

The Girl Beyond the Trail

coaches had enjoyed the experience somewhat at first, for there is a pleasing and indefinable thrill to unexpected adventure, and this, for a brief spell, had been adventure de luxe. There had been warmth and light, men's laughter, women's voices, and children's play. But the loudest jester among the men was now silent, huddled deep in his great coat; and the young woman who had clapped her hands in silly ecstasy when it was announced that the train was snow-bound, was weeping and shivering by turn. It was cold—so cold that the snow which came sweeping and swirling with the wind was like granite-dust; it *clicked, clicked, clicked* against the glass—a bombardment of untold billions of infinitesimal projectiles fighting to break in. In the edge of the forest it was probably forty degrees below zero. Within the coaches there still remained some little warmth. The burning lamps radiated it, and the presence of many people added to it. But it was cold, and growing colder. A grey coating of congealed breath covered the car windows. A few men had given their outer coats to women and children. These men looked most frequently at their watches. The adventure de luxe was becoming serious.

For the twentieth time a passing trainman was asked the same question.

"The good Lord only knows," he growled down into the face of a young woman whose prettiness would have enticed the most chivalrous attention from him earlier in the evening. "Engine and tender been gone three hours, and the divisional point only twenty miles up the line. Should have been back with help long ago. Hell, ain't it?"

The young woman did not reply, but her round