

## WITH HIS FINGERS CROSSED.

BY HARRY BEDWELL.

### Sammie McClaren Did Not Know Just How His Ride in the Lone, Light Engine Would End.

SAMMIE McCLAREN said afterward that he knew it was his off day the minute he reached the top of the stairs leading to the chief despatcher's office. And after he had walked the length of the gloomy hall, he was sure of it.

So when he cautiously pushed open the door to the chief's little office, he crossed his fingers tentatively before venturing into the room. The inside of the office reassured him, however. It was a narrow little room, with a desk in the center.

Behind the desk sat the short, fat little chief despatcher, and before the desk was an empty chair.

The chief did not look up when Sammie entered; but, as Sam himself would say, he was used to the bluffs of many chiefs, so he quietly took the vacant chair and waited. At last the chief raised his head from his desk and looked vaguely at Sam, or in his neighborhood. Sam squirmed uneasily in his chair and cleared his throat.

"How are you fixed for operators?" he asked.

But the chief continued to stare for a few seconds; then, he suddenly swung around in his chair, jumped to his feet, and pattered across the floor, through a side door, and out of sight into what Sam took to be the trick despatcher's room.

"He's batty," muttered Sam to himself. "This is sure my unlucky day. I think I'd better put off askin' for a job till to-morrow."

But just then the chief returned with a message in his hand, which he was reading with some intentness; so Sam remained in his seat.

Sam took note of the fact that the fat little chief chewed tobacco in a manner that reminded him comically of a goat; and that he spat about him as he walked as if under some mental stress.

"He's Dutch!" observed Sam. "And that means he's a Jonah."

At last the chief looked up at Sam with a question in his glinting spectacles.

"How are you fixed for operators?" Sam repeated doggedly. The chief looked surprised, and pleased, which facts Sam noted, as more signs of bad luck to follow. For he was used to chiefs that growl and grumble when asked for a job, and this departure from the usual Sam regarded with suspicion.

"Are you a telegraph operator?" asked the chief. "Well, sir, I believe that I can give you a job if you are. Let me see your service letters."

Sam produced a goodly sized bundle of letters, and placed them upon the desk before the chief. This showing of so many service letters was indiscreet in Sam, for but few chiefs like to hire an operator who has moved about too much.

“Well, well,” murmured the chief, opening his eyes in mild surprise. “It seems you have plenty of them. A sort of boomer, eh? Well, let us hope that you will settle down and give good service.”

“It’s my bad luck,” complained Sam, warming in spite of his suspicions. “I work just so long for a road, then something happens, and I’m fired.”

“Of course, I knew that it wasn’t your fault” smiled the chief. “You look like an industrious, conscientious young man, and I believe you intend to do right by us.”

But as the chief read letter after letter, he could not help but note that “discharged for sleeping on duty” appeared in a great many of them.

So, after unwinding yards of red tape preliminary to going to work, Sam was sent to a small station as night operator. But here his bad luck, as he characterized it, still pursued him. There was little work to do at this night office, and he could not help but sleep on duty.

After bearing patiently with him for about two weeks, the trick despatcher told the chief things, and Sam was called back to the office.

Disgust and resignation were written on Sam’s countenance as he again faced the chief despatcher in the narrow little office.

“It’s no go,” he complained despondently. “I’ve got a hoodoo in me some place.”

The chief’s eyes glinted a little behind his glasses as he looked up Sam’s undersized person, but he seemed not greatly offended.

“I’ll give you one more chance,” he said deliberately, “and we’ll see if your hoodoo remains with you.”

Sam’s mouth opened loosely. Never before in all his experience had a second trial been given him, and this change of procedure in the species was so startling that he forgot to be suspicious until it was too late.

“There is a small mining town out on the desert,” said the chief, “in the opposite direction from where I first sent you. There I have a good night job for you. There’s enough work to do there to keep you awake if you’ll do it, and the pay is pretty good. In fact, it is a good job. Will you take it?”

“Sure,” said Sam, not considering before committing himself.

“Your train will leave here within five minutes,” went on the chief; “so you’ll have to hurry to catch it. Here’s your pass. Good-by!”

Sam took the pass and departed. But he was hardly started on his journey before his superstitious fears returned and began to cause him uneasiness.

“Gee!” he grumbled to himself as the train left the green, fertile country around division headquarters and began to roll out on the desert. “Gee! I didn’t even have my fingers crossed, when I accepted the job. Something’s sure to happen. Wish I hadn’t told him yes. If I had the two weeks’ pay that’s coming to me, I’d keep right on going.”

After two or three hours of hot riding, Sam at last arrived at his station, and was left upon the platform, where he gazed about him. All around the little town there was nothing but desert and hills; and the heat of the noonday sun was blistering.

Not far away were the mine buildings, propped up into the hills; and across the track was the station building, with a huge black-and-white sign bearing the name of the town, “Sphinx.”

After perceiving enough to fill him with disgust, Sam entered the small station, where he made himself acquainted with the agent; and that official explained matters.

He said that the regular night operator had quit, and that he needed another badly. He said, also, that there was nothing to do at night but — and here he cleared his throat and began in a sort of singsong to name over the things there were to do at night.

Sam listened to the recital for some time; then he took the agent firmly by the arm and shook him.

“Forget it!” he cried angrily. “I didn’t come down here to be the handy man about town. Tell me where I can get something to eat, and then tell that chief despatcher to wire me a pass back to town. Say to him that I can’t take this snap!”

The agent pointed out a little tent shack which, he said, was where they fed people,” and Sam went to lunch. When he returned to the station he found the agent busy with his reports, and on him Sam gave vent to his tortured feelings.

“That’s a fine hotel you have over there,” he said with deep scorn. I had to go into the kitchen and wake the Chink cook before the meal was started, and then I had to worry the waitress for half an hour before she’d serve it. It’s a funny town where a fellow has to work for everything he gets, then pay for it, too.”

“The chief says he won’t give you a pass,” said the agent, with his nose in a big book. “Says you’ve got to stay here and take the job. Think’s you’ll like it if you get used to it.”

“The chief says—what?” cried Sam, horrified. “Say, old man, tell me that again.”

The agent repeated.

Sam kicked his battered suit-case under a table, and spat at it. Then he stood and gazed abstractedly out of the window for a few seconds.

“Said I had to stay here, did he?” he inquired at length. “Say, you’re not kidding me? Said I had to stay in *this* town?” He took a long breath. “The next time I go into a chief’s office I’m going to have all my fingers crossed. I knew when I got on the train something was going to happen. You tell the chief that I wouldn’t take this job if he’d give me a sworn statement that he’d fire me within the week. If I took the job, I’d be sure to make good!”

“You’ll have to pay your fare back to town if you go,” said the agent dispassionately. “He won’t send you a pass, you know.”

Sam took out his money and counted. He had about fifty cents.

“What’s the fare?” he wanted to know.

“Two eighty-five.”

Sam looked shocked.

“Say” he broke out. “Was that ride I took from town out here worth two eighty-five? They sure hang it onto a fellow when they catch him in a God-forsaken country, don’t they? Two eighty- five! Well, I’ll just have to bump the conductor of the first passenger-train to carry me in on my face. When’s the first train due?”

“It is due about five o’clock.”

Sam looked uneasily about him.

“Say, don’t you know I am very much afraid I’ll get to liking it here if I stay,” he complained; “and I’d rather never get another job in my life than to do that.”

The agent went on with his work silently.

Sam spent the remainder of the afternoon seated in a dark corner of the office with his fingers crossed. A great fear was upon him that he might become enamored of the place and decide to stay, and he was certain that if he did he would never see the outside world again.

The passenger-train arrived about five o’clock, stopping only long enough for the agent to load on some express packages which he had received from one of the mining companies.

Sam buttonholed the conductor as soon as that official had alighted from his train, and asked for a ride to headquarters, showing at the same time his service letters in proof that he was a railroad man.

The conductor grinned broadly when he saw the name on the service letters, and he brought from one of his pockets a telegram, which he handed to Sam.

The message was from the chief despatcher to the conductor, and read:

**Do not carry operator named S. McClaren from Sphinx unless he pays fare.**

Sam looked up from the message hopelessly.

“Say, con,” he wailed, “don’t it beat the dickens how a streak of bad luck holds out when a fellow just forgot to cross his fingers once? I suppose you won’t carry me in now, will you?”

“Can’t do it now,” grinned the conductor. “If I hadn’t received that message, I’d have carried you. But now I’d sure lose my job.”

Sam’s face was wrinkled into a mask of gloom as he watched the train wind away and lose itself in the desert.

“It sure do look like Nature was dead set ag’in’ me,” he said disconsolately, as he turned hack toward the station. Then a sudden burst of hopeless anger flamed up in him. “I won’t take this job!” he cried fiercely. “I’ll walk out of town first!”

“Wouldn’t the conductor carry you?” asked the agent as Sam entered the depot.

“Naw! The chief spiked him. When’s the next freight-train due in here?”

“There’s a freight due about midnight. None before, I guess. Better take the job.”

“Nope! I’ll try to catch that freight-train. If I miss her, I’ll walk out of town.”

Sam spent twenty cents for some food, and returned to the depot to eat it. He found the agent locking up for the night.

“There’s no night-man here, you know,” he explained to Sam, “so I have to lock up. We sometimes have a fellow here at night who keeps the light engines alive that come down here to take out ore-trains; but there’ll be no light engine down here to-night, so there’s no watchman coming on duty.”

“Ore-trains,” repeated Sam. “Do you have trains of ore out of here?”

The agent pointed to a siding full of box cars.

“You bet!” he said with pride. “Have two out of here every week, and sometimes more. When there’s a train out in the morning, they send a lone engine down the evening before, and the engine-crew ties up till the train is ready. The watchman has to keep the engine alive during the night. He’s not here to-night, you see. Won’t be a train out in the morning. Usually have one out on this day of every week. I wonder if I told the despatcher there wouldn’t be one out in the morning? Yes, I think I did. Good night.”

Sam sat him down on a truck and consumed his meal in silence. There was a short twilight, then darkness, and Sam still sat there disconsolately.

After a while he was aroused by the sound of an approaching train.

“I wonder if that mutt of an agent lied to me,” he mused, as the train approached; “It’s sure a train going t’ard town, and it’s no more than eight o’clock. Well, if she’s a freight, I’ll try to hop her,”

The headlight soon hove in sight around a line of buttes, and bore steadily down toward the station. It stopped at the end of the yards, however; and a few seconds later the switch-

light turned. Then the engine puffed slowly into the siding, and came to a stop not far from where Sam sat. He saw then that it was a lone engine without cars.

After taking off their greasy overalls, the engineer and fireman slid down from the cab and walked toward the town, passing close to Sam as they went.

"I suppose that watchman is around here some place," Sam heard the fireman say as they passed. "I don't want the engine to blow up."

"He's likely over in town some place," answered the engineer. "He's heard us come in and will be here before long. He never did fail to show up."

Sam sat quite still for a long time after the two had disappeared in the darkness; then he slid thoughtfully to the platform.

"The agent did forget to tell the despatcher not to send down an engine," he soliloquized triumphantly, and there's no watchman here to keep her alive. Some one's due to get into trouble."

At first Sam decided to let the engine be, and not interfere. Thus he would have some revenge on the fat little chief. But a new and better plan suggested itself and he pondered it for a while.

"I'll just take the engine on into town myself," he chuckled, slapping his leg excitedly. "I'll show that chief who's who!"

He searched about the station for a while until he found a shovel. The blade of this he worked under one of the back windows of the office, and began to pry.

After a little exertion, the catch that fastened the window broke with a snap, and the window raised clear of the sill. Then, with fingers tightly crossed, he crawled into the office and took his seat at the telegraph instrument.

He called up the despatcher and told him that the lone engine had arrived, but that there was no train to take out in the morning, and that the engineer wanted to go on to headquarters at once.

After asking a few questions, and expressing himself strongly on this waste of power, the despatcher issued running orders for the lone engine to run extra from Sphinx to headquarters, meeting two freight-trains and a passenger on the way. Sam repeated the order, then searched diligently around on the wall till he found a switch-key hanging by the office-door.

Then he crawled out of the window, took up his battered suit-case, and climbed aboard the engine.

He had ridden on an engine many times before in his life, and had once or twice run one while switching in a station-yard; so now he felt no fear as to his being able to run this one, although he might experience some difficulty in keeping her hot.

He climbed up on the right side, and after peering anxiously at the steam-gage and the air-gage, he released her, and sent her puffing slowly forward to the other end of the yards.

Soon he was out on the main line, and speeding down the track, with the lights of the little desert town vanishing behind.

"I wonder can I keep her hot?" mused Sam when, after setting a lively pace, he climbed down to peer into the fire-box. "She sure will take lots of coal."

He began shoveling energetically, and kept it up for a time. Then he slowed down long enough to go forward along the running-board and raise the headlight curtain, which the fireman had lowered before departing.

When he returned to the cab, he put on the fireman's overalls, jumper, and cap, so as to look like the real thing if I'm stopped," he grinned.

On he rumbled over the silent desert through the starlit darkness. He passed two lighted telegraph offices, and at both the light in the semaphore showed white. He found a time-card in the engineer's box on which he checked off the stations as he passed them, so as to know where to meet the opposing trains.

At the third open telegraph office, however, Sam encountered a stop signal set against him. He whistled for a clear, board, but the light remained red.

"I wonder now what he'll be wanting," he grumbled as he slowed down. "Be like they've found me out, and are going to hang one on me. But I'll bet there's no one save the night operator in that office, and he can do me little harm."

He stopped the engine before the depot, slid to the platform, and strode into the office.

"What's your board out for?" he demanded of the operator, who hung sleepily over his instrument.

"Freight-train in the ditch on the other side of the next telegraph office," said the operator without looking up.

"The engine and half the cars slid off the bank. No one hurt, though. Despatcher wants to know if you can run down to the second blind siding from here and pick up Corbin, the general superintendent; Parks, the chief engineer of construction, and a couple of surveyors. They've been out on the desert doing some surveying, and rode into the blind siding just in time to miss the passenger-train bound for the city; so they telephoned in from a ranch to hurry something along to pick 'em up.

"Parks has got to reach the city in time to-morrow morning to attend a meeting of the directors, or there'll be the deuce to pay."

"That's quite a history," commented Sam. "But how do they expect me to get them around the wreck?"

"I dunno. Reckon they'll send an engine up from headquarters, or unhitch one from a freight-train, and send it up to meet you at the wreck, where it'll pick up the old man. Despatcher wants to know if you'll pick 'em up."

"Ask him if he thinks I'm running this engine for fun. Of course, I'll pick 'em up, if I can find them in the dark. Is that all?"

"Yep!"

Sam strode out, climbed aboard his engine, and puffed away into the solitude.

"Chief engineer of construction has got to be in the city by morning, has he?" he mumbled. "Well, he'll have to do a lot of hustling if he does. Wonder what I'll tell 'em became of my fireman?"

He kept the engine going at a good pace, passed the first blind siding marked by a sign-board on a post, on through the darkness, till the headlight revealed a man in the center of the track frantically waving his arms up and down. Sam slowed down and stopped, and four men, with their luggage and tools, climbed aboard.

"What's this?" asked the man who first climbed into the cab, and whom Sam took to be Corbin, the superintendent. Where did you come from, and where is your fireman?"

Sam blinked owlishly in the gloom.

"My fireman is sick, and I left him behind," he lied. "The despatcher sent me down to pick you up. There's been a wreck on the other side of the next station, and I'm to take you down to it. An engine from the other side'll meet you there and take you on. One of you fellows will have to shovel coal if you want any speed."

Sam latched out the throttle as he spoke, and the engine shot away into the gloom. The two surveyors took turns at tending the fire, while the two officials perched themselves up on the fireman's seat and conversed together in low tones.

"I've got 'em buffaloed!" grinned Sam into the darkness. "Gee! I wonder what I'll do with the engine when I reach the wreck?"

It was not far to the next telegraph office, and here again there was a red light in the semaphore.

"I wonder what is the matter now?" grumbled Corbin. "Another wreck, or some other delay, I'll be bound."

When Sam stopped the engine before the station, all slid to the platform and entered the office.

"The despatcher says he can't get an engine up to the wreck for about two or three hours yet," the operator informed them. "The freight-engine that started to meet you broke down on the hill, and the despatcher had to cut off an engine from the passenger-train that's behind the freight and send it on for you."

"Hasn't the wrecker been started out yet?" Corbin demanded.

"The wrecker left headquarters about thirty minutes ago, and is behind the passenger-train."

"That about settles it, Parks," said Corbin to his chief engineer. "You'll not be able to make it in time to put the proposition before the board, and they'll sure call the deal off because we have delayed so long."

Silence in the office for a few seconds, then Corbin spoke again.

"We might as well run down to the wreck and see what's happening. Perhaps we can get things lined up for the wrecker when it arrives."

"The section-gang left here about fifteen minutes ago," said the operator. "They were bound for the wreck, so you'd better keep an eye out for them and not run 'em down."

The five left the office and took their places in the cab. Again the engine started on its way, and was soon roaring along over the desert.

The wreck had occurred at a place where the track curved around a lone butte at the top of a grade. A broken rail had evidently been the cause of the derailment; but, as the train had not been going at high speed on account of the grade, no great damage had been done.

When Sam brought his engine to a stop, a short distance from the wreck, all jumped and proceeded to examine things by the light of torches and lanterns.

"It looks bad, anyway," was Corbin's comment as he looked about.

While the others were examining the derailed cars, Sam went over the displaced track. This took but a short time, and then he ran off in search of the section-gang.

Sam soon had the section foreman at the torn-up track, explaining to him what he intended doing. The foreman listened, said that he understood, and forthwith sent one of his men to the caboose of the wrecked train to fetch a large cable that is always carried underneath a caboose in countries where wrecks are common.

When the cable was brought, Sam ran his engine as near the torn-up track as he dared, and the cable was hooked into the front coupling of the engine, then to the only derailed car, which remained in the road of those wishing to repair the track.

Then he slowly backed the engine down the track. The cable tightened, the derailed car faced slowly about, listed to one side, and then went over on its side clear of the twisted rails.

The crash of the falling car was the first notice the officials had that work of reconstruction had began, and they rushed back to the track to see what had happened. But when they arrived they saw Sam's engine slowly backing down the track away from them. Corbin cursed, and swore the engineer had gone mad.

But Sam had not gone mad. He had merely taken the section-gang and gone to a nearby tie-pile, where the men loaded on a few ties. Then back he came, and the ties were hastily unloaded.

Corbin thrust his head in at the side of the cab and demanded to know what was going on.

I'm fixin' to take you on to division headquarters," explained Sam, so your man can catch the flier from the other side which will get him into the city early in the morning. Now you watch me do it."

There had been perhaps fifty ties broken by the derailment, and about three rails on either side torn up. Two of these rails were still serviceable, but the rest were bent and broken so that they were useless.

Under the direction of the foreman, the broken ties and rails were quickly cleared away and new ties substituted — the new ties being placed as far apart as was consistent with any chance of safety. Thus placed, they bridged the gap in the track.

Then the men placed the two good rails upon the ties and began driving spikes frantically. When the two rails were spiked in place, the men hurried to the rear of the engine and began tearing up rails from the solid track.

When a rail was loosened, it was instantly carried forward to be placed in the narrowing gap; and when this rather flimsy track was complete, the train-crew of the wrecked train was aroused from their caboose, commanded to release the brakes of the remainder of their train, and let it roll back down the hill.

The trainmen and the enginemen obeyed when they learned whence came the order, and in a short time the part of the train that had not been derailed was gliding smoothly down the hill toward a little siding not far distant.

When they were well out of the way, Sam climbed into the cab of his stolen engine, and, while the rest looked on breathlessly, he ran the engine slowly onto the flimsy track. At every slow turn of the drivers the track sagged from side to side, but it held together till the engine crossed to the more solid track.

"Good for you, Mr. Engineer," cried Corbin, as the four men climbed into the cab. "Now let her out at her best pace for headquarters, and we will try to keep her hot for you."

"What about that light engine that's coming to meet you?" asked Sam as he opened the throttle. "We may meet her between here and the first telegraph station."

"Let her out anyway, if you're not afraid to take the risk," ordered Corbin. "We'll try to keep a lookout for her. We ought to be able to see her long before we get into her on this flat country."

Away they shot, Sam crouching among the levers, the fingers of his left hand carefully crossed on the throttle, his little eyes gleaming with excitement as he searched the path of light ahead for a sign of obstructions.

As they shot by the unwrecked half of the freight, the crew swung their lanterns high in air and shouted encouragement.

Corbin and Parks crouched on the fireman's seat, keeping a sharp lookout for opposing trains, while the two surveyors toiled at the furnace. Sam seemed to have gone mad with excitement, and he drove the engine forward at ever-increasing speed.

At last he sighted the lights of the next station, but even here he seemed reluctant to stop. He drove down upon it at almost full speed, and when he did put on the air, Corbin and Parks were tossed up on the boilerhead, and the two surveyors groveled in the coal.

Once in the telegraph office and in communication with the despatcher, Corbin ordered the track cleared for his light engine. Soon they were all in the cab again with the required orders, and the race to catch the Overland was resumed.

That race was a masterpiece of luck and nerve. Sam seemed to lose all sense of fear or judgment as he clung to the wide-open throttle while the engine careened dizzily around sharp curves or shot down long grades. Every one hung-on as best he could, but the two amateur firemen had the hardest time.

With but little coal or water left, Sam brought the lone engine into headquarters a few minutes before the Overland arrived. As Corbin swung off the engine, he called back to Sam.

“Come up to my office to-morrow! I want to see you!” and then dived into the big station after his chief engineer.

I will—nit!” grinned Sam as he watched the super go. If the company will give me my two weeks’ pay, I’ll not be bothering them any more. I’m through with this business for a while.”

He ran the engine down into the yards and hailed a passing switchman.

“Hey, terrier,” he called to the switchman, “come take this engine into the roundhouse! I’m all in, and sick besides. I brought the engine most of the way from the other end of the division without a fireman.”

After the usual grumble, the switchman took the engine, and Sam, with his battered suit-case, slipped away into the dark to find a park-bench to sleep on.

The next-morning, Sam again climbed the stairs to the chief despatcher’s office. He looked a little more battered and crumpled than was his wont, and his fingers were a little more tightly crossed than was usual on such occasions.

He entered the chief’s office without knocking, slumped into the chair before the chief’s desk, and stared vacantly before him.

The chief looked up, and his little eyes widened with surprise.

“Well,” he said sharply, “how did you get here?”

“I came in by the air-line,” said Sam dispassionately. “I want my time.”

The chief looked thoughtful.

“How would you like—” he began.

“No! I won’t take any more of your snaps!” cried Sam fiercely. “Come through with my time, and I’ll call it square.”

The chief sat silent, as though listening for a few seconds; then, as he had once before done when Sam was in the office, he swung around in his chair and pattered into the trick-men’s room.

“He must hear the message when it’s coming in,” mused Sam.

As before, the chief came back presently with a message in his hand. Even more than usual, the message seemed to excite the little chief.

“This blamed division of mine is going to the bad,” he complained. “Some one went and stole an engine from Sphinx last night. They’ll be stealing a whole train next.”

His little eyes wandered about the room in search of something to vent his anger on, and they fell upon Sam.

“You’re discharged!” he shrieked, waving the message in the air. “I discharge you now! I won’t have such a man as you on the division!”

This was the way chiefs usually acted toward Sam, and his superstitious feelings were lulled to rest. He was sure now that he would get his time.

“Don’t do anything rash, chief,” he grinned. “You give me an order for my time, and we’ll say good-by.”

“You’ll have your time right now!” shrilled the chief. And he sat down at his desk, drew out a form, and, filling it out, handed it to Sam.

Sam took the paper and scrutinized it carefully, as if looking for flaws. Just then the door opened. In walked Corbin. “Hallo, Mr. Engineer,” he said to Sam genially. “Telling the chief about our phenomenal run last night? That was a good one, you bet. Say, chief, didn’t we break all records on this mountain end?”

Sam slowly folded up the slip of paper and put it into his pocket.

“I have just discharged this man,” smiled the chief uncertainly. “You must be mistaken about him, Mr. Corbin.”

Corbin suddenly became cool and calculating.

“Discharged him! Since when have you had the authority to discharge an engineer?”

“Engineer, Mr. Corbin? I thought you were mistaken. This fellow is an operator, and was in our service. I have just discharged him.”

Corbin looked at Sam for a few seconds in silence.

“For Heaven’s sake, my friend,” he said, “tell me how you happened to be running that engine last night?”

Sam calculated the distance to the door, but wavered. Vanity and a wish for revenge on the chief caused him to say:

“I’ll tell you, if you’ll swear never to blacklist me or have me arrested.”

Corbin promised, and Sam told him the story.

Corbin laughed shortly when Sam had finished. The little chief was very red in the face.

“Well,” said Corbin, “we still owe you something for getting our construction engineer to the Overland in time. Do you want another job on this division?”

Sam positively did not.

“I’d rather go to jail,” he said. “But if you’ll give me a pass to the city, I’ll be much obliged.”

He got the pass. **Ω**