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## CANADIAN NORTHERN RAILWAY

bogey—that I did my best to hire in my business and couldn't? Not much, Mary Ann. The only thing I fear is public opinion—plus Hoag."

"Oh," said Gretchen as she lighted a cigarette, "You've got P. O. pretty well strangled—outside of the Clarion."

He glanced at the windows as though he fancied Hoag might be peering in at all of them at once.

"Gretchen, if I can ever get it into Helen's brain—that since he got a wallop on the head Hoag has been mentally unbalanced—"

Gretchen spoke slowly. "Well, why don't you get an alienist on the job?"

"Provocation," he mumbled. "Oh! That all? Well, Henry—" she poked the fire a bit—"you persuade Helen Munro to go on that trip—and I'll gamble you'll have provocation enough. Do you—get that?"

He bowed low. "Gretchen," he repeated. "You are the inspiration of my life."

**M**ARKHAM improved on Gretchen's tuition. In his skilful play of organized and quite theatrical sentiment Helen detected no false note, abundance of reasons why she should go on the trip, and no reasons against—except such as a skilful lobbyist knows how to put forward for the sake of vanquishing them.

"Well, for the life of me I can't see why my going matters—so much," she repeated.

He did not tell her. No dream recurred; though she looked for it.

She consented to go. Hoag knew it. Whether his discovery of it was immediate is not certain.

As the newspapers said, there would be a special train of three coaches, one of which was Mr. Markham's private car.

The train was scheduled to go at midnight. Helen felt herself drawn by a curious half-metaphysical machine. Since she had quit the office she had been often conscious of this manipula-

tion of her affairs. Her only aim in life now was to fit herself for wifehood to Henry Markham. One of the things he particularly wanted her to do he told her as they sat in the coach a few minutes before midnight, was to study music and languages—French and German. He had it all arranged that she should take a term in Germany, with a few months in Paris. But as he said, this could be done after marriage, if need be; or in case they decided to marry before the coming summer—

"But why be so uncertain about the time?" she asked him.

Madame M.-M. and other guests were in their own staterooms. The two of them were alone in the coach, she watching the people on the platform. It was all a furor of excitement; an odd time for Henry to prefer speaking of marriage—but he always knew when to dodge a crowd.

To her question he made no reply. He seemed to be absorbed in some speculation.

"Not that it matters to me," she said irritably, as she turned from the window to fumble over the magazines.

"Have a cocktail?" he suggested. "No, thank you."

Helen wished she could break away. He noticed that she was restless, and smoked slowly, looking out of the window, scrutinizing every man who passed. From the corner of one eye she watched him. But he gave not the slightest sign of concern.

Would Hoag put in an appearance? If so, what was likely to happen?

To him Hoag was a phantom likely to dawn unexpectedly anywhere.

He snapped his watch. One minute of midnight. Precisely on the instant, there was a sound of a loud altercation near the gate. The gate was shut. A man outside was shaking it, demanding to get through.

Markham rose and went out to the vestibule. "Henry, what is it?"

"No-thing," he bawled back. The train gave a jerk and moved off. Markham's hand instinctively reached for the bell-rope. He thought again and did not pull it.

He came back and sat down. "Was there—somebody left behind, Henry?"

It was Madame M.-M. who spoke. "Nobody with any baggage to get through," he replied. "Please don't retire—until we get out of town. No!"

What happened at the train gate was so sudden and mysterious that none of the guards at the gate could describe it—except that in the dim light of the depot a form seemed to fly over one of the gates further along. It darted onto the track. There it seemed to run, almost sucked along by the gathering of speed of the departing train.

Hoag was on business bent. How he caught the rail at the end of that train he scarcely knew. But he hauled himself up. The train was then well out of the yard. He waited. The door was locked. There was no hurry. Better to wait a bit. Just inside that door was the woman he wanted to save from Henry Markham. Would she come out. And if so—what?

Light snow was scudding over the city. Past the eastern station no stop, the train jumped to full speed. Hoag still waited. He had no sense of danger; very little of weight. He felt himself like a man in a movie.

**W**HAT happened a few miles out was briefly sketched in a morning paper as wired from the next station by Henry Markham.

Four miles out of the city the special train bearing the Markham Consolidated inspection party was mysteriously stopped by a lunatic who eluded the guards at the depot and concealed himself on the rear platform of the train. So far as can be ascertained—though it seems incredible—this madman climbed to the top of the train and ran along it to the tender. Climbing over the coal he flung himself suddenly into the engine compartment and forced the engineer to halt the train. The crew grappled with him but as usual in cases of this kind, the madman was too much for them. He evaded their clutches, ran back to the private coach of Mr. Markham, and forced his way in. He made a scene, further publication of which will appear in a later edition, and as mysteriously made his escape by darting out at the rear door and disappearing into the fields.

The later edition gave no clue to the identity of the madman.

But the Clarion reported it briefly, saying—that all the other papers had missed—that Miss Helen Munro who was on board refused to go any further with the party; that at her request the train was subsequently backed up to the station, she was taken home, and was now quite ill from the shock to her nerves.

(To be continued.)