

Asleep At The Switch - song lyrics

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ASLEEP AT THE SWITCH.

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Words and Music by Chas. Shackford.

The midnight express will be late here to-night,
So side-track the West-bound freight:
Those were the orders that Tom had received,
At he patted through the round-house gate:
Tom was the switchman, with heart true us steel,
And duty was first in his breast,
But the thought of his boy, who was dying at home,
Crazed Tom, and he fell at his post.
The shrill whistle blew on the freight for the West,
The ramble was heard of the midnight express.

Refrain.

Asleep at the switch, and no warning light,
To signal those trains that rushed through the night,
When down to the switch ran Tom's daughter Nell,
The crisis had passed, his boy would get well;
She caught up the light, and waved it on high,
And side-tracked the West-bound freight.
And the midnight express all in safety flew by,
While Tom was asleep at the twitch.

The freight slowly backed on the main track again,
The men called to Tom good-night,
Only the sob of a girl made reply,
And they saw by the engine's light,
Tom lying flat at his post where he fell.
And there, with her head on his breast,
Was his brave daughter Nell, who had saved all their lives,
And those on the midnight express.
Each man on the freight for the West bared his head.
For Tom's heart had stopped, at his post he lay dead.

Refrain.

Asleep at the twitch, the president read,
And my wife and child were on board he said,
But as he read on, his stern face relaxed,
This road shall reward such heroic acts:
He sat at his desk and filled out a check,
And sent it with all dispatch,
Twas for Tom's daughter Nell, for her brave deed that night,
While he slept his last sleep at the switch.