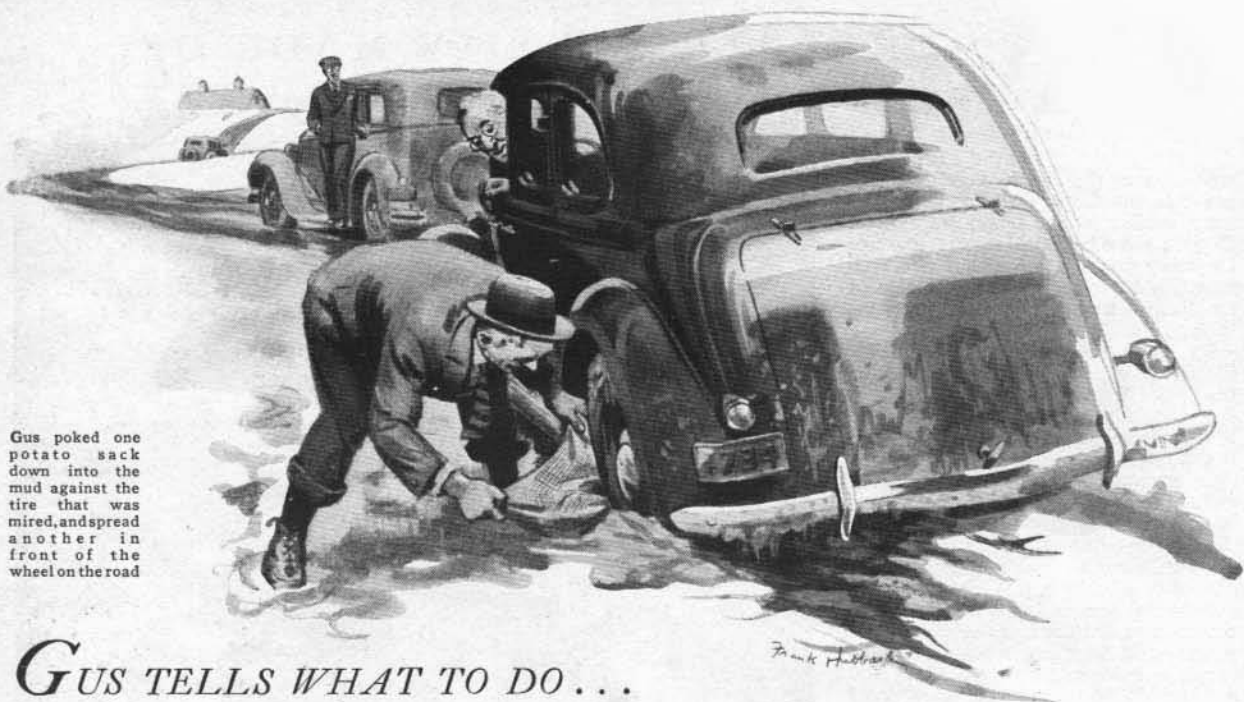


Gus poked one potato sack down into the mud against the tire that was mired, and spread another in front of the wheel on the road



GUS TELLS WHAT TO DO . . .

# When You're Stuck in the Mud

"COME ON, Joe! We're late now," Gus Wilson shouted, as he pulled up in front of the Model Garage. Joe Clark, his partner in the operation of the establishment, popped out of his little office and hurried over to the car.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed, eyeing Gus with admiration as he climbed in. "Nobody'll look at the bride, once they catch sight of all that glory!"

The veteran auto mechanic certainly was "all dolled up." From the crisp, new fedora that adorned his grizzled head, to the mirrorlike shine on his new shoes, not a detail was missing.

"And why not?" Gus asked, with a grin, as he let in the clutch. "A fellow doesn't have his favorite niece get married every day. I've got to do her credit. Now, if we can only get there in time."

The car splashed through a mud puddle and straightened out on the concrete as Gus gave it the gas. Looking back to see if any cars were coming from the rear, Joe caught sight of a heap of potato sacks, several blocks of wood, and a coil of rope on the floor of the car.

"I thought this was a wedding we're going to, not a kidnaping," he observed. "What on earth is all that junk for? Don't you think the minister can do all the hitching necessary without using rope?"

"Don't bother me with fool questions," snapped Gus, with a worried frown, as he glanced at the dash clock. "We've got to burn up the road to get there on time."

Joe realized, after checking the dash clock against his watch, that they really were quite late, so he kept silent. Gus's big foot had the throttle nearly down to the floor boards, and they whizzed down

the state road far faster than was usual with Gus, who was ordinarily a very conservative driver.

"No more chance to make up time," Gus muttered, as they swung off the concrete onto a side road that seemed to be one vast sea of mud. Splashes of mud and dirty water soon decorated the car from stem to stern, as they skidded and slued around through the heavy going.

"By golly, now we can't be late; there's the minister," Gus grinned exultantly, as they rounded a turn and he caught sight of a small sedan with one rear wheel sunk nearly hub-deep in the mud just off what passed for the shoulder of the road.

"Hold everything, Doc," he shouted as the minister raced his motor and let in the clutch. The wheel that was sunk in the mud remained stationary. The other spun in the watery slime, sending up a shower of muck to add to the spattered design on Gus's car as he pulled past.

"Can't spoil that shine," Gus muttered, as he reached under the pile of potato sacks and pulled out an old pair of heavy, mud-stained shoes.

After changing footwear, he sloshed over to the other car just as the Reverend John Gillespie, who hadn't heard his shout, was vainly endeavoring to get in a position where he could manipulate the clutch and at the same time watch the wheel that was in the mud.

"No use, Doc, the wheel won't turn," said Gus.

"Oh, hello, Gus! Have I broken an axle?" the minister asked.

"If you had, neither wheel would turn around at all," Gus explained as he walked

to the rear of the car and inspected the wheels.

"Well, it's a relief to know that nothing is broken," Gillespie sighed, thankfully. "I suppose you're on a hurry call, Gus, but I'll be mighty grateful if you can stop long enough to help me get out of here."

"Don't worry, Doc," Gus chuckled. "I'm sticking with you. Then I'll be sure not to be late for that hitching bee you're heading for!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Gillespie. "I forgot, for the moment, that Marion Carter is your niece. How fortunate that you came along at such an opportune moment!"

"This is what the potato sacks are for, Joe," Gus said, as he picked out two of them and returned to Gillespie's car.

"Here's something to remember, Doc," he went on as he spread one of the sacks along the ground in front of the wheel that remained on the road and poked the end of the other down into the mud against the tire that was mired. "When you get stuck like this, it's mighty important to notice which wheel is slipping."

"If it's the one that's sunk in the mud, then the chances are if you get a potato sack or something else under that wheel to give it traction, you'll pull out all right. In this case, you've got to stop the slipping of the other wheel, too. Let in the clutch real easy now, Doc. That's another thing to remember when you're trying to get out of a hole in the mud. The easier you slip in the clutch, the better the chance that the wheels will take hold. There you are!" he shouted, as Gillespie's car crawled slowly forward onto the road.

"You go on ahead, Joe," Gus called to his partner. "I'm going to ride with the Doc."

(Continued on page 120)

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## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU STICK IN THE MUD

(Continued from page 56)

"I wish I could have you with me all the time," Gillespie smiled. "I have to do quite a lot of visiting on these back roads and I dread it in the spring. I'm always getting stuck. It's humiliating to have to ask for help so often. Wouldn't it be a good idea if I procured a number of potato sacks and kept them in the car? I have never seen such awful mud as we're having this spring."

"WITH all the heavy rains we've had lately, that's not surprising," Gus commented. "A potato sack, or any piece of heavy burlap or rough cloth, is about the most useful thing you can have handy for getting out of mud—and that goes for sand too. You can store some of 'em under the seats, and stuff the tool compartment with several more. Besides being useful when you're stuck, they keep the tools from rattling around."

"Will burlap always get you out?" Gillespie asked.

"I should say not!" Gus replied, emphatically. "A potato sack is useful only when there's something for the wheels to get hold of. If you get bogged down to the point where the rear axle, and maybe other parts of the under gear, are resting on the mud, then enough of the weight is taken off the tires so they won't have traction even on burlap."

"What's to be done in such a case, short of hiring a team of horses or getting some other driver to pull you out?" Gillespie inquired.

"Depends on how you're bogged down," Gus replied. "Like enough, with the crowd that's coming to this wedding and the state of the ground right now, we'll have plenty of cars stuck in all sorts of ways there beside the church. Keep your eyes open after the ceremony and watch how we get 'em out."

Gus's forecast proved accurate. When the crowd thronged out of the church to drive to the bride's home for the reception, they had a bad time of it. The first car attempting to drive out of the parking area skidded around and sank its rear wheels hub-deep, in such a position that it blocked any other cars from moving out, and at such an angle that no car on the road could exert a useful pull on it.

GUS fished his jack out of his tool kit, and also several blocks of wood of various sizes. "We'll have to raise it up so as to get some rocks under those wheels," he observed, as he placed a short piece of board beside one of the rear wheels. On top of that he piled wooden blocks until the business end of the jack reached the upper side of the rim.

"Screw jacks are best for this kind of a job," he said to Gillespie, who was carefully watching the procedure. "They apply the pressure smoothly, and there's less chance of having the blocks slip. As soon as we get it up far enough, we can slip some loose rocks or a piece of board under the wheel to hold it up while I get the jack down under the edge of the hub to give it another lift."

"But there's no hub sticking out of these modern wheels," Gillespie objected.

"So we tip the jack and wedge it against the hub at an angle, this way," Gus went on, suiting the action to the words. "Of course, there's always a chance that the rear of the car will slide sideways. But if you're careful, that won't happen. Even if it does, it just means starting over again after wedging a block under the side of the opposite wheel to keep it from slipping again. Usually, the car is tipped

(Continued on page 121)

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## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU STICK IN THE MUD

(Continued from page 120)

enough from the wheel bogging down so that there isn't much tendency to slide, anyhow."

Getting this car out of the way allowed the majority of the other cars in the parking space to drive out. Some, who found it hard to get going, pulled attachable chain units out of their tool kits; one old fellow, with a heavy, old-fashioned car, yanked a coil of rope from a running-board tool kit and wound a section of it around and around each rear tire.

"That appears to be an excellent idea," Gillespie said, calling the rope-winding stunt to Gus's attention.

"DOES the business in fine style in mud and sand, but it certainly plays the devil with the rope. I wouldn't recommend it except in an emergency," was Gus's comment.

"Here's another way to use rope," Gus suggested, as he observed a young fellow vainly trying to "rock" his rear wheels out of a slippery gully in the mud. "That fellow's front wheels are on good, solid ground. If we tie one end of a piece of rope to one of the rear wheels, halfway up the forward side of the tire, and the other end to the front wheel on the same side, not quite halfway up the forward side and do the same to the other two wheels, then he'll have a four-wheel drive for a half revolution of the wheels."

The young fellow readily accepted the suggestion, and Gus applied two lengths of rope in the manner he had described.

"Now, mister," he said, "let the clutch in gently, and just ease her forward about two feet—no more. That's going to get you out of the gully, and we can take the ropes off."

"Quite an excellent arrangement," Gillespie commented as the car pulled out of the gully with apparent ease.

"Sure is," Gus agreed, "and if we had nothing but four-wheel-drive cars it would be nearly impossible to get stuck in any kind of mud short of a regular bottomless swamp."

"I wish I had such a car," sighed Gillespie as he and Gus climbed into the car to go on to the reception.

"I can suggest something even better than that for tough going," said Gus.

"Better than a four-wheel-drive car?" exclaimed Gillespie. "That would be wonderful. What is it?"

"Buy yourself an endless-tread tractor!" Gus chuckled.

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