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THE FREEZE OUT



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HAGGERTY sat and waited. He was the fifth in line. He had become used to waiting, so he didn't mind it. He set his bundle on the floor, pulled his hat down over his eyes and stretched out his legs. He was not quite sure whether the four men ahead of him would take four minutes or four hours to finish up their business with the manager, and he prepared himself, therefore, for a long siege.

He was half asleep when somebody nudged him, and asked him what his business was. He stated it. At the end of the room there was a door with a sign upon it, in gilt letters, "General Manager" was what it said. This door opened. Haggerty picked up his bundle and strode through into the next room.

McDonald, the general manager, superintendent, and man of all work of the Empire Haul & Elevator Company was naturally a busy man. The corporation kept him busy, its employees kept him busy, the public kept him busy. He attended to everything—he never delegated duties. He kept tab on everybody, from the president down to the cleaners-up. More than that he kept his eyes upon the horizon, as well as upon the interior of things. He was on the outlook for good things, old or new. He kept pace with the times. The Empire Haul concern owed much, perhaps all, of its marvellous prosperity to the energy and sagacity of this one man—McDonald.

McDonald was polishing off the fourth man as the fifth man entered.

"Well, sir," said he to the fifth, before the fourth had left the room.

Haggerty, keenly alive to the briskness of the man he had to deal with, stepped forward and sat down. As he did so, he pulled off his hat and tossed it on the floor. Haggerty was sorry in his heart that he could not present a better appearance before this brusque, well-dressed, man of business. Haggerty's hair was a bit long, and he was a bit too shabby in spots to pass inspection. But McDonald didn't care for that. He looked at the bundle.

"What have you got?" he demanded.

Haggerty untied his bundle.

"This is a safety-check device," he announced gravely, "for use in case of accident—it is automatic, of course."

McDonald glanced at the model in his unmoved way. "What does it do?" he asked indifferently. "What's it for?"

Haggerty stared at the other man. "Good Lord!" he burst out, "why, it stops the car. If the rope breaks, it stops the car. That's what it's for—in case of accident," he repeated. "It's a safety-check device."

McDonald shook his head. "There isn't any such thing," he remarked, "as a safety-check device—I never saw a real one yet: never saw one yet that's safe."

Haggerty smiled hopefully, and scratched his head. "This one is," he answered.

McDonald had been looking at the man. Now he was looking at the machine. "Show me how it works," he requested. Haggerty fitted a few small cords into place, and operated his model, once, twice, thrice. The other man glanced at it listlessly.

Finally he tossed a small pad over to the inventor. "Write your name and address," he said. Haggerty obeyed.

"Now, Mr. Haggerty," continued McDonald, "we'll look at this thing at our entire convenience. We have about a

dozen of these safety, or so-called safety, devices come in here in a year, besides hundreds of other appliances and improvements. Our engineer has got to test them all an' report on 'em. You leave your model, and your papers, and whatever else you got, and we'll take care of them, and you'll get a report just as soon as we're ready for it. Now don't come around here and bother us. If we want you we'll send for you—and we don't want you till we do. Understand! Well, that's all right, then . . . Now, Stevenson,"—this to the sixth man—"I haven't got time to bother with you to-day. Come to-morrow. What does the next man want?" And so it went.

A few weeks later, Sherrerd, the company's engineer—a young, short, thick-set fellow, with a flower stuck in the lapel of

car just fifteen feet above rock bottom—that's all, and then almost jolted the lives out of the gang. Say, what would have happened, old man, if the fifteen feet hadn't been there, eh? And here's another fitted up by Hayler out in Chicago. Good Lord! dropped, and smashed every bit of freight in sight and wrecked the machine. And the kind we use ain't a bit better either, though Lord knows, we've had blame good luck with them. But they're just like all the rest—they're all rotten to the core.

"This one that I'm telling you about," imperceptibly went on Sherrerd, "is different, that's all."

"Whose is it?" asked McDonald, beginning to take some slight interest, as he rose from his desk.

"It's Haggerty's patent,—whoever he

With this rope broken, there was nothing to keep the car from rushing clear down to the bottom of the shaft, where it would have been smashed to pieces.

But the instant that the rope broke, and the speed of the car became accelerated in the least degree by the action of gravity, untrammelled as it was—at that instant there was a sudden sound of crunching, grinding, and splintering of wood; and the car with a mighty and tremendous shiver, came to a full stop before their very eyes. It had fallen a comparatively imperceptible distance. And yet so gently had its stoppage come to pass, that a fragile pipe of glass inside the car had not been broken. The glass was a human life—a spinal column, if you please—and it remained uninjured and intact.

The manager looked at the engineer. "Tell me," he commanded, "just how much weight she carried, and just what speed she was running under, will you? Tell me all there is about it."

Sherrerd told him everything down to the smallest detail. Until he finished not a muscle of McDonald's face was seen to twitch.

"How many tests have you made?" he inquired finally. Sherrerd smiled. "This is number forty-three now," he answered.

"Phew!" exclaimed McDonald, in a delighted whistle of astonishment. "Good Lord, man! That looks to me to be the thing for sure. What do you think of it, eh?"

"That's about the size of it," replied the engineer. McDonald laid his hand on Sherrerd's shoulder. "I want the old man to see this," he remarked. "How long will it take you to rig her up again? All day?"

"Bout half," responded Sherrerd. "All right, then," said McDonald, "I'll send in to the president and have him here at four sharp. I've got to go back; I'm late. When everything is ready, send for me again. And by George, that seems to be the thing all right."

In the presence of the president that afternoon, the test was repeated—a test which, if anything, was this time somewhat more severe. It was successful; even more so than the former one. At its close the president spoke to the general manager.

"McDonald," he exclaimed, "we want that thing—we've got to have it." He paused for a moment and looked the manager full in the face. "You must get it for us," he concluded.

He passed on slowly down the room. Half way down he stopped; retraced his steps, and once more stood before McDonald.

"Come into my room," he suggested to the manager, "right now—and we'll talk it over." McDonald went, and they talked it over.

McDonald sent for Haggerty. Haggerty came—hot foot. But he cooled down when he read unsatisfactory news in the countenance of the man whom he had seen before.

"Now I'll tell you, Mr. Haggerty," said McDonald, "the company don't want your appliance—they won't have it—that's all. I'm not responsible for it, nor can I be. I don't run this concern, and they tell me just what I tell you—that they don't want it. There's your model, and your papers all shipshape, as we got them. See? But here," he added, leaning over and touching the other man upon the arm, "that isn't why



Portion of Harbor at Fort William, Ont., showing Mount McKay in the distance

his working clothes—sat in the manager's office, waiting for an opportunity to get a word in edgewise.

"Now, Sherrerd," finally said the general manager, with a nod toward the engineer, "what's your little game? Eh?"

Sherrerd rose to his feet. "Got something to show you," he responded.

"What is it?" demanded the manager as though he half doubted the fact.

"Andy McDonald," returned the engineer, impressively, "I'll tell you what it is. It's a safety-check device—that's safe. Absolutely safe," he repeated.

The manager laughed out loud. "Don't believe it," he replied. "Why, say, look here!" He opened the pages of a large scrap-book, and pointed to a number of clippings. "Here's the American Company's latest—their very latest device, understand, that half the experts in the country swore by. Read that—that's a passenger elevator in Milwaukee—dropped ten stories—ten stories, understand. 'And then,' it says, 'the safety device got in its work and saved the lives of the passengers.' And it stopped the

is," returned the engineer.

"Haggerty—Haggerty," slowly mused the manager; "oh, yes, I recollect the fellow—lanky sort of chap he was—hard up too, I guess—looked like Henry Clay. I remember him."

"Come on; then," returned the engineer. They passed out by a private door, through a show wareroom, and thence to the testing shafts in the rear.

They were using for the test a large passenger elevator, weighed with pig iron to the limit. Sherrerd briefly pointed out to the manager the method of applying the device, and then gave the word to start her up. A man pressed a button and the elevator ascended high above their heads. When it reached the top of the shaft, he rang the bell again. The engines were reversed, and, as the car descended, the manager and the men backed precipitately out of the way. The car fell like a shot—they were using the extreme test. When it reached a point opposite the manager there was a sudden snap. The wire rope had been sawed through to make it break.