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Diphtheria Epidemic!

Nome, Alaska

Nome, Alaska: An epidemic of diphtheria is sweeping Nome, Alaska. Children that have become infected wheeze and gasp for air, and every day is bringing new cases of the lethal respiratory disease. Many children have already died because of this epidemic. Nome's lone physician, Dr. Curtis Welch, fears this epidemic could put the entire village of 1,400 at risk. He has ordered a quarantine but knows only an antitoxin serum can ward off the fast-spreading disease.

Great Race of Mercy!

The nearest batch of the life-saving medicine, however, rests more than 1,000 miles away in Anchorage. Nome's ice-choked harbor makes sea transport impossible, and open-cockpit airplanes cannot fly in Alaska's subzero temperatures. With the nearest train station nearly 700 miles away in Nenana, canine power offers Nome its best hope for a speedy delivery.

Sled dogs regularly beat Alaska's snowy trails to deliver mail, and the territory's governor, Scott C. Bone, is looking for, and recruiting the best drivers and dog teams to stage a round-the-clock relay to transport the serum from Nenana to Nome. The Governor has scheduled a train to arrive in Nenana on January 19, 1925. The train's whistle will pierce the stillness as it arrives with the precious cargo—a 20-pound package of serum wrapped in protective fur. Mushers in the style of "Wild Bill" Shannon, will tie the parcel to their sled. As they give the signal, the paws of the Mushers will pound the snow-packed trail on the first steps of a 674-mile "Great Race of Mercy" through rugged wilderness, across frozen waterways and over treeless tundra of the Alaskan Territory.