

# The Whig's Big Serial Story

## 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.

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### SYNOPSIS.

Little Helen Holmes, daughter of General Holmes, railroad man, is rescued from imminent danger on a scenic railroad by George Storm, a new boy from a young womanhood. Helen saves Storm, now a freeman, her father, and his friends. Amos Rhinelander, financier, and Robert Seagrue, promoter, from a threatened collision. Safetybreakers employed by Seagrue steal General Holmes' survey plans of the cut-off line for the Tidewater. Helen recovers the general and one of her father's estates badly involved by his death. Helen goes to work on the Tidewater. Helen recovers the general and one of her father's estates badly involved by his death. Helen goes to work on the Tidewater. Helen recovers the general and one of her father's estates badly involved by his death. Helen goes to work on the Tidewater.

### FIFTEENTH INSTALLMENT DRIVING THE LAST SPIKE

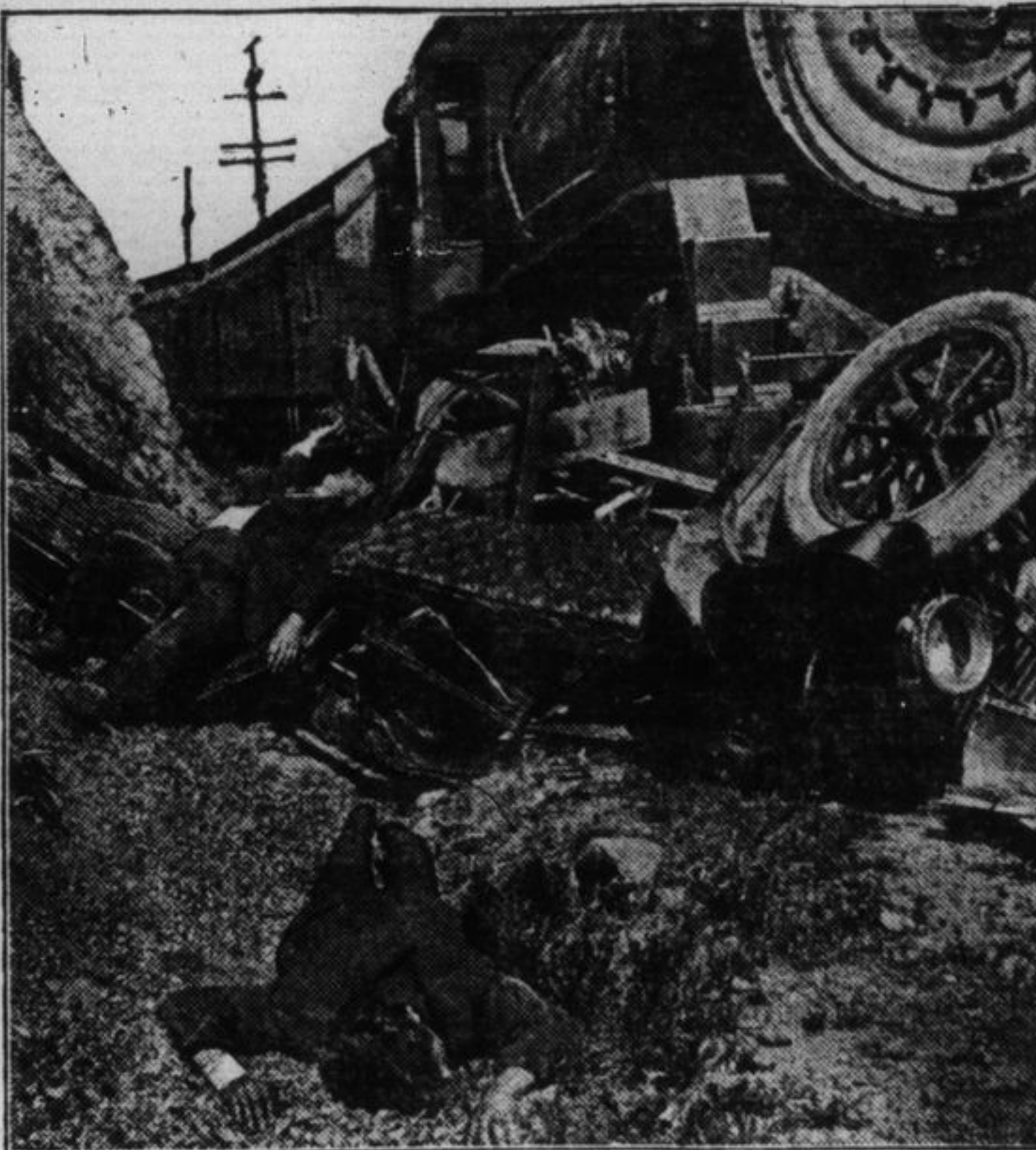
It was a week later that there were social activities again in Helen's home. Rhinelander had come down from the mountains with Storm to announce to Helen the completion of the Superstition cut-off, the cause of so much enmity and bitterness between the rival roads that had striven to achieve its successful building. Helen was making ready, when they arrived, to join her two friends, and all returned to the station to take the special train that was to carry them with a party up the line to celebrate the driving of the last spike—a responsibility that Rhinelander had assigned, over all her protests, to Helen herself. The train, gayly decorated, pulled in early and the party—roadmen, constructionists and personal friends of the builders—getting out on the platform at Signal, gave it for a moment an air of social gaiety. The stop was made only long enough to exchange greetings, and the party, enlarged by the Signal contingent, again boarded the train to continue the journey to the cut-off.

### CUT-OFF TO SUPERSTITION MINE

Helen Holmes to Drive Last Spike. At noon today Helen Holmes, daughter of the late General Holmes, assisted by Superintendent A. Rhinelander and Construction Engineer George Storm, will drive the spike that marks the completion of the Superstition cut-off. Seagrue read with anger. To his disordered mind, now victimized by drink, it seemed as if the celebration were intended to signalize his own defeat. In a furious mood, he struck the bell to summon Adams, his servant. When the latter appeared his master said curtly, "Bring Ward here at once," and turned to the decanter that had lately become his most intimate resource. The moment Ward came in with Adams, Seagrue picked up the newspaper. "Look at that," he said, without preliminary words. Ward read the headlines hastily. "You see what's going on," exclaimed Seagrue, laboring apparently under excitement. "I want you to get busy." He spoke the last words in a tone that left no doubt of his meaning. And Ward, old in ways of intrigue and crime, looked at him so understandingly that Seagrue had hardly need to add what he did: "This is my last chance," he muttered, viciously. "I want them both. Get them. I'll make you rich." Ward was quick to assent. He was quick to act, and after conferring hurriedly on details Seagrue started the two men out. In the street, Ward and Adams boarded a taxicab, gave their orders to the driver and were whirled rapidly out on the desert. At the cut-off, the roadmasters and officials of the operating department of the Tidewater line were waiting for the special. When it reached the scene a salute, arranged by an ingenious railroad man with dynamite, was fired from an adjoining hill. But from a second hill, across from where the improvised salute had noisily greeted the gay special, two men looked with unfriendly eyes down on the interesting ceremony. A golden spike had been provided for Helen. And the senior roadmaster, acting as

every place of concealment, came on. Their hurry, however, was too great, and the very place where they should have looked, they passed. Even before they were well out of the way, Spike had released his feet and gaining the track was running at full speed back to where Helen was waiting beside the Special with her friends. These latter saw a bareheaded man dashing down the track, waving his arms. "They've got Storm," exclaimed Spike. "They carried him off first, to throw him into an ore car. They meant to throw us both in. If they've thrown George into one of those cars, the minute it's loaded, he'll be killed!" Helen blanched. To threaten Storm's life was to touch her heart. "We must get aboard," she cried to those about her, "and run the train up to the mine without losing a minute. Hurry," she cried, "everybody!" Rhinelander hastened the excited guests into the cars, signaled the conductor, and the Special, swiftly gathering speed, started to catch the freight train at the mine. In the gondola into which he had been flung, Storm, pounded and shaken over the rough rail joints, gradually recovered consciousness. He knew he was in no danger until he should reach the deadly chute, for it was there that constituted his peril. Revolving rapidly in his mind the features of his situation, he felt the car rolling slowly and monotonously on until it seemed as if the train must have traversed twice the length of the switch—the track of which he was familiar with—and the farther he was pulled, the worse his predicament looked. The car rolled slower and slower. He knew well what the engineer was doing: pulling ahead to spot the last gondola under the chute. Storm saw, as the condemned man sees the blade of the guillotine poised above him, the chute itself come into sight. The next moment his own gondola drew under it and stopped. Helen, on the Special, had taken her place in the cab where she could urge the engineer to every burst of speed

feverman, too late for him to avert the disaster, if one were impending from his action—the chute was coming down. But at the instant the monster maw was opened and tons of heavy quartz shot into the gondola. Helen, outside the car, turned the dumping key and Storm dropped through the opened car bottom under the trestle. The ore at the same moment was pouring in at the top. When the young engineer returned to consciousness, Helen was raining tears and kisses on his upturned face. He lay under the trestle, freed from the cords that had so nearly caused his death, mine men and the guests of the day crowding around. He staggered to his feet and greeted his deliverer. "They had Spike, too," he said, speaking rapidly to Helen. "We must find him before he is smothered." There was no need for her to answer. Spike spoke for himself. "And what I want to do," he said with heat, "is to get that Special back to the bridge and get after the guy that roped me." The neighborhood was scoured for a found where their assailants. They found where the taxicab had stood in which Seagrue's pair had come up. But the two had long ago made their escape and were running back to town and to their employer. Hastening up the stairs, looking guiltily over their shoulders as if fearful of immediate apprehension for their crime, Ward and Adams burst into Seagrue's room. Seagrue was in waiting. "We got Storm," Ward began. "Good!" cried Seagrue. "Spike got away!" Seagrue struck his fist into his open hand. "I wanted that fellow worse than the other," he muttered between his teeth. For another moment he stood deep in thought. Then he turned savagely on Ward. "If Spike escaped, he will be at Helen's home. We will get him there." Ward nodded as coolly as if a further crime were a mere detail. "I'm going up there tonight," continued Seagrue, "and I must change for the evening now. Adams has two guns. Stop! There they are, on the table." Seagrue, a little later, came in dressed. His tools had made their preparations and were dislabeled with the injunction to eat their dinners before the murder was committed. When the special, on its return, reached Signal, those aboard were so



The Engine Struck the Limousine Squarely in the Middle

Then a reckless look crossed his face. He called up once more the old smile. "Not a thing," he insisted. "Nothing whatever. It's a little cold outside tonight. Perhaps," he added with a restless laugh, his eyes wandering over the gay faces all about, "some one's walking over my grave." "Oh," exclaimed his friend, "are you superstitious?" "No," returned Seagrue, almost fiercely, "only tired of the world and everything in it. Where is Helen?" "She's in the library," said his companion. "You're awful late. Let's go and find her." She would have led him into the library. He stopped on the threshold and refused to enter. He saw, as in a vision, what others—now that the room was filled with laughing men and women—did not see. He saw, midnight within it and his own accomplices in a death grapple with an old man. He saw that old man laid out a few moments later on a couch, a doctor bending anxiously over him to detect a heart beat. And he saw the surgeon's face as he looked up and gravely said: "General Holmes is dead!" Despite his reckless bravado, a shudder gripped him for an instant again. He shook it off and braced himself with angry resentment. "No," he said brusquely, "I won't go in there—too much of a crowd for me. I'll try the reception room." Turning, he encountered Rhinelander. The two men greeted each other briefly. Rhinelander spoke with kindness to his nephew. He tried to tell him that he wanted him to do differently. He assured him that neither he nor Helen cherished any lasting resentment for what they were before, and now that they meant to be generous to the losers and to him in special. "I am willing," declared Rhinelander, "and I think that Helen will stand with me in it, to give you an interest in the mine—it is big enough to make a dozen millionaires. Make a man of yourself, Earl, that's all we ask. We'll do the rest." Seagrue regarded him with an expression so terrible that it shocked Rhinelander, but what was passing through Seagrue's mind, he could not tell. "Tomorrow," Seagrue muttered, like one hardly in possession of his senses, "not tonight—I'll talk to you tomorrow. Where's Helen?" "She left here this moment for the conservatory with George Storm." Seagrue took a step forward, as if to go to her. Then he stopped and turned away. Someone took Rhinelander's attention, and he lost sight of his nephew, but the woman who had first spoken to Seagrue afterward related what she saw. Seagrue looked once more toward the library. He directed his steps toward it. On the threshold he halted abruptly again, as if rudely checked by an unseen hand. He looked about as if he saw and heard what others did not see and hear. Then, shaking himself loose from the seeming clutch of invisible fingers, he took a determined step, strode into the library as one who accepts a challenge, walked defiantly through the room and out of the French doors he himself had opened on a midnight to a murderer. He disappeared from sight in the shrubbery of the garden and walked some distance before he encountered those whom he had gone out to meet. Even the two hiding men saw the emotion under which he was laboring. He told them what he had seen, told them of Storm's escape, the thwarting of his plans, and with oaths gave them orders as to what to do and how to do it. He trembled with furious emphasis as he spoke on. "And when the coast is clear," he exclaimed, at last, "I'll drop my handkerchief." Turning on his heel, he left them. The two murderers looked uncertainly at each other. Something of his uneasiness communicated itself to them. In the conservatory, Helen and Storm were conversing with guests. The guests left the room as Seagrue came in and he returned, somewhat stiffly, the greeting of Helen and Storm. Storm, resolved now to be generous with his enemy, stepped to the punch bowl and filling glasses, crossed the conservatory with them to serve



"Part of the Agreement is That George Shall Finish This."

his machine was capable of. "One minute," she reminded him pathetically, and more than once, "may mean a life very dear to me. Do the very best you can, won't you?" she pleaded. Tense and collected under the strain, Helen, staring through the open cab window, had only eyes for the ore cars, which in another moment she felt stood in on the switch with the last gondola spotted for loading under the chute. What car had Storm been thrown into? The question racked her nerves and clutched at her heart. With Storm still struggling on the car floor, the forger of the ore plant, taking a fresh chew of tobacco, signaled: "Ope on!" A man below threw the lever and the jagged quartz rock tumbled with a roar into the chute. Storm, working to free himself, had heard the foreman's order, heard the deadly rush of the falling rock. It was only as the great chute—the one which he, himself, had helped to install and which worked with such fatal efficiency—slowly descended that he gave up hope. A cry outside, a woman's voice, hardly roused him from his stupor. But the next moment he felt a great shock. It seemed as if he were launched precipitately into space; the world was falling around him. Overhead, a mighty roar crashed on his hearing—consciousness left him. What had happened was that Helen, leaping from the gangway of the engine, almost before the Special's wheels ground by the brakes, fully stopped, had run swiftly up the switch track beside the gondola in which Storm lay. She had no means of knowing whether this car contained her lover. It was too late to signal the

happily over the fortunate outcome of the day that the evening festivities at Helen's home were looked forward to with pleasurable excitement. It was an open secret among her friends that this occasion was to signalize the public announcement of her engagement to George Storm. The evening assemblage was brilliant. Not alone with the guests of the day but a second special had come from the city bringing another car of friends and a procession of motor cars brought to the door guests from the neighboring estates. In the house, Helen, radiant in evening attire, was descending the stairs. Storm waited at the foot to meet her and after receiving her guests she left the scene for a few moments with her lover. The last among the laggards seemed to have arrived when a big limousine, turning in from the highway, was driven rapidly through the grounds and stopped in front of Helen's door. The car contained three men—Seagrue, Ward and Adams. "Wait in the garden," was Seagrue's command to his companions. "I will go in, look the field over and report in a few minutes." When Seagrue crossed Helen's threshold that night, a strange feeling came over him. An Occasional lady, an old acquaintance, was the first to extend greetings. She noticed the strained expression of his face and the ravages made on it by his recent dissipation. She was, indeed, shocked. "I haven't seen you for an age," she declared. "And you're not looking a bit well either. I can tell you. What's the matter?" she demanded. A shudder seemed to pass over him as she spoke. "Are you ill?" she asked with wide-open eyes.

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