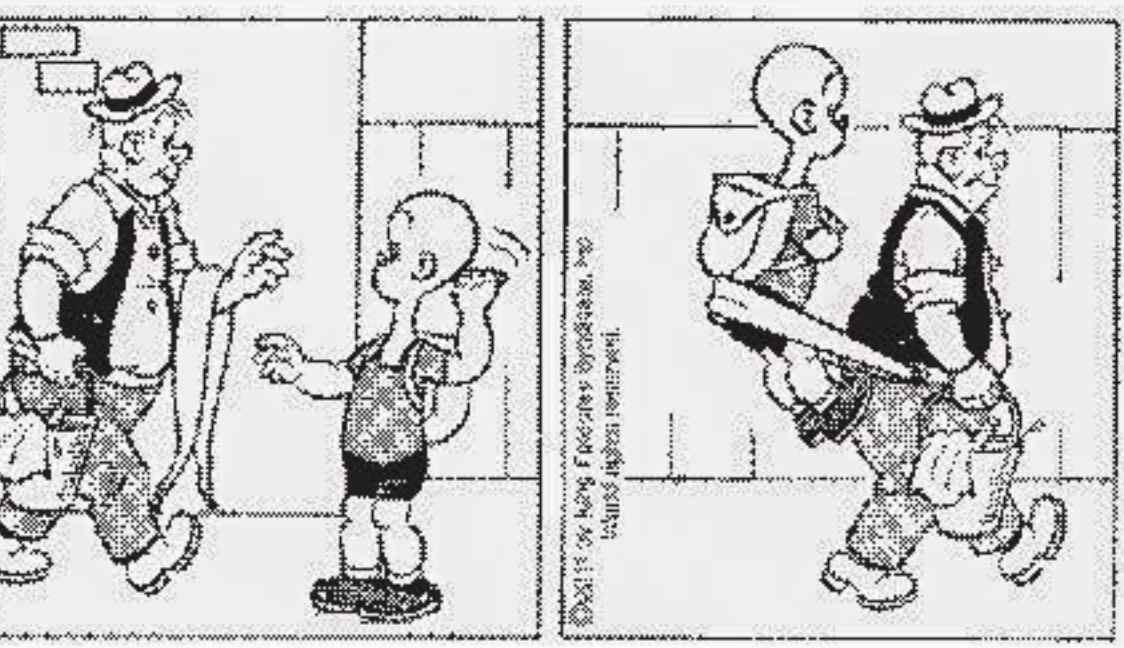
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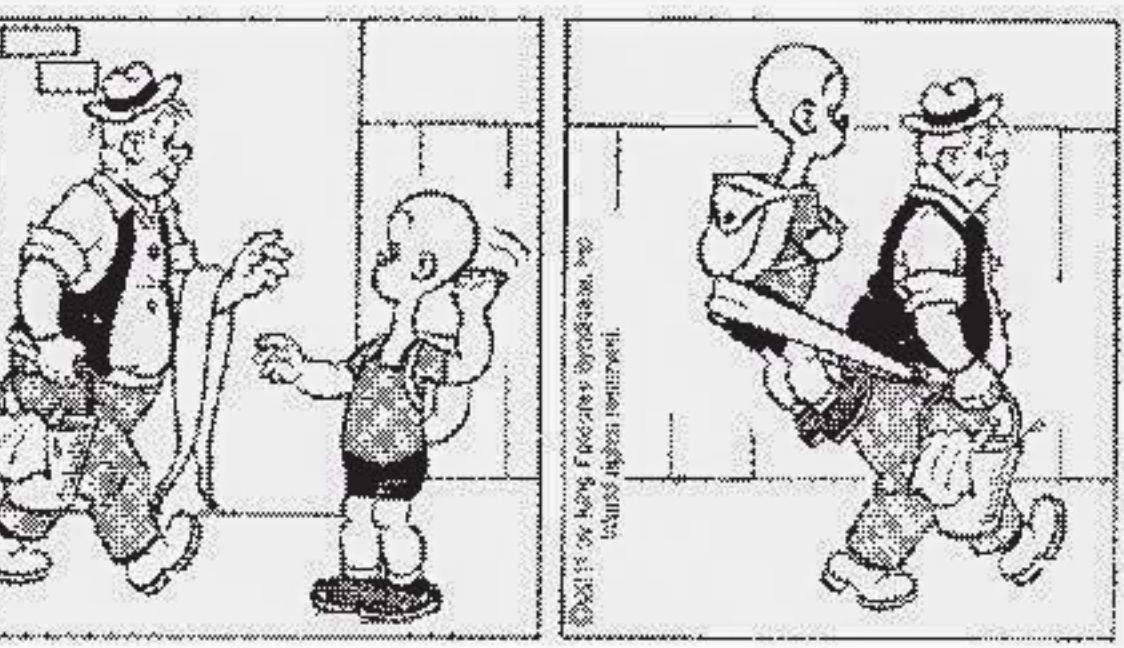
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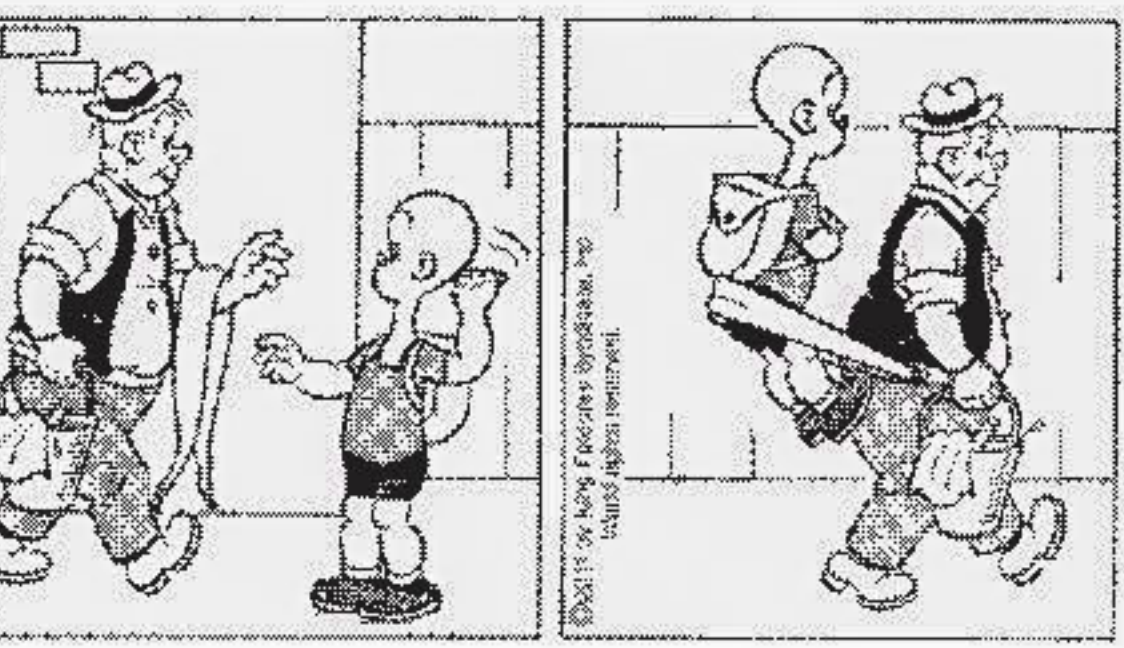
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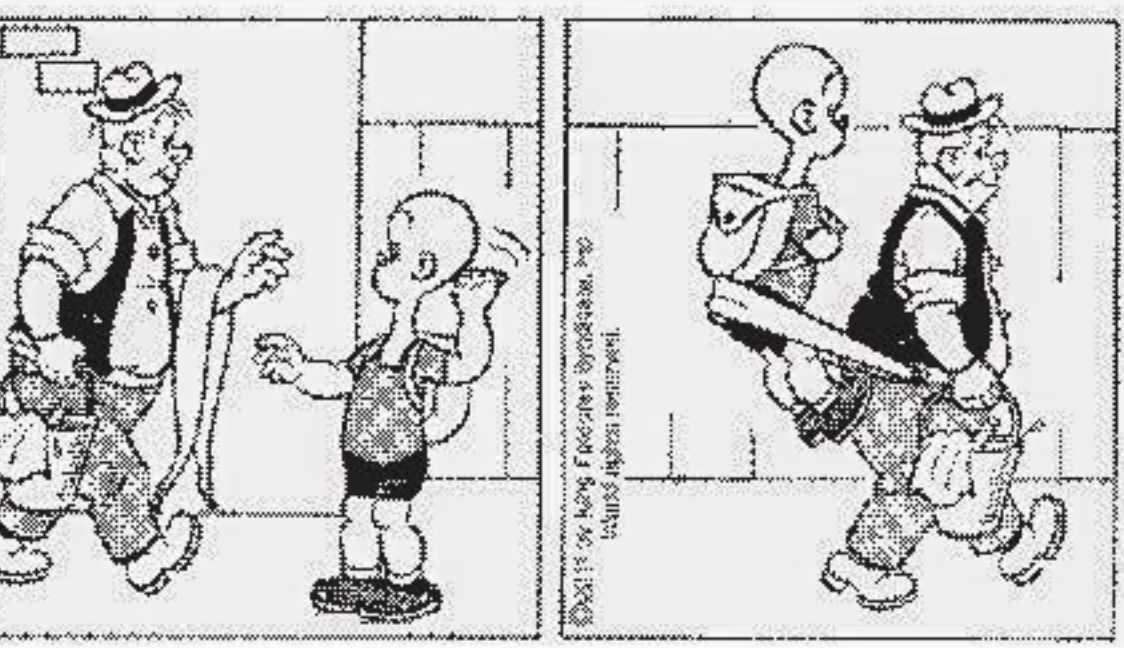
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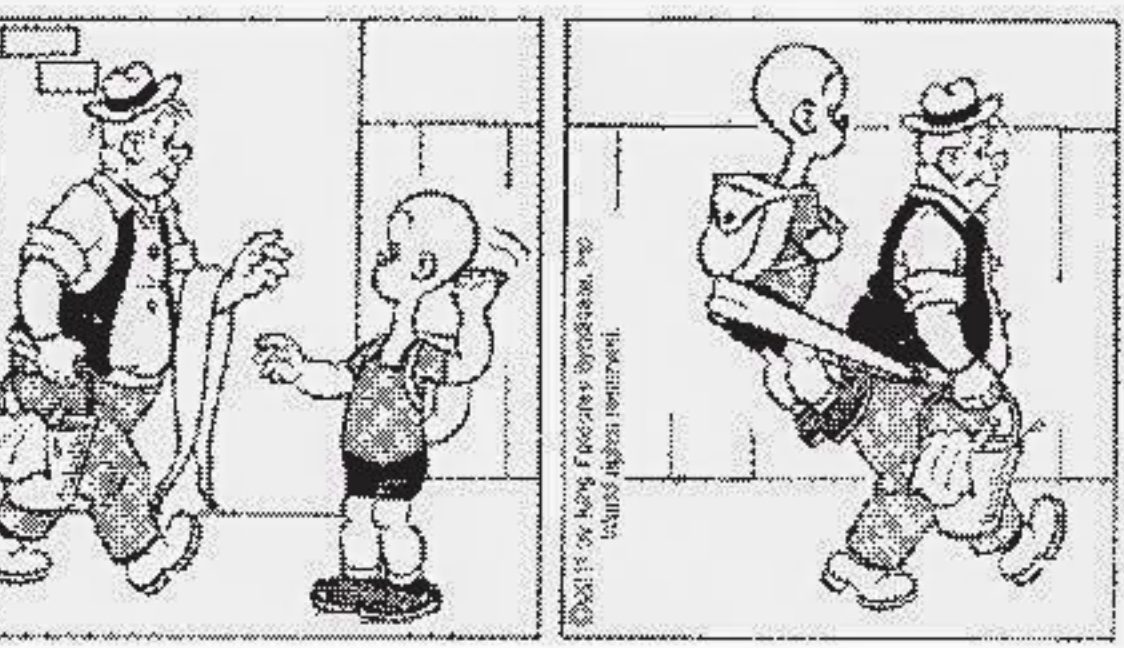
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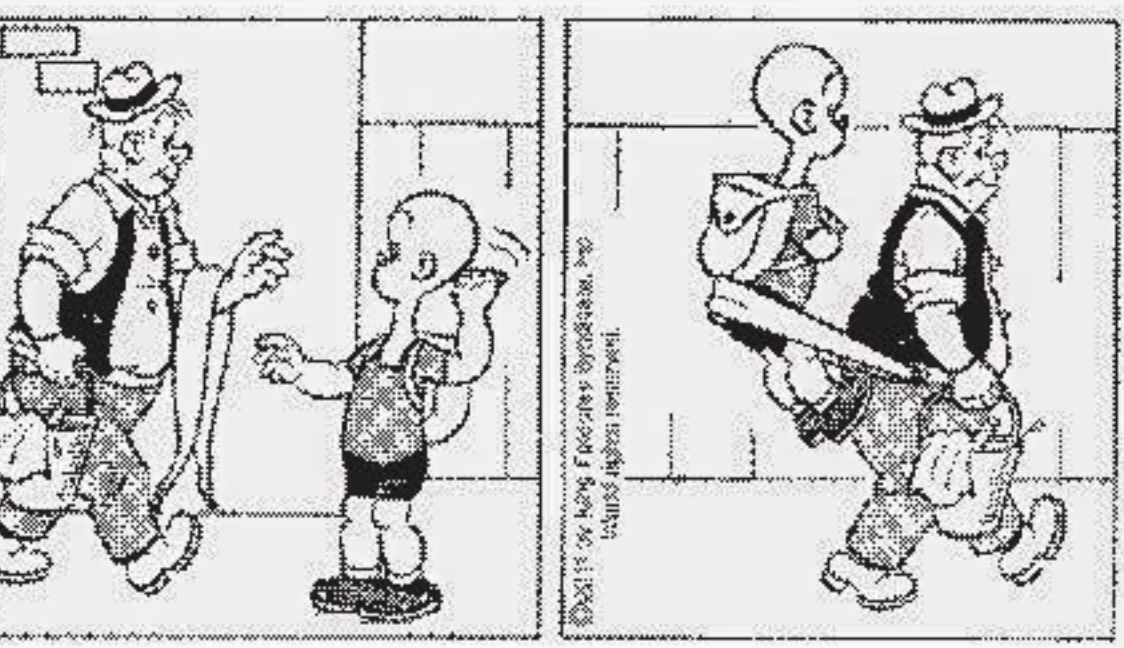
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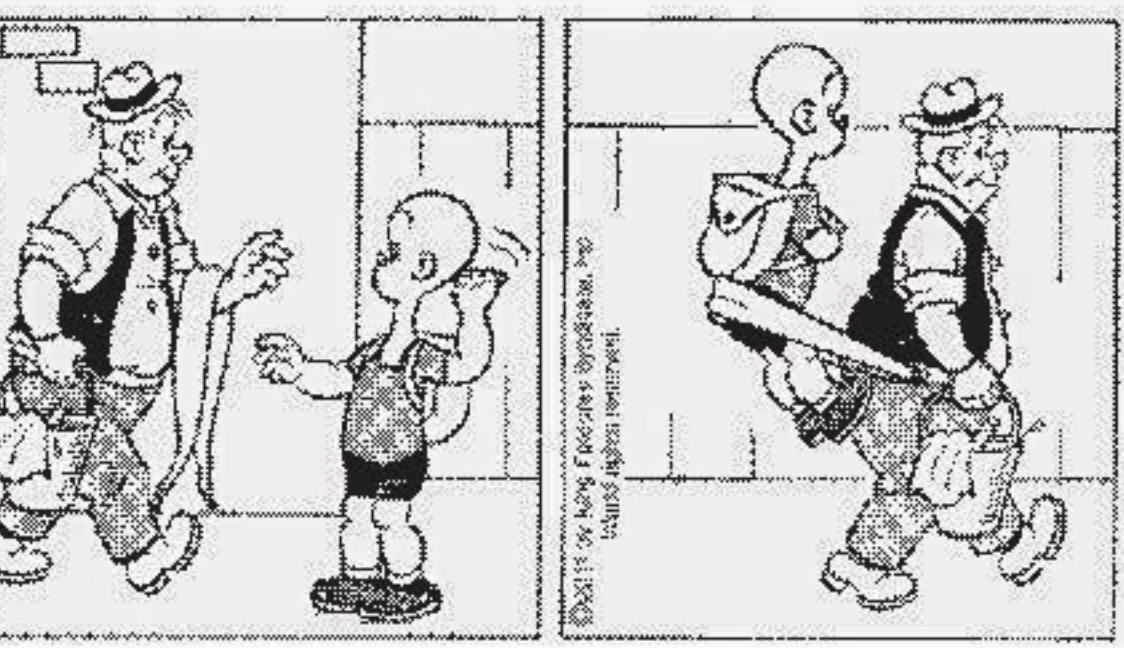
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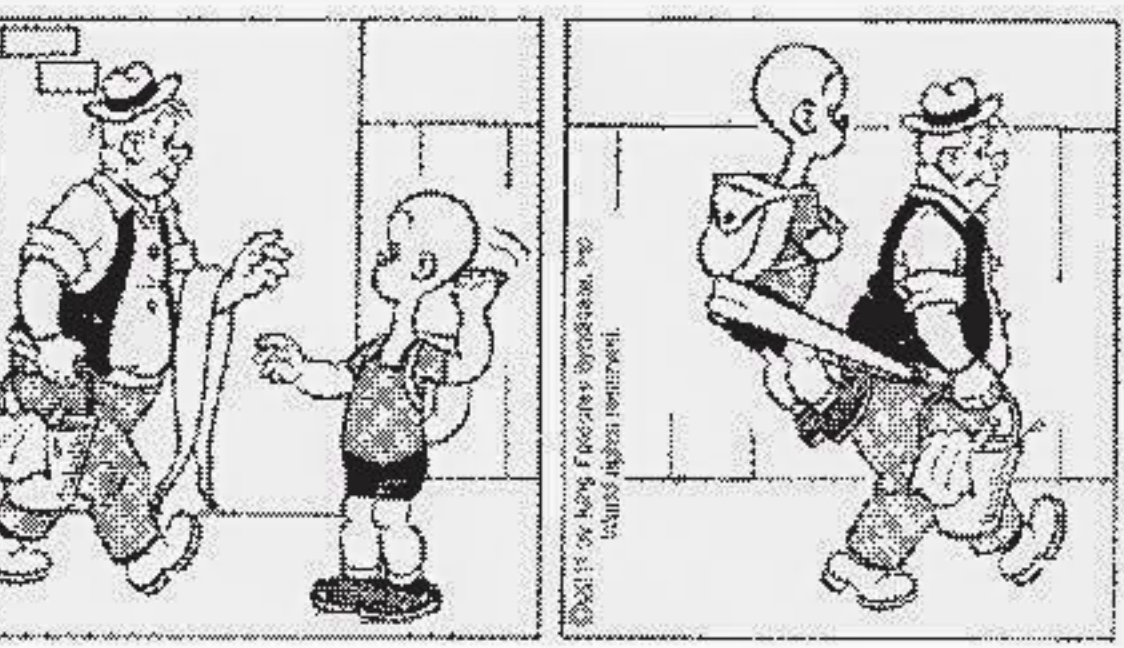
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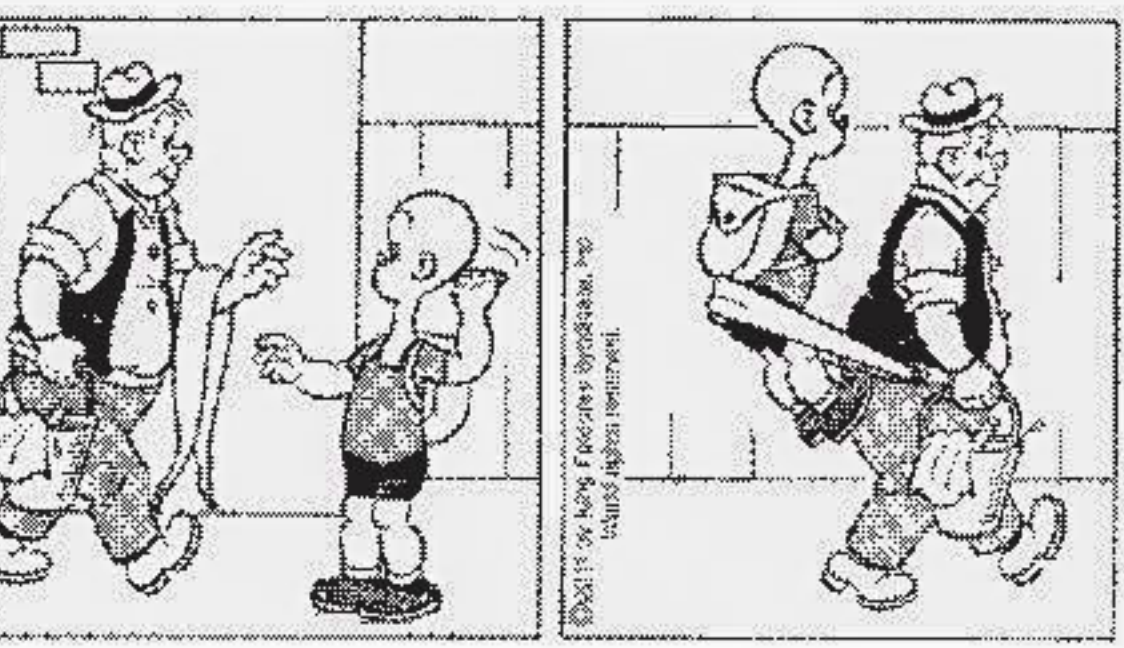
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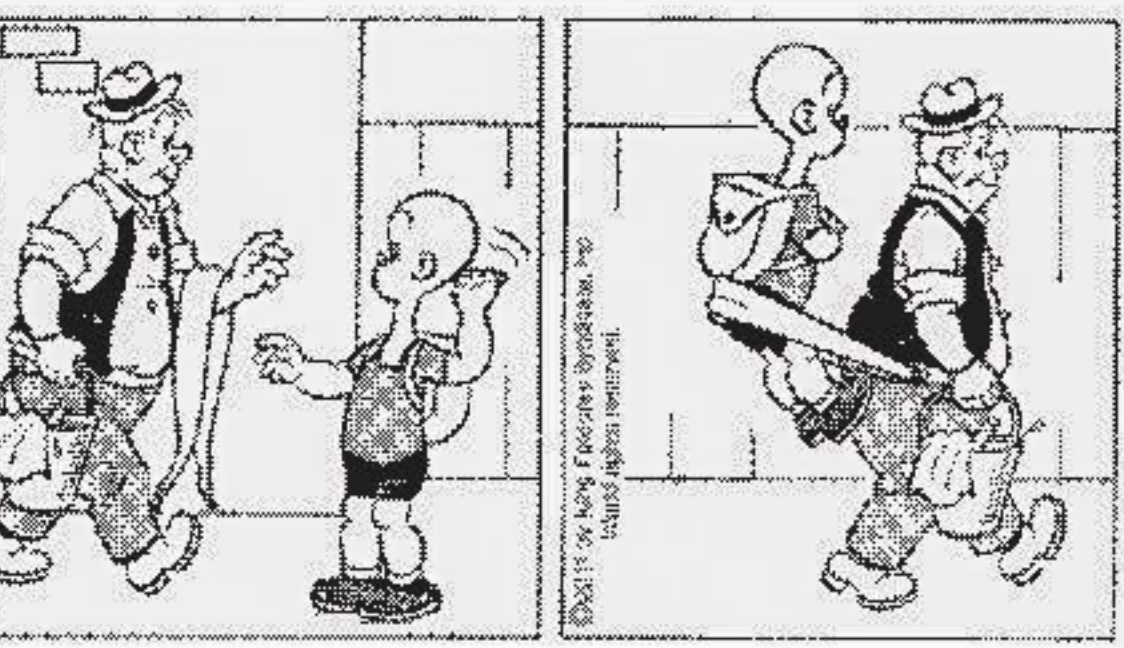
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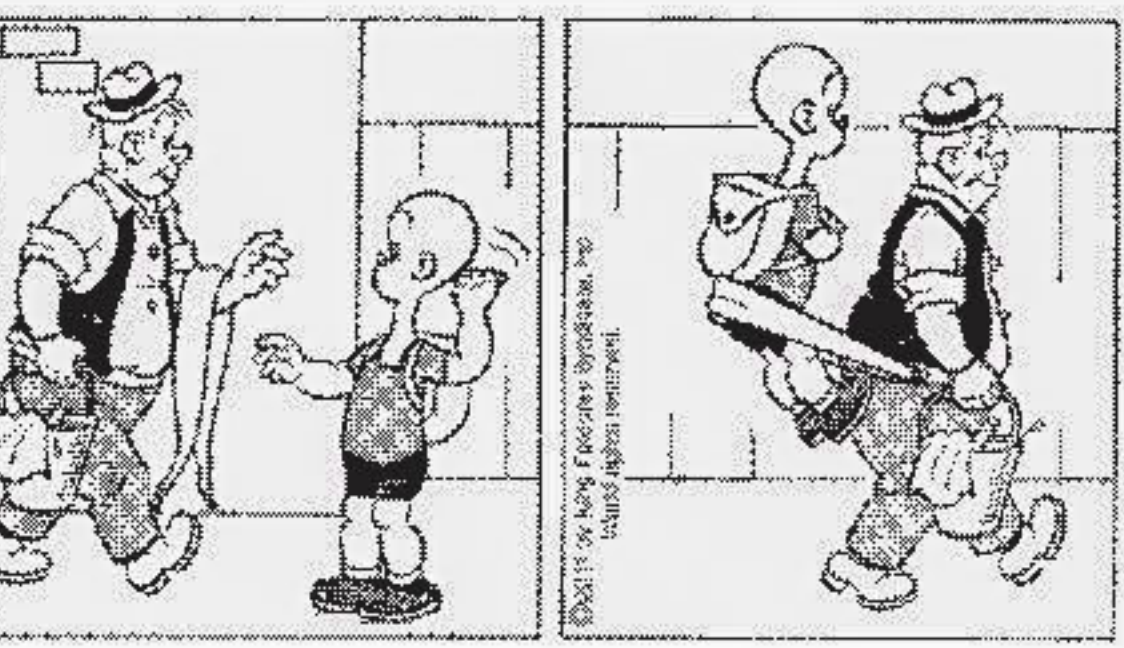
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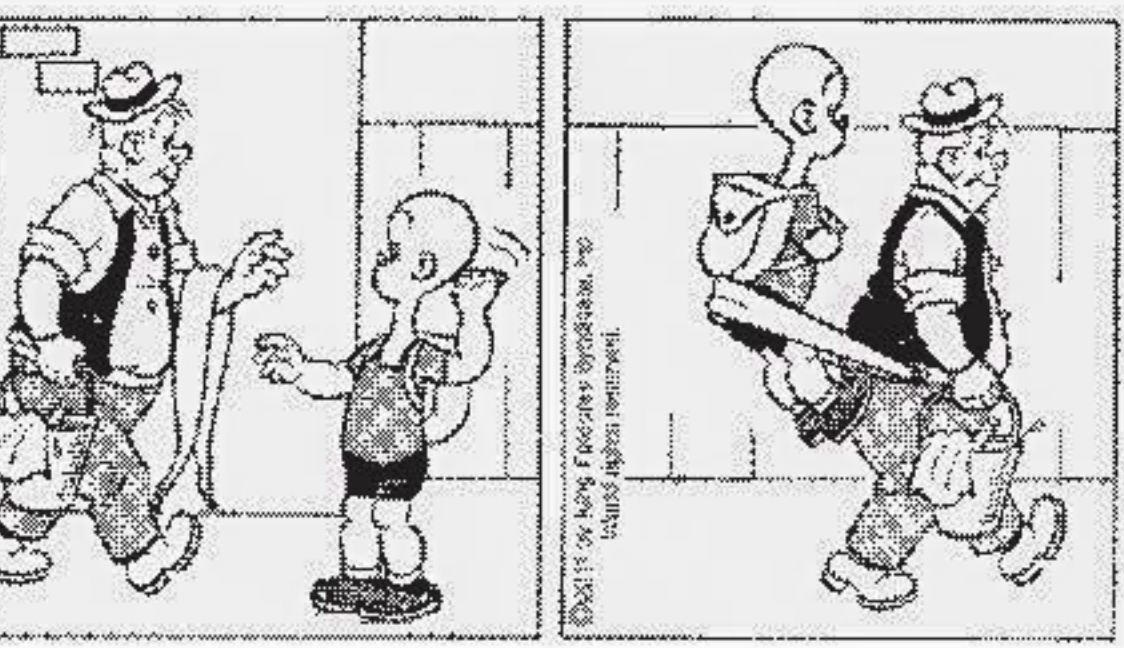
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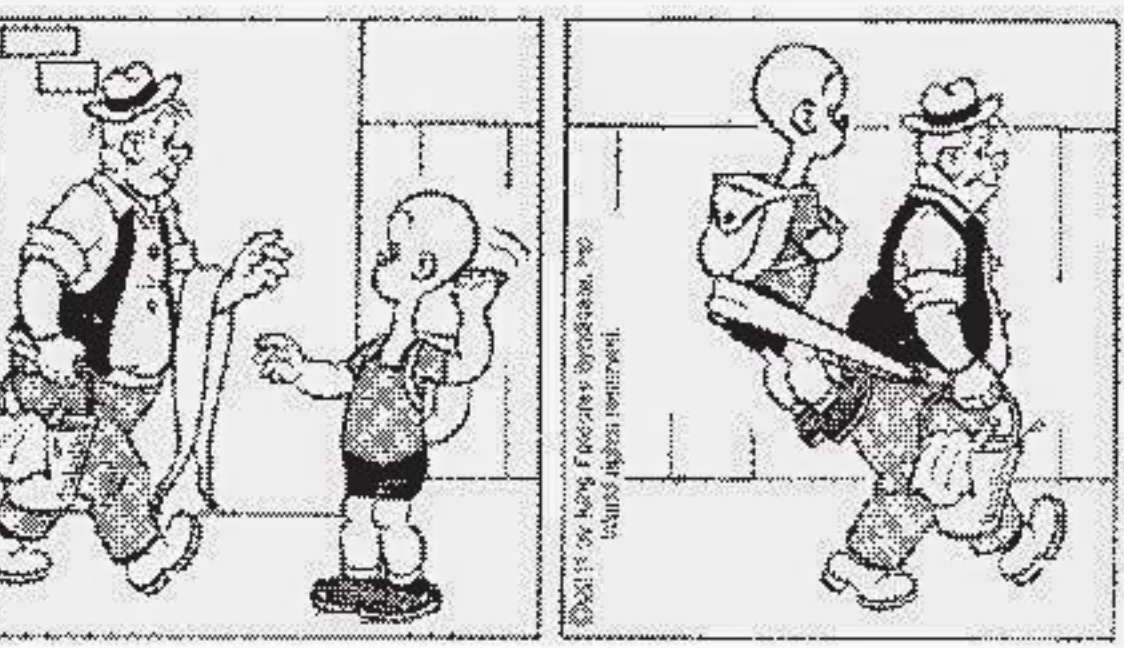
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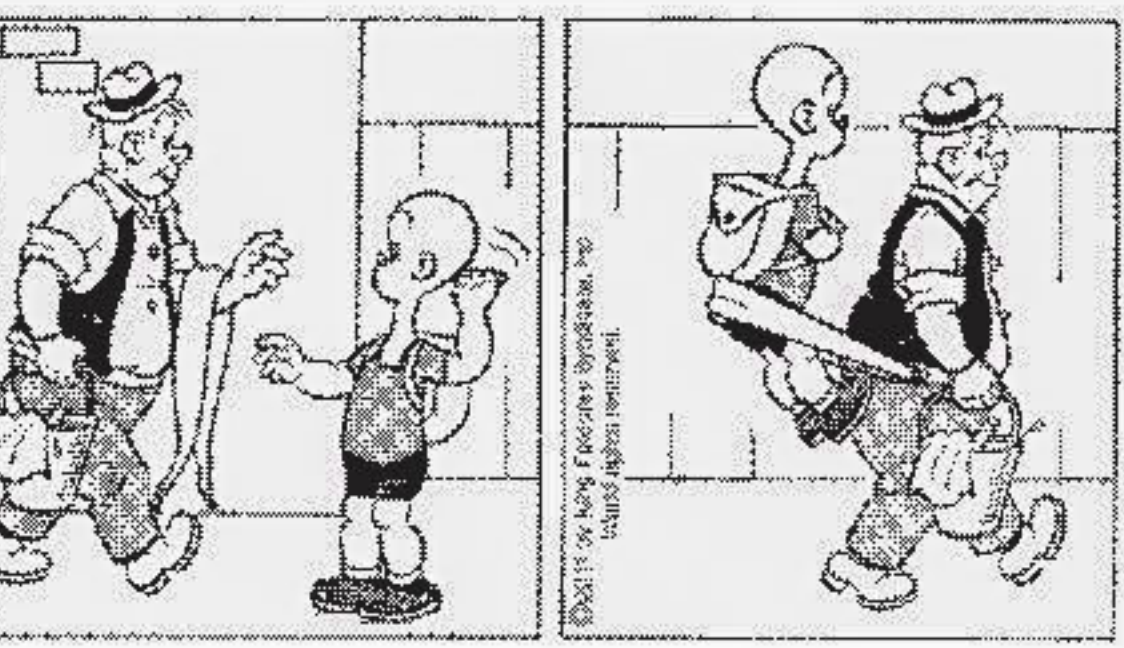
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