

The Girl and the Game

A STORY OF MOUNTAIN RAILROAD LIFE

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FOURTEENTH INSTALLMENT.

Synopsis.
Little Helen Holmes, daughter of General Holmes, railroad man, is rescued from imminent danger on a scenic road by George Storm, a newsboy. Grown to young womanhood, Helen saves Storm, rescues him from his father and his friends, Amos Rhineland, financier, and Robert Seagru, promoter, from a threatened collision. She rescues him from a Seagru's scheme to steal the general's survey plans of the cut off line for the Tidewater. Helen recovers the survey plans from Seagru, and though they are taken from her, finds an accidentally made copy of the survey plans. Storm is employed by Rhineland. Spike, befriended by Helen, in his turn saves her and the life of her father when Seagru kidnaps her. Helen and Storm win for Rhineland a race against Seagru for right-of-way. Helen, Storm and Rhineland rescue Spike from Seagru's men. Spike steals records to protect Rhineland and Storm and Helen save Spike from death in the burning court house. Yet in Superstition mine Helen and Storm are captured by Rhineland. Rhineland gives Helen and George each one-third of the Superstition mine stock. Seagru's scheme to prevent payment for the mine is spoiled.

Helen's Race Against Time.

A fortnight spent at the Hotel Hollywood went very rapidly for Helen Holmes. The princely munificence of her foster uncle, Amos Rhineland, in making her again through his gift of a substantial interest in the Superstition mine, a young woman of large means, had restored her to social responsibilities. These were hers by right of birth and inheritance, but she had been deprived of them by the untimely death of her father.

Nor was her benefactor a man to do things by halves. During the time that Helen was his guest in the city he seemed an unusually busy man. Always fully occupied, his time now was hardly his own, so frequent were his dashes in and out of town and so many were his engagements. And during this time something of an air of mystery surrounded his movements despite all he could do to make them appear as of ordinary routine imposed on him by his railroad interests. To Helen's frequent queries as to what he was doing day after day, Rhineland returned answers which no doubt seemed to him to satisfy her. But Helen perceived these were mere evasions calculated to put her off and keep her in ignorance of what he really was doing.

What ostensibly was most on his mind was that Helen should make all preparation for resuming a social life of life to which she had been for some strenuous time a stranger. Rhineland, always the finished man of the world, whether he was strutting or swaggering, employed his natural aptitude for the role of dictator by suggesting, commanding and directing Helen to make herself ready as soon as possible to take her place again in the society in which she had, as General Holmes' daughter, naturally moved.

He was insistent, for example, that she give up immediately all her old wardrobe, a new wardrobe with all accessories pertaining to it. And found time, even in the midst of his many activities to act as counsellor and adviser while the numerous tradespeople, engaged in fitting Helen newly out, kept her occupied in selections and fittings. Rhineland decided on hats, instead of jewelry, and the interest of experts in Helen as he would have enlisted engineers in running new lines of railroad. And all this while after the work of a hard day, he seemed refreshed and sustained by some secret which he kept religiously to himself until one morning when he asked her to take a ride with him into the country.

He had already restored to her service, after diligent inquiry, the faithful maid with whom Helen had parted when she left her father's house. The meeting between the two women, mistress and servant, was affecting. A bond of affection had always existed between them and the tragedy that came into Helen's life had only increased the devotion of her servant.

car, approaching the outskirts of Signal, swept sharply to the left instead of taking the highway on the right toward the village, instinct sent the baby girl's heart into her throat with a great throb; she half dreamed, half suspected what it might all mean.

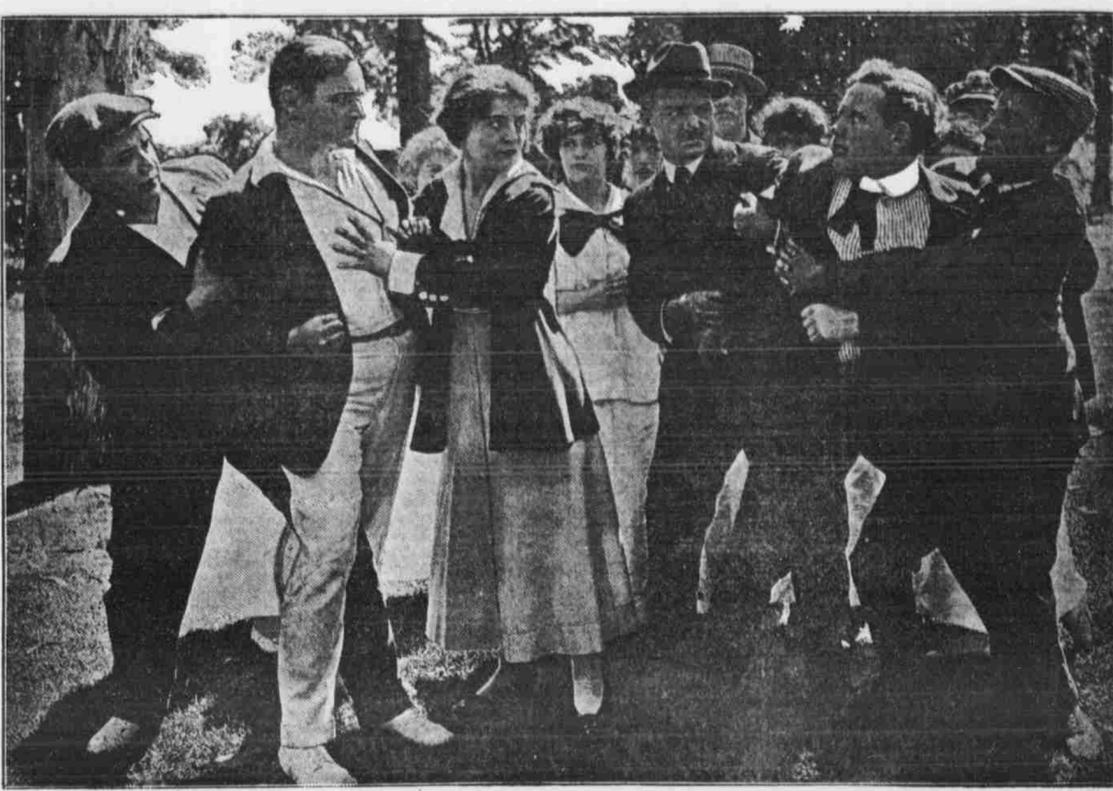
Rhineland only looked straight ahead and preserved an untroubled silence, a silence that Helen herself was not unwilling to break as the car sped on toward the iron gates that guarded the entrance to her father's former estate. Would it turn in there, she asked herself, or continue on up the bay road?

The great gates were wide open and a lodgekeeper bustled himself close to one of them. Helen was not long in suspense. Apparently, Rhineland's driver had had his orders for his employer save none, but the heavy car, scarcely slackening speed, averted through the open gates and the lodgekeeper lifted his cap as the party swept past. Something in his salute awoke old memories—could he be the same who had served her father? she asked herself.

"That man," she murmured to Rhineland, "looks exactly like father's old keeper."

"He ought to," returned Rhineland, evenly.

"Why so?"



Storm, held by Spike and Rhineland, launched a terrific abuse at Seagru.

gram for Helen. She opened it and read: "Miss Helen Holmes, 'Signal.' " "Will be on Local today." "George Storm."

Helen's face reflected the pleasure the news gave her; she handed the dispatch to Spike and asked him to meet Storm at the station.

When Spike had gone, Rhineland, who had been telling Helen of his plans for the future, resumed his subject. "And Helen," he said, at length, "I'm going to make a request of you now that may seem very peculiar. You know, as well as I do, how my nephew, Earl Seagru, has treated both you and me. He has been about as mean as a man could be, in spite of our efforts to treat him fairly.

But the fight is over and we have won. He is my only sister's child. She died when he was a mere boy and asked me, on her death bed, to look after Earl and be to him what she would have been, had she lived. You know whether I've tried to carry out her injunction; you know what it has cost me in more ways than one; you know as well as anyone that I have been patient with him."

speaking rapidly and not always connecting long, long time. The trouble has been, I've never felt in a position to speak until now. You know I love you; I think you understand why I've held my peace. I had nothing, it seemed to me, to offer you. But Mr. Rhineland has put me in a position where I need no longer be afraid or obliged to keep silence. I want to ask you, Helen, to be my wife."

She could not speak. It seemed to both that though they had long anticipated the moment, they could not have anticipated the happiness now upon them. He drew her, unremitting, into his arms and placed upon her finger his engagement ring. "This isn't the conventional way of doing it, Helen, but this ring has been waiting for two long weeks for its place on your finger."

They wandered some distance from the house. But, unfortunately for their tentative, the guests were arriving. Rhineland meeting these as well as he could, was compelled to dispatch Spike on a search for Helen.

Spike, who had lost none of his aptitude for situations, found her with Storm among the oaks, and in spite of Storm's disguised expression he delivered his imperative message. And, conscience-stricken at having neglected her duties as hostess, Helen hurried away.

on with Seagru. Two men watched them walk away with particular interest. Spike, who seemed deeply concerned with the awkward situation, and George Storm, who now began to feel the full force of Helen's disapprobation.

For an hour she moved among her guests, accompanied a good part of the time by Seagru. To tell the truth, it was not wholly by her own desire. As her indignation cooled she began to consider that her lover had some grounds for his ungenerous outbreak and the exploits in which Seagru had figured in the endeavor to do her and her friends all manner of harm recurred to her memory.

She did feel, however, that Storm should have made a further effort to tell her privately he was sorry for having so rudely broken in on the festivities of the day and since he did not, she was sufficiently piqued to profess an interest in Seagru she was far from feeling.

The tennis games were finished and the guests making ready to go. Helen was about to start from the courts herself when Storm, coming up, spoke abruptly to her. But he was too proud and Helen was too disdainful. He could not bring himself to speak further about the unfortunate incident and, increased by his attitude, Helen, when she extended her hand as he said good-by, slipped his ring from her finger and gave it to him in flushing hands.

overtaking the engine. The fireman surmised they were giving the train a particularly unusual thump along that particular tangent. But these racers waved frantically at him. Thinking they were jesting, the fireman waved back in turn.

"We never can stop them," cried Helen. "That man thinks we're fooling. You must run ahead of the train, and get over on the other side where we can reach the engine."

With a terrific burst of speed, the motor car pulled ahead of the fast moving engine, and taking the track like a hurdle, crossed to the right side of the engine. For one moment the lives of the motor car hung narrowly in the balance; the hind wheels missed the pilot by only the fraction of a second. Helen tried to cry out her warning to the engineer. But he, mistaking her intent as the fireman had done, grew angry at what appeared to him a crazy joy in one's life. He refused to listen or look any longer toward the motorist, but he waved them contemptuously off, calling them roundly for their idleness and sitting down again to his throttle.

Half a mile beyond where Helen and Seagru were now speeding, the railroad and the highway part company abruptly and all hope of making the engineer stop came to an end. As the train pulled away from the road, the motor car was halted and Seagru and Helen got out. Helen felt keenly distressed, but of a sudden she remembered Burnett bridge and she whirled on Seagru. "We can beat them to Burnett bridge, this side of the junction!"

him half way around and himself, kneeling, lifted Helen from the ground.

"Dazed by her fall and opening her eyes slowly on her surroundings, Helen—white Storm anxiously asked her if she was hurt and reproached her for leaving him—gradually pulled her senses together.

"Take me away, George," she murmured faintly. "Who are these people? What has happened?"

At Storm's elbow, while he tenderly cared for and redoubled his efforts to revive Helen, stood Spike, like a watchdog. He kept the circle of passengers from crowding in, and when Seagru again attempted to interfere, Spike escorted him over to his machine and invited him in such unmistakable terms to continue his journey that Seagru thought best not to rouse Spike's anger further.

Returning hurriedly to the focus of interest about Helen, Spike continued to push the passengers back. When Helen spoke to Storm again, as she soon did, she was able to rise to her feet and those passengers who refused to leave the young couple to themselves were hustled away by Spike to give privacy to the little scene being enacted between Helen and Storm in the foreground.

"I'm awfully sorry, Helen. I forgot myself this morning. George was saying to his offended sweetheart, 'I know I ought not to have given way, but when that fellow spoke to me as he did—after all his meanness—I felt as if nothing but a good beating would do him justice. I forgot you in it, Helen—that's all. Can you forgive me?'"

She looked up into his eyes. Whether he found forgiveness there or not, he could detect nothing of anger. "Take me home, George," she said, sorrowfully. "I'm awfully bruised up."

"You've nothing on me at that," laughed Storm. He slipped his hand into the pocket of his waistcoat and drew out their ring. "Before we start, Helen, I'd better put this back where it belongs." Taking her unresisting finger into his own, he slipped the engagement ring over it again.

(To Be Continued.)

Fashion's Spring Signs

A delightful novelty is the skirt of ruffled tulle, worn with a bodice of satin. Flowered taffeta and lace are combined in quaint and becoming frocks. Spring frocks show many adaptations of the old-fashioned basque.

The separate taffeta skirt is almost a necessity in a well-arranged wardrobe. The more novel the shape and coloring of the parasol, the more fashionable it is. Bright-colored corduroy skirts are having things all their own way for country wear.

Soutache braiding is having great vogue. They are even trimming linen frocks with it. The combination of velvet and chiffon holds a prominent place among the new frocks.

Patent leather motifs form a decorative scheme on some of the new gabardine suits. Handkerchiefs of plain white linen are being supplanted by those with colored borders.

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