

PEG O' THE RING

WALTER K. HILL
BY JO GRANT

Novelized from the Motion Picture
Play of the Same Name by the
Universal Film Manufacturing Co.



SYNOPSIS

La Belle Le Clair, animal queen, dies after giving birth to a baby. Doctor Lund, owner of circus, La Belle's husband, refuses to recognize child. La Belle intrusts baby to Flip, a clown, who rears Peg as circus rider. Doctor Lund's second wife determines Peg shall not share Lund's millions and sends Hindu to follow circus and dispose of girl. Doctor Lund sends thugs to get from Flip letters that prove Peg's parentage. Mrs. Lund also wants the letter. Many exciting and hazardous attacks and events transpire. Doctor Lund's son who is following Peg to induce her to become his wife, rescues girl from many perilous straits. In the preceding episode he has received a gift from her companions with the circus, a running horse owned by Mrs. Lund. When the race is ready to run and the horse which she cannot ride. Peg gets permission to ride her own horse. She is wearing the jockey's uniform, wins. After the race Peg is overpowered by the Hindu and his thugs and thrown into an automobile. She is being rapidly driven away, young Doctor Lund overtakes the machine and jumps aboard.

ELEVENTH EPISODE

Young Lund had managed to attach himself securely to the automobile that bore the captive, Peg through the gates of the Tia Juana race track. When the machine turned abruptly into the broad highway, and started full speed for the open country, Lund was firmly fixed in his position on the running board. Inside the tonneau Peg was engaging her captors in a lively tussle.

Lund's first move was to convince the chauffeur that the wild ride was not to continue indefinitely. The young doctor moved along the running-board until he was within striking distance, and then, stepping himself with his left hand, he directed a smashing blow against the driver's head. The man reeled in his seat, and before he could in any measure recover himself Lund finished him off with a second punch.

Then throwing open the door of the tonneau, that Peg might have opportunity to escape, Lund crawled into the driver's seat and brought the car to a full stop. Peg was defending herself, with good result when Lund again appeared at the door of the automobile and contributed his own spirited efforts to the encounter. Chockro and his confederates were quickly overcome, and Peg was able to jump from the machine to safety.

Without waiting for a final settlement of the issue, young Lund followed Peg as she ran toward the race track. Chockro and his gang held a brief council, and then drove away in acceptance of their defeat. Peg and Lund returned to the race track, where they found their friends from the circus excitedly discussing the strange events of the afternoon.

Only a few moments had elapsed during the time Peg had been away from the track on her adventure in Chockro's automobile. She found her jockey still suffering from the effects of the assault the Hindu and his gang had committed upon him, but the doctor in charge of his case declared that there would be no serious results. The show was billed in San Diego for a brief engagement, and the afternoon's holiday for the circus people fraught with sensational events had ended. Peg insisted that Jerry should be taken to a hospital in the same automobile that carried her back to town.

Young Lund returned alone to the hotel where his mother was established in luxurious apartments. When he entered the parlor, unannounced, he was surprised to find the Hindu and one of his thugs waiting, presumably, for Mrs. Lund. Lund cast ceremony aside and pounced upon the two wretches like a panther.

Having many times before engaged the Hindu in fistic battle Lund had little to fear as a result of the encounter. Swinging out with left and right the sturdy young man soon brought the thugs to submission. Then coupling them together by linking his arms under theirs, Lund said:

"If I ever catch you here again, I'll hand you over to the police."

With a quick twist of his arm Lund sent the Hindu spinning toward the door, and then landing a few blows on Chockro's confederate, young Lund pounced on the two wretches on the run and glad to get away.

"At that moment Mrs. Lund entered the room.

"Who are those men?" she asked, in a voice that implied surprise.

"They were here in your apartment when I arrived," said young Lund, "and if you don't know them I'm sure I don't know who they are."

With gold indifference marking her manner and tone of voice, Mrs. Lund declared she had no idea who the intruders could be.

"Well, there's one thing certain, they'll not come back," said Lund.

When her son had departed, Mrs. Lund hurried downstairs and passed out of doors into the beautiful grounds surrounding the hotel. She walked among the trees and flowers, keeping a sharp lookout for the Hindu. Chockro appeared from behind a nearby hedge.

"Well, did you get away with her?" said Mrs. Lund.

"No, we missed out again, boss," said the Hindu.

Chockro's companion then chimed in:

"Dat young guy what just threw us out of your rooms, cut in and spoiled our game. He sure is there with the punch, and has a fine set of muscles," said the tough. "But we'll get the girl, boss, if we have to use a gun on her."

"Well as far as I am concerned," Mrs. Lund replied, "you can do anything at all just so you dispose of her. I'll pay you both well. Return to the city and get Peg out of the way for good."

And without another word being passed, Mrs. Lund walked away from her hirelings and proceeded toward the hotel.

Young Lund called on Peg, in her dressing tent, before the show began, to inquire if she had suffered any bad consequences from her adventure in the automobile. He found her in a strange mood. She was surprisingly cold in her manner toward him, and Lund was deeply grieved.

"I can't understand you at all Peg," said Lund, as shadows crossed his handsome face. "You are a strange girl, sure enough."

"Yes, dear, I know I am strange. And I'm extra nervous today."

"Have I done anything, dear girl, to offend you?" said Lund.

"Oh, no. Not that—I just feel odd, that's all."

Lund turned as if to leave, and then suddenly halted. Reaching into his pocket he drew forth the letter Peg had given him to keep the day she had visited his mother's home.

"I've been trying to think, every time I saw you, to give you this letter. Now at least I think of it at the right time," Peg took the letter in her hand and young Lund, without further words, left the dressing tent.

Lund dejectedly walked slowly from the tent. He was trying to fathom Peg's unexpectedly strange conduct and the more he considered the matter the deeper the mystery seemed. Finally he determined to have another interview, and returned to the tent where Peg was dressed and ready for her performance.

The young man rejoiced when Peg greeted him with a friendly and impetuous shout:

"Oh, I'm glad you came back, and I'm sorry I was mean. I'm very nervous, dear. And this letter you gave me makes me feel more worried. Take it back, please, and give it to Flip when he's alone," and Lund took the letter from her outstretched hand and put it back in his pocket.

Then the young physician looked steadily into her eyes for a moment. He took her two cheeks in his hands and drawing her lips toward him, kissed her. Noticing that she made involuntary gestures as if repulsing him, Lund said nothing more. He passed from the tent and proceeded to the front of the show and entering, took a seat among the spectators.

The young man seemed to have discovered an unhappy solution to the girl's strange conduct. Her manner indicated that her old malady, which had been dormant for so long a time might be expected to suddenly return.

The performance was soon under way before a crowd that filled the tent almost to its capacity. Young Lund watched with eagerness for the time when Peg should appear. And when she finally dashed into the ring, he watched her closely for any indications of trouble.

But if the pretty circus girl was beset by any danger of her strange affliction recurring, there was nothing to indicate it in either her appearance or actions.

The immense audience, swayed by the spell of Peg's skill as an equestrienne, was noisily proclaiming its delight in salvos of applause when an utterly unexpected and mysterious incident, followed quickly by the terrifying experience of an elephant herd stampeding, turned the scene from one of gayety to pandemonium.

The evil-minded Hindu had bought a gun with a "silencer" attached and waited for Peg to enter the ring before executing his fiendish design. Then Chockro cut a slash in the side-wall where he could draw a bead on the girl and with the muffled gun, shoot her without attracting attention. Taking careful aim the Hindu fired, just at the instant the circus girl was balancing in graceful posture upon the back of her prancing steed.

Almost simultaneously the one thing circus men most dread transpired—the herd of elephants stampeded. In the ring next to where Peg was riding, the elephants were being brought in and aligned to perform their feats as soon as Peg had finished her number. Peg being the featured act, was assured of the undivided attention of the audience, working entirely alone and without any acts appearing in the other rings while she was riding.

No one ever really knows what "stampedes the elephants" with a circus. The most trivial disturbance may frighten the animals into panic—and once started the tremendous brutes have their own way. Nothing can stop them and the men who are their complete masters at other times have absolutely no control over the movements of the beasts once they are thoroughly alarmed.

Blinded by fear the bulky brutes press forward in the face of an obstacle. They have been known to break through brick walls, walk through strong fences as though they were kindling, and the ropes and canvas of a circus mean nothing to an elephant on stampede.

Peg's sudden fall from her horse might have been passed as an accident by the crowd that beheld the girl topple heavily to the ground. Her horse, relieved of its burden, stopped on the other side of the ring. And in the second that Peg lay prostrate upon the ground, Prince, the big elephant that stood in the ring, but a few feet from where the girl fell, made a move that was faster than any human being could follow—or prevent.

Trumpeting madly the other elephants in the group with Prince ran in different directions—but Prince had his own ideas. Before anyone, in the excitement, could realize what the big brute was about he had dashed to the spot where Peg lay prostrate, and wound his trunk around her body. Lifting her as though she were a babe, the ponderous brute made a dash for liberty.

The wildly excited multitude fled in all directions.

Young Lund, from his seat in the crowd, had seen as much as anybody

could of the swift-moving events, and when Peg fell he had jumped to his feet. The surging crowd momentarily hid her prostrate body from his view, but he saw the elephant dash into the ring where she had fallen. Then caught a flash of the girl held securely by the elephant.

The young athlete fought his way through the crowd, working himself along the seats until he came to the end of a section and then dropped to the ground. When he reached the open, Lund saw the herd of elephants dashing down the road, and lost no time in following as fast as he could run.

There was one man among the circus folks who had managed to act about as quickly as did the elephants. Jerry, the jockey, who would go to unknown extremes to serve the pretty circus girl, was always on hand to watch her ride, and when he saw her fall he started to her assistance. But the elephant was quicker than the man.

When Jerry saw what had happened he dashed away in pursuit of Prince and his self-imposed burden.

Prince ran with Peg in his grasp for a long distance down the road. At length his attention was directed to a lumber yard that spread itself along the shores of the harbor. He turned through an open gate, ran some distance inside the yard, and deposited Peg upon the ground. Then Prince retraced his steps to the highway, and followed the other elephants.

The circus people had, by this time, recovered from the shock and surprise. Animal men ran down the road in pursuit of the elephants and Flip, the clown, headed a party of performers who followed along in search of Peg.

Jerry had seen Prince turn into the lumber yard and again emerge without his burden. Young Lund, running alone in hot chase, had also marked the incident, and also saw Jerry disappear through the gate.

For some time Peg lay motionless and insensible upon the ground where the elephant had dropped her. Although she had traveled for a considerable distance, under extraordinary conditions, the animal had carried her as carefully as a mother could handle a child. There was no shock and no bodily damage for which the elephant was responsible.

But the bullet from Chockro's revolver had torn a slight wound in her scalp as it passed in almost fatal proximity to her head; and when she fell from her horse, the impact had fairly stunned her. Thus Prince bore an inhuman burden, a fact that probably saved the girl from being trampled to death by the frightened

beast. Had Peg been conscious her struggles might have been her undoing.

Slowly the girl regained consciousness and opened her eyes bewildered upon the strange surroundings.

She struggled to her feet, and fell. Again she attempted to arise, but was too weak to stand. Crawling to a pile of lumber nearby she raised herself with the aid of this support and leaped heavily against the lumber to collect her senses.

Jerry had by this time entered the lumber yard and was searching among the piles of timber for the girl. The animal men passed on down the road to overtake the elephants. Young Doctor Lund had followed Jerry into yard, but search where he might there was no living soul.

Peg, meanwhile, had started on her own account to find her way through the alleys that separated the high piles of lumber. She had gone only a short distance when, with horror, she beheld two evil looking men seated on a low pile of lumber near where she stood. Peg tried to evade their notice, but one of the beery-eyed creatures caught sight of her and shouted:

"Hully Gee, Mike! Look at the gal! Let's get her."

The two unkempt and half-drunk creatures started for Peg and chased her among the lumber piles. Her desperate position gave the girl renewed strength for a little while, but the drunken brutes who were chasing her had too great an advantage.

Jerry, running among the lumber piles, and across the wagon roads that divided the yard into sections, heard Peg's screams for help as the first indication of her whereabouts. Taking his directions by the sound of



Peg Was a Toy in Their Hands.

Peg's voice, he came upon the struggling girl, just as she had been overpowered by the drunken sailors.

Regardless of consequences Jerry pounced upon the huskies and gave them the best battle he was able to muster, but when one of the men swung a short piece of board through the air and brought it down upon Jerry's head the young jockey went down and out. Despite her struggles, and regardless of her screams and pleas for mercy, Peg was a toy in the hands of the sailors.

Lifting her by main strength the sailors started toward the water, just as Jerry, lying prone upon the ground, began to recover his senses.

The jockey caught only a glimpse of Peg and her captors, but it was enough to bewilder as he was, Jerry, dazed and bewildered as he was, Jerry remembered and was struggling to follow the sailors with their prey, when young Lund, in his desperate search for Peg, came running through the lumber piles and almost stumbled over the prostrate jockey.

"Oh, Mr. Lund," gasped the boy, "run that way—they've got her—I'll follow." And Lund, with all speed, fled in the direction Jerry had indicated. Lund had not travelled far toward the water, before he came to a place where the road forked, and both branches led down to the docks.

There was not a human being in sight. Taking chances Lund selected the wrong road, and he lost precious moments before he had raced to the docks and found the place deserted. Off to his right the piles of lumber were stacked close to the pier, but he could see that the dock took an abrupt turn. To his left there were more lumber piles and nobody to be seen.

He quickly decided to retrace his steps and take the other fork of the street, and with all speed he ran over the distance he had wasted in his unlucky decision. Just as he reached the fork of the road, Jerry met him, the young jockey staggering along as best he could. Although he was fast recovering his usual agility Jerry was still rather kingly from the blow the sailors had given him on the head.

Lund led the way down the road over which he was now certain Peg had been carried by her captors. The strain of his long run began to tell, and agile and muscular as he was, his speed was slackening under the hard strain of his protracted effort. Looking over his shoulder he saw that Jerry was now making good speed and as they neared the wharf they were on even terms.

As the two men dashed out into the open on the docks they realized to their dismay, that the sailors had

made good the first move in their purpose. Backing away from the pier was a steamer and at the moment Lund and Jerry came upon the dock Peg was being carried down a companion-way that led from the upper deck, at the stern of the boat. The would-be rescuers stood transfixed with horror as they realized, in a flash, the danger to which the circus girl was now exposed.

But Lund came to sudden realization that moments were too precious to waste, and began at once to look about for some means by which he might follow Peg and rescue her, if possible, from her captors. The solution would be found in hiring a tug. If one were only at hand—but when the boat, bearing Peg backed away from the wharf, the place became at once deserted.

In desperation Jerry and young Lund ran to the edge of the wharf, as if by that move to lessen the distance between themselves and the boat. It was a strange move of fate that led them to do this, for when they reached the edge of the pier, and began looking about, their eyes were gladdened by the sight of an evidently deserted motor boat tied to the dock, some distance away from where they stood.

The two men acted as with one impulse, and dashed along the pier. When they reached the motor boat, Lund jumped in and tried the engine. In feverish haste he worked to "turn it over" and was, after a few trials, successful in his attempt. Then Jerry untied the painter that held the boat fast to the pier, shoved her free, and the two men were soon speeding away in pursuit of Peg and her captors.

Meanwhile the girl was desperately struggling against heavy odds. The rough sailors, half mad with drink, were reveling in their discovery. When they carried the girl below, they left her alone for a while in the ill-smelling cabin, while the brutes went on deck and started a drunken orgy.

Left alone Peg looked about for some means of protecting herself. She first investigated her surroundings, and found that the hold was divided into two cabins. In one cabin the sailors evidently ate their meals, for on the table were the remains of some course of food. Just forward of this cabin was another in which beds and bunks provided sleeping quarters.

There was not a weapon of any sort to be seen. Only old ropes and cordage, with pulleys and blocks—the usual embellishments of a harbor craft. Peg felt a trifle relieved when she had made a thorough investigation of her prison. She knew at least what was behind the door that separated the cabins, and during the little time they left her alone she had time to form some plan of defense.

Above her head she could hear the heavy footfalls of the drunken sailors. Their voices came to her down the companion-way in loud dispute. Only the round portholes in either side of the cabin afforded her a view of the water as the boat steamed along. Her heart almost failed her as she contemplated the terrifying position in which she was placed.

After traveling through the water for several moments Peg heard the bell ring in the engine room and knew by the lack of vibration that the machinery had stopped. Gradually the boat lost headway, and soon she heard the noise made by the anchor chain as it rattled from its capstan.

The girl could not know that this very act would be the means of insuring relief. Young Lund and Jerry, forcing their borrowed motor boat to its top speed, rejoiced when they saw what the sailors had done. They had made slow gains in their efforts to overtake the steamer, but now that she rode at anchor they rejoiced.

The boat had stopped because all hands wanted to enter into the drunken orgy. The engineer and the man at the wheel determined that they would not be left out of the revelry, and so they agreed that the boat should be brought to anchor that all hands might be free to join in the carouse. When the anchor struck bottom, Peg's position grew desperate.

Peg heard the drunken men approaching the companion-way. When the first man touched the bottom step, she was waiting for him with a stool raised above her head. She brought the heavy weapon down with all her strength—but the sailor was quick enough to break the force of the blow by throwing his arm above his head.

The man next behind him witnessed the action and shouted to his pals:

"Come on boys, we've got a fighter down here." Soon strong arms had overpowered the girl, and they flung her in the corner of the cabin.

Peg was weighing her scant chances of escape when she looked through the porthole and saw the motor boat, with Frank and Jerry, approaching. Peg's heart gave a great leap for joy—and then her spirits fell.

Perhaps the boat was bringing more ruffians to threaten her—but there was an equal chance that rescuers were at hand. The girl determined, at all hazards to postpone the final moment, and watching her chance she made a dash into the other cabin and slammed shut the door.

The girl braced her body against the door, and managed by reaching out with her feet, to draw one of the iron beds into a position where she could use it as a barricade. She felt the drunken brutes trying to force the door by main strength.

The girl struggled with the other bed and threw it into a position where it would increase the strength of her barrier. Then she waited in terror for further developments.

Lund and Jerry, in their speeding motor boat, were drawing nearer while

the drunken sailors were arguing in the cabin. Without checking the momentum of their craft, Lund steered the motor boat along side of the steamer and then shut off the engine. Jerry missed two or three ropes that hung over the side, but Lund managed to grab one of them and clambered out of the boat.

"Make her fast, Jerry," said Lund in low tones, "and then climb up. The deck is deserted. They must all be down below." And when Jerry had reached the deck, the two men crept toward the stern until they reached the companion-way.

"We don't know the odds we are against," said Lund, "but if the guns work I guess we will be winners." So saying Lund whipped out his revolver and, Jerry following suit, the two men sprang down the stairs.

"Hands up, and be quick!" cried Lund as he reached the foot of the steps. And in a second Jerry stood beside him, the two revolvers covering the drunken sailors, dazed into further submission by the suddenness of the command.

With their revolvers covering the crowd Jerry backed up the companion-way while Lund ordered the ruffians to follow suit. In this way the cabin was cleared, Lund following the last man up the stairs, the two rescuers keeping the sailors always under control of their revolvers.

"Drive them forward," was Lund's command.

"Go ahead if you want to keep whole skins," ordered the jockey.

And the motley crowd of half-drunken brutes covered under the threat of the revolvers as they flashed in the late afternoon sun. When they had marched the crew into the forward end of the boat, Lund and Jerry made them climb to the half-deck that had been built in the extreme bows.

"Keep them covered, Jerry," said Lund, "and I'll make a search for Peg."

Young Lund hurried aft and again descended the companion-way into the cabin. When he tried to enter the other cabin the door was held fast against his efforts.

"Peg! Peg! are you in there?" Lund called as loud as he could lift his voice. Without waiting a second for the reply, Lund swung a stool with all his might and sent it crashing through the door.

Through the splintered panels Lund saw Peg lying limp upon one of the beds. With desperation he cleared away the remaining panels by forceful applications of the stool, and in a twinkling was inside of the cabin.

Working fast he swung the beds out of the way, and lifted Peg in his arms.

The girl's eyes suddenly opened wide, and, seeing that she was in Lund's arms, she gave a wild cry of delight. The young man implanted a hurried kiss upon her upturned lips and said:

"Hurry girl, we must work fast." And he half dragged and half carried her through the room and up the steps to the deck above.

Jerry still had the sailors corralled on the half-deck forward. Lund called out to the jockey, and when the young man turned his head to respond they began to happen with great speed.

Freed momentarily from the menace of Jerry's revolver, one of the sailors jumped to the main deck the instant Jerry turned to look back at Lund. In a twinkling the others followed, and one of them with a sudden blow felled the jockey to the deck.

Lund looked for the motor boat where Jerry had been told to make it fast. He was horrified to discover that it was not there. Taking a quick glance around he saw the boat floating at some distance from the steamer, and realized that with Peg and Jerry he was marooned.

In the few seconds that had elapsed the sailors were rushing aft. Lund drew his revolver and pulled the

trigger. There was no report. Again and again he pulled the trigger, and then realized that the gun was useless.

"We must fight for it, Peg," said Lund, as he drew the girl with him behind the top of the companion-way.

Looking about for some means of protection against the onrushing sailors, Lund was only able to lay hands on two iron belaying pins, used by sailors to hold coils of rope as they were huzed against the bulwarks.

Their launch drifted, Jerry lying unconscious upon the forward deck, the drink-crazed sailors rushing madly upon them. Lund and Peg resolved to sell their lives dearly as they faced their unexpected peril.

(END OF ELEVENTH EPISODE.)

"Peg, I Don't Understand You at All!"

"Whether or not the Iowa boys get home from Texas before election there's enough left to give Hughes the big majority he has coming," says the Marshalltown Times-Republican.

"The Methodist ministers," says the Holte Arrow, "will eventually find that they took the democratic party on far too short a probationary term this year."

"Our guess is that we will not suffer much more from heat," says the Cedar Rapids Republican. "About the next thing we will begin to hear is about too chilly weather. It is at hand."

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