

Florsheim



Dinklaker Shoe Shoppe prided itself on being one of the most cutting-edge footwear stores on all of South Klondike Street. The owner, Dean “Dino” Lakerdink, never carried a shoe style that was more than a week old. His sales personnel knew their merchandise so intimately that they all took vows of celibacy during working hours to keep their marriages intact. A giant animatronic shoe at the door greeted customers, announced the daily specials and dandled kids on its tongue. But when Dino installed a robot shoe salesman and laid off Bob and Eugene, who’d worked in the store for decades, some customers thought he’d pushed his avant-garde philosophy too far. However, they were in the minority. Most shoppers deemed the mechanical man, who was named Florsheim, the grooviest gadget they’d ever seen. Lakerdink liked him because he had outstanding time management skills. Using state-of-the-art laser telegraphy, Florsheim could accurately measure a person’s foot and produce the perfect fitting shoe within seconds. And usually only another minute was needed to close the sale. Dino’s sole reservation, in fact, was that Florsheim had an eye for the ladies, almost to the exclusion of his equally important male clientele. Take this morning, for example. Three men entered the store at the same time. In a flash, Florsheim had measured their feet and was off to fetch the appropriate footwear. But when a willowy blond sashayed through the door, the mechanical man seemed to instantly forget all about his gentlemen patrons. Florsheim eschewed the laser foot measurement process in favor of a “hands on” approach, and his carapace reddened noticeably as he caressed the woman’s tootsies. One of the men, annoyed at being ignored, tried to get the robot’s attention by flinging a shoehorn at him. Florsheim may have sensed danger for he shot the implement out of the air with his laser ray. Unfortunately, he didn’t employ a focused beam, and the three other customers were promptly reduced to collateral damage. If the blond was fazed, she didn’t show it. And Florsheim was certainly not programmed for remorse. And since no one could identify the fused remains, no charges were ever filed. In the end, it became just another offbeat element of Dinklaker Shoe Shoppe.