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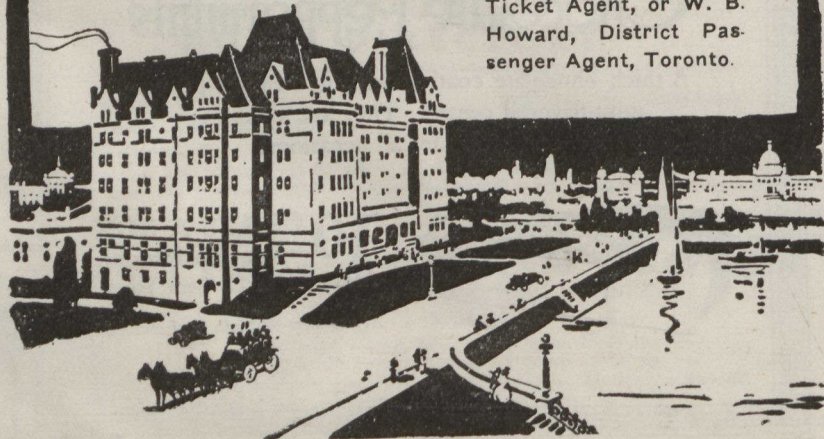
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They left for New York the same night, drawn by an occult attraction that seemed stronger than any power they could oppose it with. Pearson surveyed the calm, pale face of the girl he loved and vowed that nothing would drag her from his arms. This journey was even stranger than the last. There was no tall man whose personality they silently explored, but at the other end he waited, invisible and irresistible, while they came in swift obedience to the magic of a few scribbled words.

NATALIE smiled bravely and then tried to lose herself in a Toronto paper. An hour passed. Hamilton dropped behind, and the train began its long climb to the level of Lake Erie. Suddenly the girl leaned forward, with her eyes riveted on the paper. Her lips moved without words as she read. She glanced quickly at her lover with an extraordinary expression, and her hand closed tightly over the sheet. In another moment she had folded and slipped it quickly into her bag.

Pearson's gaze was turned into the darkness. Then, as the features of a woman become doubly beautiful when she regards the man who is everything to her, so those of Natalie became transfigured. Such looks remain in the hearts of men with undying meaning.

"Beloved," he whispered, "what is it?"

"Jack," she said, with infinite tenderness, "if some strange chance kept us together, would you always cherish and love me? You don't know who I am or very much about me. It might be that you would find life very difficult with me for a wife, even if danger were removed."

"Don't you know," he answered, slowly, "that if I do not marry you I will not marry any one? God meant us for each other or we would not have been thrown so strangely together. Do you think I am a man who could forget Dubawnt Lake and the perilous days we have gone through together?"

"But I don't know either English ways or English people. Have you thought of that?"

He smiled bitterly. "I am only a younger son. You know in England that means one has to forage for oneself. It's a poor country for younger sons, and they generally ship us out to Canada or Australia. Perhaps, when I am old and grey, I shall come into my own and take my place and name and will go back home—that is, if I want to," he added, cynically.

Natalie's face still wore that inscrutable look. "Who can tell?" she said, gently.

Memory rushed back and engulfed them both as they walked through the Grand Central Station next morning. Here had begun that memorable journey, and here Stanovitch had stood only six months before to greet his new recruit. But Stanovitch seemed so far away now that it was as if he had only appeared in a dream that vanished at its birth.

The roar of the city deafened them. Pearson blinked at these hurrying multitudes and wondered if in any single breast there was buried such poignant emotion as in his own. Together they tried to prepare for that which this eventful night must bring forth.

"He will insist," said Natalie, wearily, "that I go back to Novogorod with him at once, and be always under guard. You will have to give your oath that you will reveal nothing you know. Then we will say good-by, and I will take ship for Russia, and you, dear heart, will go your own way, but you will not forget me."

Pearson was silent. His jaw set firmly, and the muscles in his arm began to twitch as his fingers closed over an object in his pocket. Presently he looked down at her. "And you think I am going to stand by and do nothing?" he said, after a moment.

"Yes, because you love me."

(To be continued.)

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