

**BILLIKIN AND OTHERS;  
BEING A COLLECTION  
OF EXPRESS STORIES**

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Billikin and Others; Being a Collection of Express Stories by George W. Vorys

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**GEORGE W. VORYS**

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# BILLIKIN and OTHERS



BEING A COLLECTION OF  
EXPRESS STORIES

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Written and Illustrated  
by  
GEORGE W. VORYS

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ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN  
1910

## The Deadly Viverrae Mangustae

A box came into the Old Dominion Express Company office covered with a fine wire screen. Two signs on the ends of the crate bore the word "DANGEROUS" in bold characters. Inquisitive Dutch, one of the drivers for the express company flattened his nose against the wire mesh trying to peer down into the dark recesses of the box and find out the nature of the contents.

"Lizards," he ejaculated.

"Lizards, nothing," retorted Charley, the driver on Route 2. "Those are ichneumons and they are poison."

"Oh, there ain't no such thing," said Dutch.

"Charley is right," put in the agent, "we had some here before."

"Here, Dutch," said Billikin, the head driver driver for the Old Dominion Express Co. "Don't throw that sandwich in to those lizards, they don't eat such stuff."

"Well, what do they eat?" asked Dutch.

"Gold fish food," hazarded Billiken, "or anything snakes eat such as grass and toads."

"How about baled hay," said Dutch.

Charley playfully slapped at Dutch and he dodged, stumbled and fell over the crate. His heavy boots smashed the side of the crate and the ugly, slimy lizards crawled out upon the floor. The agent jumped upon the counter. Billiken and Dutch balanced themselves in the high window near and Charley stood on a trunk.

"Harold, put those things in the box," said the agent, addressing Dutch by his more genteel name in the moment of peril. "They won't hurt you," continued the boss.

"Charley did it," argued Dutch. "Let him put them in."

"Didn't either," said Charley. "It isn't my fault you have feet like shovels."

"Pick them up Charley, they are not poison," said Billiken, forgetting what the agent had said at first.

"You're closest to them, pick them up yourself."

"I'll bet Billiken can put them in the crate. That boy isn't afraid of anything," said Charley.

"You lose the bet, Charley," said Billiken, restraining the blandishment.

"Say, Dutch," went on Billiken, "you get the big one by the neck and I'll get him by the tail and we will throw him in the box."



"Nix, I got the biting end."

"Huh, well, I might get clawed."

"Pick him up, Charley, he is going to sleep," said the agent, still standing on the counter.

"Oh! no. Wait until he snores. If that thing would bite you you would swell up and die in an hour. I wouldn't touch him with the end of a fishing pole."

"Put some gloves on and pick him up," suggested Charley. "You can wear the gloves, Dutch, you have such a funny face you can throw the lizards in the box and they can't bite for laughing."

Bud, driver No. 1, entered the office with a box in his arms.

"Say, Bud, put those lizards in that box, will you?" asked Dutch.

"How much?" said Bud, recognizing an opportunity.

"I'll give you that ticket to the social."

"Done," said Bud, as he calmly picked up a wiggling lizard in each hand and dropped them in the box.

"Those things won't bite. They're just common lizards," he said. "Us kids down in Virginia used to play with them." The box was securely nailed to prevent a repetition of the panic.

Soon after a flashy dressed man came into the office and paid and signed for the lizards. Bud took them as directed to the public square where the show tent was erected. In front of the tent was a mammoth sign displaying three men in a death struggle with a lizard. One of the men lay dying beneath a tropical palm. Another was holding his hand to a wound in his side from which the blood was freely flowing and a third was making a desperate effort to shoot the beast with a pistol and at the same time carve him with a murderous looking sword. Painted in large letters at the top of the canvas sign were the words, "The Deadly Viverrae Mangustae, the most vicious, venomous, blood-thirsty, reptiles in captivity. One touch of their poisonous fangs brings instant death." Bud looked at the sign.

"There is such a thing as a live gold brick," he soliloquised.

## Fraternal Love

A crowd of colored men were standing about the depot office of the express company. All the members of the crowd were dressed in their Sunday clothes as if for some important occasion. A coon in a rusty frock coat and a boiled shirt sideled up to Charley.

"Say, boss, when does this heah train from the souf come in?"

"About ten-thirty," said Charley as he pulled a loaded truck away from the baggage car.

"Now look heah, boss," the colored man resumed, "dis heah bunch of smokes wants to git a dead niggah offen dat train. Us fellahs heah am de Rendville Aerie er airy er erie what ever she am of de Lodge 'o Colored Owls and we wants to get the body to enter it in de cemetery."

Mr. Bank, the depot agent overheard the conversation. "Just pay for the body here at the depot and sign for it and you can take it from here," he said. "That train ought to be here in a minute," he continued as he looked at his watch.

"That is No. 10, all right," said Charley as a