

a telephone in there. I don't want to give 'em a chance to telephone a certain party in town. Your shack won't do. What's the matter with the roundhouse?"

"That's better," agreed Masters. "The doors are heavy, and there's no windows."

"Come along, then," commanded Deems.

He conducted Chivington and Glendora down one of the branching tracks that led to the engine-shed. Their protests were unheeded, and a single glance at the escort of powerful negroes showed them the hopelessness of resistance.

Together, the man and girl entered the shed and Deems slammed the ponderous doors behind them. The heavy padlock clicked, and the woods boss walked away, whistling.

CHAPTER V.

The Stolen Engine

When his eyes had adjusted themselves to the semi-darkness of the engine-shed, Chivington began looking cautiously about him.

As Masters had said, there were no windows in the place. The solid walls of two-inch pine killed all hope of breaking thru, and the heavy swinging doors were uncompromisingly secure.

Glendora groped her way to Chivington's side, and placed her hand on his arm as if to gather courage from the touch.

"I can't see," she complained, "and I can hardly breathe. What makes it so smoky in here?"

"The engines," he answered. "They've backed their three Shays inside for the night. One of the engineers must have been in too great a hurry to draw his fires. Whew! The gas is stifling. I wonder if I can't stop it?"

He climbed over the pilot of the second engine and mounted to the running-board near the smokestack.

"Hello!" he called. "They've got some holes in the roof. Never noticed them before. Sort of flues for the engines. This is the one that's spouting; the others look dead."

The girl heard him drop to the ground and cross between the tracks to a second engine.

"I'm going to climb on top of the boiler," he said. "Maybe I could squeeze thru one of those vents in the roof."

There was silence for a few minutes, and then Chivington scrambled from the engine and rejoined the girl.

"It's no use," he declared, breathing heavily; "the holes are too small. It looks as though they had us locked in here for keeps."

For the first time Glendora's courage failed her. She began sobbing despairingly. With an entirely involuntary movement Chivington slid his arm about her shoulders, and for a second she pressed her face against his breast.

Then she released herself, catching his hand appealingly.

"Think! think! think!" she commanded. "We've got to get out of here! We simply must!"

"We'll try," gasped Chivington wildly. "I'd try to dig my way thru hot steel for you!"

He flung himself against the door, but it failed to give the fraction of an inch.

"If we only had an ax," he groaned, "we'd chop—"

He broke off the sentence sharply. "Well," he exclaimed, "how devilish simple!" He laughed excitedly.

"What is it? Oh, tell me what you've thought of!" she cried.

"Just a second," he promised. "It may not work, but—you never can tell till you try."

While the girl stood by in wonder he climbed into the cab of one of the Shay engines. After rummaging a few seconds in the tool box he jumped again to the ground with a big wrench in his hand. Kneeling beside the wheels he began taking the bolts from one of the knuckle joints.

"Ever watch a Shay engine running, Miss Peyton?" he inquired while he worked swiftly at the heavy burrs. "They drive with a revolving motion instead of the straight drive of the ordinary locomotive. Something like

the screw propeller of a boat, you know."

The bolts slipped through the steel jacket and the casing dropped to the ground with a thud.

"There!" he muttered with satisfaction, "this engine's shed its knuckle-joint, Miss Peyton. The only way it could run now would be to tow on behind something. If that part should happen to disappear it would take them all night to find another and bolt it back into place. This engine is helpless for the next twenty hours, that's certain."

He picked up the piece and carried it to the tender of the midmost engine.

"Now for the other!" he panted.

Miss Peyton followed him back across the tracks in puzzled silence.

He set to work on the second engine, humming under his breath.

"These Shays are great for woods travel," he informed her after a minute. "They hang to the track where a horizontal driven locomotive would go skipping into the ditch like a rabbit. You could almost climb a tree with one, but you mustn't expect to make time."

The second fitting came off, and he also lugged it to the engine, which still remained hot. Then he jumped into the cab.

"Plenty of water," he observed; "tender full of wood." He opened the

door of the fire box and a red glow lighted his face.

"Mighty careless of the engineer not to draw his fire, Miss Peyton. There's even a few pounds of steam. Can't say for certain, but it strikes me this old pot's worth stoking."

He opened the flues and began throwing great pine chunks into the flame. Soaked with turpentine, they burst into flame.

"Mr. Chivington!" cried Glendora with dawning comprehension, "what are you going to do? You surely don't intend—"

He interrupted her with a feverish laugh.

"We're going to ride to Hattiesburg," he said, "or blow up this engine and their old shed with it! Look at her steam!"

Choking clouds of smoke poured from the stack of the locomotive. Most of it drew out thru the vent overhead, but enough remained behind to almost suffocate the pair in the shed.

Gasping for breath, his eyes smarting, Chivington fed the roaring fire furiously. The little indicator in the steam-gage circled around with perceptible jerks.

"Lie down, Miss Peyton!" he called. "You'll find the air better nearer the ground."

For the next few minutes they fought for breath, holding out against

their tortured lungs for the great stake that was not yet lost.

At last Chivington reached for the throttle and gave the handle a tentative jerk. Steam rushed thru the valves, and the engine quivered.

"She'll do!" he shouted. "Now, Miss Peyton!"

She sprang to her feet and he helped her into the cab. He took the throttle and gazed ahead thru the smoke. There was a clear fifteen feet between the pilot and the great, wooden doors.

"All right, look out!"

The engine answered to the steam slowly, nosed ahead sturdily, and bucked into the door with a hissing grunt.

For an instant it seemed that the door might hold. But the Shay has the one great virtue of going ahead where a bigger engine stalls.

With a shudder that nearly shook the two from their feet, the engine drove its pilot thru the wooden barrier, and then the doors burst open like a pod, and flung back on their hinges against the sides of the shed.

Chivington opened the throttle wide, while warning shouts rang thru the clearing and men came running from all sides.

The Shay responded like a good piece of machinery, and jumped into its pace with a pleasant whirring of driving gear. Five, ten, fifteen miles an hour—the speed increased.

(To be continued next week.)

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