

Whig's New Serial --- Pictures At Griffin's Theatre

THE RAILROAD AND THE GAME A Story of Mountain Railroad Life By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

Copyright 1915 by Frank H. Spearman
Novelized From the Moving Picture Play of the Same Name Produced by the Signal Film Corporation.

SYNOPSIS.

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 manhood, Helen saves Storm, a young womanhood, her father, and his friends Amos Rhinelander, financier, and Robert Seagru, promoter, from a threatened collision. Safebreakers employed by Seagru steal General Holmes' survey plans of the cut-off line for the Tidewater. Helen's estate badly involved by his death, Helen goes to work on the Tidewater. Seagru uses Spike to set fire to a powder train hauled by Storm's engine. Helen saves Storm from a horrible death. Helen recovers the survey plans from Seagru, and though they are taken from her, she finds an accidentally made proof of the survey blueprint. Storm, employed by Rhinelander, wins a fight with Seagru's men for possession of a consignment of railroad ties. Spike and his confederates safe-breakers steal Rhinelander's pay-roll money. Helen pursues and, with a police man's aid, captures two of them and recovers the money.

SEVENTH INSTALLMENT

"SPIKE'S AWAKENING"

Resolved to get completely away from the constant interruptions in his work, Amos Rhinelander replaced his burned camp with outfit cars and moved at once to the end of his construction work, now well advanced on the desert.

The new equipment was as complete as money and energy could suggest. And no sooner were the cars out on a spur at Baird—near the end of the new line—than linemen were busy making telegraphic connections for them with the Tidewater system. The moment the wiring was done Storm suggested the first message over the new line ought to go to Helen, who had now been transferred from Signal to Las Vegas, a division station below Baird. Rhinelander was pleased with the suggestion and Storm wrote out a telegram. The operator sounded Helen's call, and after a moment announced she was on the wire taking Storm's message. It read:

Rhinelander says contracts on Number Nineteen. Bring them up Sunday. Storm will meet train here and drive you over to camp.

Seagru, during this time, had already made counter-dispositions to meet Rhinelander's arrangements and had established a secondary headquarters at Las Vegas, where he controlled an icing concession.

Spike had been lagged in following Seagru up the line as directed, and the latter sent as many unpleasant messages as he could to Oceanside, where Spike was in retreat. But as Seagru's continuing summons grew more and more peremptory Spike was obliged to take notice and get under way for the desert himself.

Leaving Oceanside the night after a carousal, he woke next morning as the train was pulling into a desert town strange to his eyes. Somewhat muddled, anyway, and being unable to recognize his surroundings, he asked a fellow passenger the name of the place; but he forgot it the moment he

heard it. However, on scanning closely the appearance of the block of crude buildings facing the station, he reached the conclusion it would be a good place to supply at least one of his needs, and forthwith hastened from the coach to the nearest corner grocery. Once inside the place, his attention was held for a moment by a rambling discussion carried on by a group of early morning loafers. Spike, never happy outside a wrangle, struck unhesitatingly into the talk, which was concerning how loud Casino could sing, and dispersed practically every statement advanced by anybody. After prolonged loss of sleep in the city and with nerves none too amiable at best, now shattered by drink, he was in an exceptionally surly state, and before he knew it had a fist fight on his hands. The brawl was short. The three or four whom he had angered set on him together and, making a job of it, threw him bodily out on the sidewalk. One of the party proved Samaritan enough to follow him out and hand him his cap and a letter he had stuck inside it before leaving Oceanside to read at his leisure. After putting the note away he had forgotten all about it

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"I'm going west," declared Spike con fessedly.

"Turn around," suggested the brake man un sympathetically.

"Where's your ticket?" demanded the trainman roughly.

"Lost it," returned Spike, laconic ally.

The conductor, accompanied by a special agent, came along. Hearing the talk, he asked the trouble. The special agent, listening one moment and sizing up Spike's appearance, pulled him forward by the collar and declared if he ever caught him on the right of way again he would stick him on a rock pile for thirty days. Spike was incontinently hustled off the platform and the company detective got aboard satisfied. A moment later the train drew out. But Spike, watching his chance and making a run, had boarded the vestibule trap, which was down.

Awaiting further opportunity, he watched until the conductor passed through the corridor into the next coach. Then, opening the door, Spike climbed inside and seated himself without explanation or apology very comfortably in the observation coach. His daring move did not, however, escape the conductor's vigilance, an coming back presently to demand a ticket, the train guardian was disagree ably surprised to find that he again had the impudent tramp on his hands.

He once more summoned the special agent and a wrangle ensued. Spike declared the brakeman must have robbed him during the night of his ticket and what money he had. This assertion naturally failed of a sympa thetic reception, and as the train slowed on the desert for Helen's station, Spike was firmly escorted by three men through the door of the coach. Helen, when the train stopped, was at the express car signing for the registered package containing Rhine lander's right-of-way contracts. She took also the Christmas mail addressed to the camp.

Returning to the office, she saw the disturbance at the steps of the obser vation car, where Spike, vehemently protesting, was again about to be hustled off the right of way. Helen reached the group at the very crisis, for Spike's surliness, enhanced by his condition, had made him an ugly cus tomer to handle. The special agent, in point of fact, was about to knock him down and drag him out when Helen intervened to ask mercy for the wretched tramp.

"Where does he want to go?" asked Helen quickly of the conductor.

When he answered, "Up the road," and the circumstances were explained to her, she made a plea: "Let him stay on," she urged. "I will pay his fare to Baird."

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But Spike was serious and not to be shaken off. For the first time, as far as he could recall, in his life someone persistently injured by him had offered, with none but a kindly motive, to do him a good turn. "If I ever get a chance, miss, I'll pay you back. Stop a minute, won't you? Just a minute," Helen reluctantly paused. "You don't think I mean it?" muttered Spike. "I do. Thank you for your kindness." He shamefacedly held out his grimy hand. "Will you shake?"

Helen shrank back, but as he stepped respectfully toward her she hesitated to hurt his feelings. She gave him her hand for an instant and hurried, laughing, into the office.

Rounding the corner of the station, Spike ran into the station baggage man. "What town is this, mister?" he demanded.

"Vegas," answered the railroad man

shortly. A feeble grin overspread Spike's battered features.

Seagru had brought to the desert with him from his camp two rogues whose names had gradually been re duced by bad spelling and hard knocks to "Bill" and "Lug." The pair were in his rooms with him when he asked whether Spike had come on the pas senger train.

Bill was looking from the window at the moment and answered, "That looks like Spike down street, now."

In a few moments more Spike had found his way to the rendezvous. Seagru, impatient as always, demanded to know as soon as he entered the room what had kept him. Spike told his story, or at least such part of it as he deemed it wise to tell, and, turning the tables on Seagru, asked what was up. Seagru told him of the right-of way contracts expected the following day by Rhinelander.

"What of it?" demanded Spike.

"We must get them," announced Seagru, bluntly.

"Who's we?" inquired Spike, impu dently.

"You!" returned Seagru with as much insolence as he could throw into one word. Spike's sullenness angered him and he continued to explain, but in no very amiable tones: "It means the big end of the job for Rhinelander if those contracts reach him; whereas, if I get hold of them, we can tangle him up worse than ever."

Spike spoke up with a new and sud den energy: "You can't get those con tracts. The girl is taking them to Rhinelander tomorrow."

"How do you know that?"

"I saw the package in her hands, not ten minutes ago."

Seagru knit his brows for a mo ment. "I guess there's one way to get them," he said, looking hard at Spike and from him to the two lesser lights. "We'll have to get Helen."

"Then I can tell you," blazed Spike, "you don't get them." Seagru looked at his tool in amazement. "The man that vict's face darkened. "The man that harms that girl"—he raised his voice ominously—"reckons with me." He registered an oath with his threat. "I'll tear his head from his shoulders!"

"You fool," stammered Seagru. "No body means to hurt her. We'll carry her off and take the contracts from

her. When the thing blows over we'll let her go."

"Leave me out of the job," growled Spike bluntly.

Seagru sprang to his feet—he was a powerful man—and grappled with the convict. The two struggled. Not a word was spoken. Only the grunting and gasping of a life-and-death grapple, the slipping, gripping and scuffling of two enraged men, with Lug and Bill looking on, broke the silence of the room. Spike gradually bore his enemy backward and downward. Lug and Bill jumped in to help Seagru. Spike, shaking himself free from the three, whirled into a corner and caught up a chair. Lug jumped for a gun. Spike, with the strength of a giant, smashed the heavy chair across the table, shattering it to splinters and raising a piece of it as a club, sprang for the door. "I'll brain the one that lays a hand on me," he cried. "Stand back!"

Helen, next morning in her office, was getting ready to take the train.

Seagru overnight had outlined his scheme to his two men, and, directing them how to work, told them that after they had secured Helen he would pick them up with his automobile at Mile Post 149. With this understanding, he drove away in his car. The two men went to the train.

Had they been more alert as they walked down the street, they might have seen Spike lounging on a corner. Reaching the station, where the train had already arrived, they decided to make the hind end of the observa tion car. But as the train started a party of people came out on the obser vation platform, and the two men slunk around to the other side of the train.

As soon as they had got their bearings, Lug, taking a coil of rope that Bill had brought, threw it over the top of the car, where it caught and hung on one of the gas cocks. Test ing the rope carefully, the two be came satisfied it would hold and, one following the other, they climbed from below to the top of the train. When the train reached Arden station they were relieved to see the people at the end of the car leave, and when the train was once more under way and the station disappeared from view, Seagru's roadster appeared on the desert.

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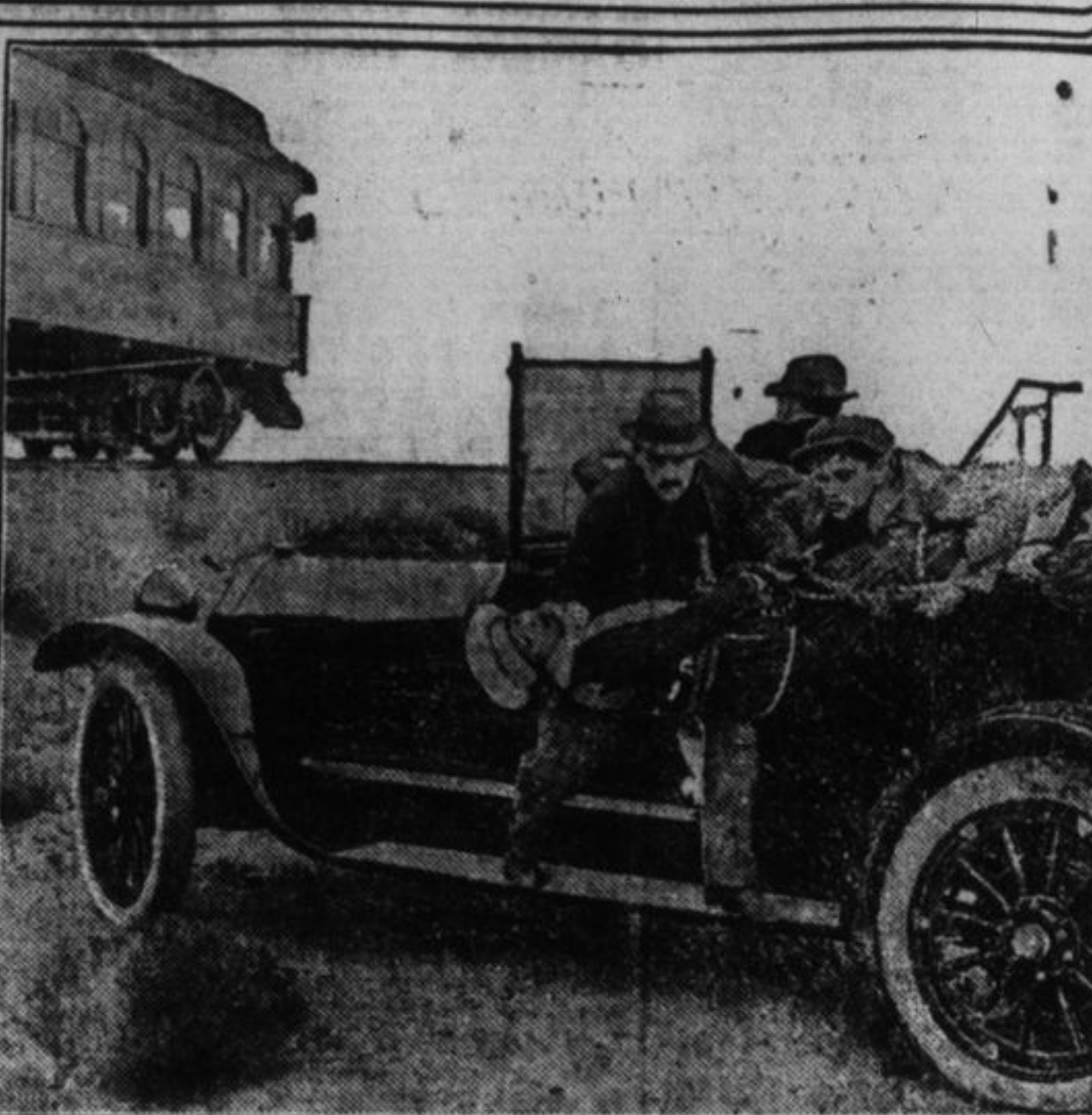
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Helen Was Transferred to the Machine.

He was not for an instant to be swerved from his purpose. "Get that whip," he shouted, pointing at Spike. "I'll look out for the girl."

Albert with the poor stomach, Lug and Bill attacked the powerful outlaw, Helen, looking distractedly for a weapon of defense, saw the explosive cylinders. A blow struck by Lug from behind had stunned Spike. He lay helpless and the three men turned to secure Helen. Stooping swiftly, she picked up a cylinder and stood at bay. "Come another foot and I'll smash this if it kills every one of us," she cried, reckless of consequence.

Lug and Bill halted in terror—they knew if she carried out her threat it meant death to them all. Seagru's was the harder nature. "Throw it if you dare," he cried, tauntingly. He knew she would not commit suicide.

"Together, boys," he shouted; "rush her."

"Seagru," cried a voice from the window behind Helen, "get back!" Storm had gained a hip of the roof commanding the room and thrusting his hand through the window covered the men inside with a revolver.

Helen laid her dangerous cylinder down. Storm handed her the pistol. "Keep them covered till I get in, Helen!"

The window proved difficult to negotiate. Storm tried to drop inside from it, and Helen turned to help him. In doing so, she left the three an instant uncovers. They sprang through the door and down the stairs. Lug and Bill made for the car. "No," shout ed Seagru, "hide."

Helen and Storm bent over Spike. He lay dazed. When he was able to help himself a little and with their aid could rise to his feet, they sup ported him downstairs.

Their enemies were nowhere to be seen. But in the roadway stood Seagru's machine. No member of the party had scruple about confiscating it. Spike and Storm, together, soon had the engine turning and they put Helen in on the seat where she had so lately lain helpless, and drove back with her to Rhinelander's camp, where they found him anxiously awaiting news of his endangered proteges.

He greeted the sight of Helen with rejoicing, but his features darkened when his eyes fell on the redoubtable Spike. Helen and Storm, enjoying the mystery of the situation, allowed the amazement on Rhinelander's face to grow, as he looked from them to Spike, and from Spike to Helen and Storm for an explanation.

"Yes," cried Helen, laughing at her foster uncle, "I know it looks strange, to see us three in friendly company, doesn't it? But we're friends—aren't we, Spike?"

Spike looked at her. "You're my friend, sure," he muttered.

Rhinelander, incredulous, pointed at Spike. "Have you brought him here to hang him?" he exclaimed. "If that fellow had anything to do with steal ing you from the train, I'll help pull the rope myself."

"No," cried Helen, whose eyes sparkled with the fun of the puzzle. "We didn't bring him here to hang him. We brought him here to eat the best Sunday dinner you ever served in a construction camp."

"You're to carve the roast for him yourself," interposed Storm.

"You've both gone crazy," declared Rhinelander, weakening.

"No," persisted Helen, "instead of Spike's being to blame for my disap pearance, I'm afraid I should never have lived to see you again. Uncle Amos, if he hadn't been my friend in need today." And she and Storm, each constantly breaking in on the other, told the day's story.

"By George!" cried Rhinelander, holding his hand ungrudgingly out to Spike. "I believe there's something decent in your worthless carcass after all. Spike. You are entitled to a good dinner. And you shall eat it with us, you blamed rascal. Go clean yourself up and report at my car within an hour," he said roughly. "By the way, Helen," he turned suddenly on his foster niece: "Those right-of-way con tracts?"

"Here, Uncle Amos," she exclaimed. She drew from her blouse the regis tered package. "But the Christmas mail for the camp was stolen by those brutes! It's lost."

"Not quite," interposed Storm, pull ing bunches of letters from each of his pockets. "I picked 'em up before we left the room."

"TO BE CONTINUED"

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