

THE GIRL AND THE GAME

A STORY OF MOUNTAIN RAILROAD LIFE

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

AUTHOR OF "WHISPERING SMITH," "THE MOUNTAIN DIVIDE," "STRATEGY OF GREAT RAILROADS," ETC.

NOVELIZED FROM THE MOVING PICTURE PLAY
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Little Helen Holmes, daughter of General Holmes, railroad man, is rescued from imminent danger on a scenic railroad by George Storm, a newsboy. Grown to young womanhood, Helen saves Storm, now a fat man, from a fat man, and from Amos Rhinelander, fat man, and Robert Seagru, promoter, from a threatened collision. Safebreakers employed by Seagru steal General Holmes' survey plans of the mine, and the fat man, finally wound the general and escape. Her father's estate badly involved by his death, Helen goes to work on the Tidewater. Seagru, the surveyor, from whom Seagru and the others are taken from her funds, and an accidentally made proof of the survey blueprint. Storm is employed by Rhinelander. Spike, befriended by Helen, in turn saves her and the right Helen, and when Spike kidnaps her, Helen and Storm win for Rhinelander a race against Seagru for right-of-way. Helen, Storm and Rhinelander rescue Spike from Seagru, and Spike goes to work to prove Rhinelander's fat and Storm and Helen saves Spike from death in the burning of the courthouse.

ELEVENTH INSTALLMENT

Salting of the Superstition Mine.

Outwitted in his effort to obtain possession of the coveted right-of-way record and defeated once more in his plans through the failure of Spike to betray those who had befriended him, Seagru's wrath concentrated on Spike as being chiefly responsible for his discomfiture.

But standing in the room which had just been the scene of his last defeat, Seagru felt that he could at least enjoy revenge. Helen, Storm and Rhinelander were still facing him, with Spike near, and the sheriff was just leaving the room when Seagru called to him. As he did so, he drew from his pocket a worn pamphlet and handed it ostentatiously to the sheriff. "There's something of interest to you!"

"What do you mean?" retorted the official jocularly. He glanced at the pamphlet, saw set forth on the cover a reward of five hundred dollars offered for the apprehension of Spike and laughed: "We see these things every day," said he, handing it back to Seagru. "If I were to chase up all of the pointers I get like that, my salary wouldn't buy gasoline."

"You don't have to burn any gasoline to get this money," retorted Seagru. "Your man is right here."

"Where?" demanded the sheriff skeptically.

Seagru pointed to Spike. "That is the man," he said coldly.

Spike decided the game was up. He made a bolt for the door. The sheriff stopped him.

The moment was an unpleasant one. Helen was furious. "Of all the mean things you've ever done," she said to Seagru, "this is about the meanest. I should think you would want to go and hide yourself," she exclaimed with cutting emphasis, "from the sight of all living men."

Stung, Seagru retorted in like: "That sounds fine from your lips, Miss Helen Holmes! It's a new role for you to become the champion of prison birds like this fellow." He nodded insolently towards Spike. "Especially," he added, "since this very man—he pointed a finger relentlessly at Spike—"this very man," he almost thundered, "was implicated in the death of your own father!" He meant, with his retort, to beat poor Helen to the ground. He almost did so.

Breathless, unable to speak, she looked helplessly from accuser to accused. Storm and Rhinelander stood speechless. Staring at Seagru like one stunned, Helen could only gasp: "My father?"

"Yes, your father," repeated Seagru angrily. "How do you like your hero now?" he concluded tauntingly.

Helen looked toward Spike. "Spike, is this true?"

He could not speak to her. He could not even look at her. He only turned to the sheriff and in a voice such as no man ever had heard from him before muttered: "I'm ready."

The sheriff led him from the room. Helen, with Rhinelander and Storm, silently followed, leaving Seagru, as he turned again to his window, to his own reflections. Nor were the loss of the records and his exorcism by Helen the only misfortunes that were to come to him that day.

He had long had control of a valuable gold mine in the Superstition range, and to his backers he had enlarged more than once with enthusiasm on the probability that their investment in this mine would make all of them more money than ever had been taken out of the Superstition mountains. But the day before, drillers working in the main tunnel had stopped suddenly before the rock wall they were penetrating. One of them, after consulting in some excitement with his fellows, called the foreman.

"What's up?" demanded the latter gruffly, when he reached the drill battery.

"Everything's up," responded the man bluntly. "It's all up with the mine and this outfit, and you and me, boss, right here."

The foreman showed his worry as he stood contemplating the fault. He drew from his pocket a book and hurriedly scratching a note on a blank leaf, handed it to a man and bidding him hurry with it turned again to the drillers to investigate. Seagru was returning from the bank when the mine messenger stopped him in the street of Las Vegas. "This Mr. Seagru?" he demanded.

Seagru nodded curtly. "What do you want?"

For answer the man handed him a soiled letter. Seagru, tearing open the envelope, read:

Dear Sir:

Can you come to the mine at once? Vein has pinched out in main workings.

S. ROE.

Seagru, startled at the last sentence, volleyed questions at the messenger. The man could confirm the intelligence of what he himself had seen before leaving the mine, and Seagru, telling him to hunt up Bill and bring him to the assay office in Main street, hurried back to the bank.

Bill reached the assay office almost as soon as his employer. Seagru directed him to go get the car, and as Bill left Seagru's assay expert, an old chum of his in Oceanside, came out of the inner office.

To him Seagru explained as hurriedly as possible what had happened. "Will you go right out with me to the mine?"

At the mine the foreman was still examining the walls. He showed Seagru the lost seam. The latter examined the spot carefully and turned to question the head driller. This man

pointed to the last spot at which they had got high-grade quartz.

The expert stooped and took up a handful of rock from the ground. Answering Seagru, in reply to a hopeful question, he shook his head. "I doubt very much," said he, after the two had canvassed the matter from all sides, "if it is possible to recover the vein."

At the entrance to the shaft Seagru dismissed his own two men and turned to the expert. They talked together a few moments. The mining man saw what was in Seagru's mind and was not surprised a moment later to hear him say, without further beating about the bush: "If I can get a bidder for the mine, I'll pay five thousand dollars for a good report on it."

Each understood the other as they left the scene together. And summoning his men, Bill and Lug, and getting into his motor car with the expert, Seagru drove away toward Las Vegas. The machine was stopped a little distance from Rhinelander's camp and Seagru on a scratch pad wrote a note to Amos Rhinelander. Giving this to Lug, he directed him to deliver it. He then told Bill to drive back to town.

Helen, cut to pieces over the disclosure of Spike's complicity in the death of her father, returned with Rhinelander and Storm to the construction camp. Storm offered such consolation as he could, but this was very little. And it was almost a relief to him when Rhinelander directed him to see about getting the men to work.

Rhinelander himself was watching the progress of the construction a little while later when Lug handed him Seagru's note.

Dear Rhinelander:

Without a cut-off we cannot operate the Superstition mine profitably. This would make a good investment for your company and I am giving you the first chance to bid for it.

Yours, SEAGRU.

Rhinelander, somewhat puzzled, read the note over two or three times. He dismissed Lug with the verbal message to Seagru that he would look into it and, calling Storm and Helen into conference, Rhinelander read

called in a couple of men and when Seagru asked Rhinelander if he would like to have it fired, and upon Rhinelander's assent, the party got into safety and the shot was discharged.

Coming out of their retreat, the different members of the group picked up specimens of the shattered ore and examined it.

"Certainly, Hyden," said Rhinelander in an undertone, "this looks good."

The expert was at hand with a handful of quartz. "That stuff," he said, showing it to the prospective buyer with an air of certainty, "will average two hundred dollars to the ton."

Helen and Storm consulted together, Seagru watching. In a moment he asked them and Rhinelander to follow him outside. Leaving the shaft, he took the three to the bag pile.

"These sacks," said he to Rhinelander, "contain high-grade ore, ready for shipment to the smelter. They are to be included in whatever deal I make with a buyer for the mine."

Rhinelander, Storm and Helen continued to discuss the purchase apart. They counted the number of bags. Rhinelander made an effort to roughly reckon the value of them. Seagru and the expert talking together the while some little distance away. A further conference with Seagru disclosed that the price he wanted for the mine was one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. After the usual bargaining, Rhinelander proposed to take the property, including the ore ready for the wagons, at one hundred and ten thousand dollars—twenty-five thousand dollars to be paid down. Seagru accepted, Rhinelander made out his check and the transaction was complete, Rhinelander only requesting that the foreman keep the men at work until he should have a chance to get started. This was asserted to and Storm was placed temporarily in charge of the mine.

While the negotiations had been taking shape, a freight train had pulled in a few miles distant at Valley station, where the crew set out an empty box car for loading. A teamster from the mine was summoned by the agent who handed him a note for the mine.

Jumped With a Cry of Defiance From the Top of the Car.

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"Do you suppose," asked Rhinelander, "that he means what he says?"

"It might be," ventured Helen, reflectively. "Certainly we know he is about defeated in his construction race. And if he's beaten on the railroad project, why shouldn't he want to get rid of his mining property?"

"The Superstition mine," observed Rhinelander, "has always been a good producer."

At the mine matters were being pushed rapidly forward for the selling campaign. Driving back with Bill and Lug, Seagru had summoned the foreman, bidden him dismiss the men and dispatched his own two worthies to the surface for bags of ore. In the meantime he and his foreman began to get the rock ready. Bill and Lug returned presently from the big pile, each of them bearing a sack of ore. Lug was sent for more, while the others deposited the rich quartz in readiness for Rhinelander's examination.

At the assay office in Las Vegas, Rhinelander, accompanied by Storm and Helen, was looking for the expert. Rhinelander held a brief conference with him, telling him what was wanted and asking whether he could accompany him on a trip to the Superstition mine. The expert raised some objection, professing other work on hand, but was finally induced to yield and Storm was sent to procure a motor car in which the party embarked on its return. The orders were to drive straight to the Superstition mine.

Seagru was almost ready for visitors. After an hour's hard work with his men, who had been distributing the sacks and rolling the ore in among the worthless rock, he directed them to get ready for a blasting. The foreman took a single charge and put Bill and Lug to work on it.

Seagru left the tunnel, the foreman remaining under his orders to hurry the shot. The moment Bill was ready, Lug got the dynamite, set the fuse and completed the preparations. Outside, Seagru, to his delight, saw Rhinelander and his party driving up. Greetings were exchanged, somewhat stiffly, after the recent encounter of the parties, but without dissension in the presence of the expert, and all started together for the tunnel.

With Rhinelander asking questions every few steps, the expert explained as they walked down the tunnel, the character of the formation and recited something of the history of the mine, with which he admitted he was familiar. It all sounded encouraging. By the time the group had reached the end of the main tunnel Bill and Lug had disappeared from sight. The foreman

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But Bill, the craftier of the pair, thought that by working quickly they still might make it. Between the siding and the main line were two cables used by the teamsters to switch cars with and they gave him an idea. Pointing to the cables on the ground, he outlined his suggestion to Lug: "There's one way to work it, Lug, and just one."

Lug, like another Watson, stared at his companion until he should hear more. "We must drop this car into the train," explained Bill. "Throw the ore out on the right of way as we run along and pick it up afterwards with the machine. See?"

Together they crossed over to where the train stood, pulled a pin in the middle of the swing and attached the longer of the cables securely between the two sections of the train thus cut in two. The second cable was attached to the hind end car of the first cut, and fastened to the partly loaded box car on the side track. The plot was hatched.

The conductor, deciding there was no use waiting longer for the box car, was making ready to go without it.

The head-end brakeman signalled the train to move, and the train moved off, the slack of the cable pulling the hind end car along.

The escaped guard,