

back. I kept listening for the sound of the wheels on the road, and looking at my watch by the light of my lantern, and wondering what kept him so long.

He was three quarters of an hour behind his usual time, and if he did not come directly, he would have to wait till the ten o'clock train had gone by.

I took a last look at my watch, and went out to shut the gates. My hand was just on one of them when I heard the rattle of the wheels close by.

'Keep back!' I shouted. 'Draw up. You'll have to wait a bit now.'

There was no answer, but the wheels came on. I was at the furthest gate, and before I could get to the other one the horse had passed it, and was on the line. So I flung the further one open again, and shouted again, 'Be quick, then.'

Still there was no answer, and looking up I saw that Fred was not driving. He was in the cart, but sunk down in a heap on the seat, and the reins hung loose.

'Drunk!' I said to myself; and before I had time to do anything the horse had swerved from the light of my lantern, and turned to the left, getting the gatepost jammed between the wheel and the cart. I ran to his head, and tried to force him back, but he would not back rightly, and the wheel was fast.

I leaned over into the cart and shook Fred by the shoulder. 'Get out,' I cried, 'get out and help me, or you'll be smashed, cart and all.'

Just at that moment I heard the whistle of the train, and there was the cart, fast jammed just in the up track. 'Get out, if you value your life,' I shouted, shaking Fred again; and then I turned and ran down the down track as hard as I could go, calling out and waving my light.

The train was close before me, even sooner than I expected. They saw me, for I plainly heard the jarring grind as the break was put on; but I foresaw that they could not possibly stop her in time.

I turned again and flew back, quicker than ever I'd gone in my life before. Surely Fred had got out as I bade him, and

yet I felt as if I were racing for life or death. I had a moment's start, and the train was slackening speed; but when I got to the crossing it was nearly there. And there was Fred, in the cart still, but just leaning over the edge of it, as if he had thought of getting out, and had changed his mind.

The horse was kicking, and as the train came so near, he gave a great plunge, and tore himself clean out of the shafts. And at the same moment I dashed across the up track, so close to the train that I felt the burning glow from the engine on my face, sprung on to the cart, caught hold of Fred, and tumbled him and myself, anyhow, out over the front of it.

You may believe me or not, but I know that though it was all done in the twentieth part of a minute, I had time to think, '*Why, I don't hate him after all! I'll save him or die with him, and then it'll be all right, either way.*'

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I knew nothing after that till I came to myself in the signal-box, and found myself lying on the floor with somebody's coat wrapped up for a pillow, and two or three folks from the cottages near, fidgeting about, and upsetting everything.

Fred was not there, and when I asked after him, they gave me such unstraight-forward answers, that I was afraid that I had been too late, and that he had been killed after all. But it was not so, though things were not very well with him. I was about and well the first, though I had got a sprained arm and a cut on the head, and he had nothing beyond a few bruises.

The fact was, he was not drunk that night, as I had thought—being too ready, as usual, to think evil. He was ill—bad enough—as more than one person in the town could testify, having seen him start off, and thought he was not fit to drive alone, though not one of them had the wit or the charity to offer to come with him.

But perhaps it's not for me to talk about charity, after the way I had behaved. Bad as I was, though, that night cured me. I never had an unkind feeling towards Fred Morris again, after I'd done my best to save his life.