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## THE MAGPIE'S NEST (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

And she deserved a breathing space, and now Hope, for whose sake she had labored. . . Where was Hope? When she found her she would—she would beat her. Ruefully, Mary admitted it would do herself good, whether it helped Hope or not.

PANIC fell on her suddenly, like the unexpected contact of icy water; her lethargy departed.

So Mrs. Hamilton found her, gazing about the room with a look of bewilder-ment and alarm, as if she thought to discover someone concealed under the sofa. "I've been looking for you, Mary,"

said Mrs. Hamilton, who was always calm, as a mother of four must be if she would escape shrewishness. "My, you look done up; you've been working late again."

"No, I've been dining with Mrs. Shane," said Mary. "Worse. Where is Hope?"

is Hope?" "She went out, with a suitcase, at seven o'clock. Just in time for the West train. Mary, I don't think that child looks well lately, and she ought not to be running around so. No sleep this week; out with that Kirby boy last night, and sitting up half the night before with a book. Don't say I said so; I know you girls can manage your own affairs. But I didn't like to see her going off that way without any dinner. I was bringing her some, but she'd gone. You get her to rest up ..." Probably she said more, but Mary did not hear. Once Mary opened her mouth to say: "But Allen Kirby left days ago." "I will beat her." she remarked

"But Allen Kirby left days ago." "I will beat her." she remarked instead. "She should have waited for me. That train is a local; it only goes to Banff. Mrs. Hamilton, be a darling, and help me pack. I've got to catch the Limited. No doubt, Mary re-flected afterward, she made other explanation, but she could not remember what. Mrs. Hamilton never asked questions. She did not even look a question. but thanks to her Mary found herself aboard the Limited with the half of a split second to spare. She had three hours to reassure

found herself aboard the Limited with the half of a split second to spare. She had three hours to reassure herself that there had been no other train than the Banff local for Hope to take. As a side issue, she could reflect on the fact that Edgerton might be in Banff, rather than Laggan, where he had said he was going. And all the world goes to Banff. It is to Canada— to America almost—what Port Said is to the East. Wait there long enough and *tout le monde* comes to you. So all the world might already be apprised of what Mary hoped to avert. Of course none would guess except their own little world—but there it was. Everyone—but everyone—from their own town week-ended at Banff. Though eighty miles distant, it amounted to a suburb. It was their one playground.

EDGERTON was in 'Laggan, how-ever. There was nothing for Hope to do but wait for the Limited, anath-ematizing her own stupidity. She was eager to go on. When the Limited drew in with a great discord of bells and whistles, and the platform filled with yet more and more people, coming or going, these were still unreal. Then Mary came toward her out of the crowd, one vividly alive among all these ghosts, and she saw and seized on Hope with a sort of angry affection and a great relief.

"Where have you been?" she de-manded absurdly. "You-you-Oh, I was distracted! But I've found you." was distracted! But I've found you." "I'm going away," said Hope, deter-minedly, bracing her shoulders with an air of one refusing discussion. "You're going back on the next train," announced Mary. "I'll see to that." "Oh, Mary, please don't bother me," said Hope, with an unexpected pleading note. "I'll go mad if I have to ever see that town again. I want to go."

note. "I if go mad if I have to ever see that town again. I want to go." "Now, see here," began Mary, vehemence overcoming clarity of speech, as she dragged Hope off toward a wooden bench out of the swirl of traffic. People were elbowing them pulticlus a few stared for a moment in politely; a few stared for a moment in passing.

"But I must catch the train."

"Wait, wait a minute!" She sought for a tactful beginning, and then flung herself at the heart of the matter; there was no time for tact. "You're going on to meet Edgerton, aren't you?" Hope merely looked at her,

like an obstinate child which will not say it is sorry. "Well, what has he ever done to you?" "I like him," said Hope, which again

was not what Mary expected. "Very well, you like him! And you're going to make him miserable the rest of his life to prove it!" Trusting to blind feeling, Mary knew it was useless to ask Hope to consider prudence and her own side of the case. "What'll he do with you? What will you do with him? You've got what he wants, but you can't give it to him. He'd give you what you want, but he hasn't got it. His life is made for him; he has made it himself; you'll be taking him away from everything he's used to. He isn't your age; he'll get tired of everlastingly 'yearning beyond the skyline, where the strange ships go down.' He'll want his work, and the men he knows. He hasn't your tastes; he'll be bored. After a while he'll see you growing up, and away from him. And you'll be to mean the strange ships go was not what Mary expected.

he'll be bored. After a while he'll see you growing up, and away from him. And you'll be no nearer anything else. You'll always be on the outer edge of things, outside of the game; you won't have conformed to the rules. And by and bye you'll leave him, find yourself . . . and he'll be sorry all his life." She paused for breath; Hope stared at her searchingly, with a little strange laugh.

"Well," she said. "Really! Oughtn't he to know what he's doing? Why-why-what about me?"

why—what about me?" "Settle that with yourself," said Mary gravely. "You'll have to any-way. But don't take out your un-happiness — your spite—on someone who never hurt you. What about me? Haven't I been fond of you? Why do you want to leave me to face what you've done? Do you think your friends will be spared?"

"MY gracious," said Hope inade-quately, "whose business is it but mine? Leave me alone, please, "That's who

but mine? Leave me alone, please, please. No one cares." "That's what you thought about you and Tony," said Mary inexorably. "Nobody plays a lone hand." "Oh," said Hope disdainfully, "you mean that someone is always looking over your shoulder and telling you how to play. But you pay your own losses. Oh, Mary, I want to go! And who on earth would know?" "Everyone," insisted Mary. "His wife might learn, and spread it all over the country in the newspapers. Or she might exact half his fortune to keep silent. You'd be the flaw in his armor; you might cost him all he has spent his life building up. Then if you did marry. ""

ou did marry. . ." "I don't want to marry him, or nyone," said Hope goaded into utter anyone," said truthfulness. "Well," s

"Well," said Mary, "then you'll take a great deal and give nothing. After all, a man's got his name too. Hope, what if your own people should

hear?" "Would you tell them?" asked Hope stormily. "Well, I'll go back. . . Please be quiet, Mary." She dropped to the bench, and leaned her head against the station wall, closing her eyes. The purpose went out of her face; she looked spent again. "I can't do anything," she muttered. "But I must, I must." "Come to the hotel and rest till the

"But I must, I must." "Come to the hotel and rest till the next train," said Mary, gently. "And get something to eat." "No. I must explain to him. I will go back if you will go on up and tell him why I didn't come. He's looking for me on this train. Here's the rest of my ticket; you use it," said Hope, practically. "And give him this." She went into the telegraph room, wrote and sealed a message. "Hurry, wrote and sealed a message. wrote and sealed a message. "Hurry, the train is starting; I won't go unless you do." Mary began to protest, thought better of it, kissed Hope, and ran. Perhaps Hope needed to be alone. And in spite of all her argu-ments, Mary was sorry for Edgerton. Hope went back to her bench sat down listlessly, and felt herself going, very far away, to the poppy fields of her childhood—but now the poppies were black. She did not want to live. No man lives by bread, but by faith in whatever gods he had. Hers was broken, and its pitiful clay feet forbade her weeping over the shards. Her broken, and its pitiful clay feet forbade her weeping over the shards. Her tears, she reflected sardonically, would reduce it to the utmost of absurdity. So she sat, gazing into the dark. And when Ned Angell stopped before her, he had to speak twice before she seemed to hear. (TO BE CONTINUED)