

# Toast



Melba McGillicuddy's artistry on the trapeze was known far and wide. After all, she *was* one of the all-time great left-handed circus acrobats. But what many people *didn't* know was that she was equally adept on the indoor I-beam. Melba would often drop in on factories unannounced and in disguise – for her face was as familiar as Christmas chalk. Then, without warning, she'd grab hold of a girder and “swing into action.” Her spontaneous performances startled and sometimes irritated the nearby workers, but most were eventually won over by her grace, her athletic ability, and the free plastic trapeze replicas that she handed out. Factory foremen, however, tended to fret over liability issues – her venues were always hazardous areas, and this was years before OSHA mandated safety standards. But Melba was always a daredevil, always trying to push the envelope of her abilities – that is, until that fateful day when she visited the Dinklaker Stationery Factory. Melba had been dangling from a trapeze that hung incongruously from the rafters and performing a series of nimble maneuvers when she spotted a giant envelope affixed to the far wall. Immediately, she swung over to it and began to tap its edge with her foot. She wanted to “push the envelope,” get it? The envelope, however, didn't budge and, according to the one eyewitness, it “pushed” back ... hard enough to knock Melba off the trapeze. Without any grace whatsoever, she fell into the maw of the letterhead kiln below. In the understated words of Franz, the factory foreman, Melba was toast.