

her as soon as I heard from Larry, and would more than likely have something amusing to tell her.

"It was snowing hard when we reached the senator's, and when we got out of the carriage she gave Duke tenderly over to me and I remember how she dragged on my arm and how played out and exhausted she seemed.

"You really must not worry at all," I said. "You know how uncertain railroad men are. It's sure to be better at the next inaugural ball; we'll be dancing together then."

"The next inaugural ball," she said as we went up the steps, putting out her hand to catch the snow-flakes. "That seems a long way off."

"I got down to the office late next morning, and before I had time to try Grover, the dispatcher at Holyoke called me up to ask whether Larry was still in Cheyenne. He couldn't raise Grover, he said, and he wanted to give Larry train orders for 151, the east bound passenger. When he heard what I had to say, he told me I had better go down to Grover on 151 myself, as the storm threatened to tie up all the trains and we might look for trouble.

"I had the veterinary surgeon fix up Duke's side, and I put him in the express car, and boarded 151 with a mighty cold, uncomfortable sensation in the region of my diaphragm.

"It had snowed all night long, and the storm had developed into a blizzard, and the passenger had difficulty in making any headway at all.

"When we got into Grover I thought it was the most desolate spot I had ever looked on, and as the train pulled out, leaving me there, I felt like sending a message of farewell to the world. You know what Grover is, a red box of a station, section house barricaded by coal sheds and a little group of dwellings at the end of everything, with the desert running out on every side to the sky line. The houses and station were covered with a coating of snow that clung to them like wet plaster, and the siding was one deep drift, banked against the station door. The plain was a wide, white ocean of swirling, drifting snow, that beat and broke like the thrash of the waves in the merciless wind that swept, with nothing to break it, from the Rockies to the Missouri.

"When I opened the station door, the snow fell in upon the floor, and Duke sat down by the empty, fireless stove and began to howl and whine in a heart-breaking fashion. Larry's sleeping room upstairs was empty. Down stairs everything was in order, and all the station work had been done up. Apparently the last thing Larry had done was to bill out a car of wool from the Oasis sheep ranch for Dewey, Gould & Co., Boston. The car had gone out on 153, the east bound that left Grover at seven o'clock the night before, so he must have been there at that time. I copied the bill in the copy book, and went over to the section house to make inquiries.

"The section boss was getting ready to go out to look after the track. He said he had seen O'Toole at five-thirty, when the west bound passenger went through, and, not having seen him since, supposed he was still in Cheyenne. I went over to Larry's boarding house, and the woman said he must be in Cheyenne, as he had eaten his supper at five o'clock the night before, so that he would have time to get his station work done and dress. The little girl, she said, had gone over at five to tell him that supper was ready. I questioned the child carefully. She said there was another man, a stranger, in the station with Larry when she went in and that though she didn't hear anything they said, and that Larry was sitting with his chair tilted back and his feet on the stove, she somehow had thought they were quarreling. The stranger, she

said, was standing; he had a fur coat on and his eyes snapped like he was mad, and she was afraid of him. I asked if she could recall anything else about him, and she said, "Yes, he had very red lips." When I heard that, my heart grew cold as a snow lump, and when I went out the wind seemed to go clear through me. It was evident enough that Freymark had gone down there to make trouble, had quarreled with Larry and had boarded either the five-thirty passenger or the extra, and got the conductor to let him off at his ranch, and accounted for his late appearance at the dance.

"It was five o'clock then, but the five-thirty train was two hours late, so there was nothing to do but sit down and wait for the conductor, who had gone out on the seven o'clock east bound the night before, and who must have seen Larry when he picked up the car of wool. It was growing dark by that time. The sky was a dull lead color, and the snow had drifted about the little town until it was almost buried, and was still coming down so fast that you could scarcely see your hand before you.

"I was never so glad to hear anything as that whistle, when old 153 came lumbering and groaning in through the snow. I ran out on the platform to meet her, and her headlight looked like the face of an old friend. I caught the conductor's arm the minute he stepped off the train, but he wouldn't talk until he got in by the fire. He said he hadn't seen O'Toole at all the night before, but he had found the bill for the wool car on the table, with a note from Larry asking him to take the car out on the Q. T., and he had concluded that Larry had gone up to Cheyenne on the five-thirty. I wired the Cheyenne office and managed to catch the express clerk who had gone through on the extra the night before. He wired me saying he had not seen Larry aboard the extra, but that his dog had crept into his usual place in the express car, and he had supposed Larry was in the coach. He had seen Freymark get on at Grover, and the train had slowed up a trifle at his ranch to let him off, for Freymark stood in with some of the boys and sent his cattle shipments our way.

"When the night fairly closed down on me, I began to wonder how a gay, expansive fellow like O'Toole had ever stood six months at Grover. The snow had let up by that time, and the stars were beginning to glitter cold and bright through the hurrying clouds. I put on my ulster and went outside. I began a minute tour of inspection, I went through empty freight cars run down by the siding, searched the coal houses and primitive cellar, examining them carefully, and calling O'Toole's name. Duke at my heels dragged himself about, but seemed as much at sea as I, and betrayed the nervous suspense and alertness of a bird dog that has lost its game.

"I went back to the office and took the big station lamp upstairs to make a more careful examination of Larry's sleeping room. The suit of clothes that he usually wore at his work was hanging on the wall. His shaving things were lying about, and I recognized the silver backed military hair brushes that Miss Masterson had given him at Christmas time, lying on his cheffonier. The upper drawer was open and a pair of white kid gloves was lying on one corner. A white string tie hung across his pipe rack, it was crumpled and had evidently proved unsatisfactory when he tied it. On the cheffonier lay several clean handkerchiefs with holes in them, where he had unfolded them and thrown them by in a hasty search for a whole one. A black silk muffler hung on the chair-back, and a top hat was set awry on the

(Continued on Page 8.)

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