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Only a Romance

By Luella Walt

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Miss Gussie Robertson had ridden out from the summer camp under the shadows of the Spanish peaks, Colorado, to do some sketching. A party of New York and Boston people were doing the camping out act in great shape. Miss Gussie was the daughter of Colonel Robertson, who was one of the party, and she was an artist of no mean ability. There was but one drawback to her complete happiness. Young Harry Caswell of Boston had imagined for a year past that he was very much in love with her. She didn't have any such feeling for him. She doubted if she ever would have, but she had joined the campers to have time to think it over and had arrived to find him very much in evidence.

It was 10 o'clock when Miss Gussie fastened her pony to a wild plum tree at the head of a gulch two miles from camp and made her way down it and alongside a brawling creek until the wall on her right rose up a full hundred feet in massive ruggedness. Then she found a comfortable seat on a rock and began to sketch the grim wall and the half dozen trees whose roots had found a foothold thereon. It was a quiet, solemn place, even with the brawling of the creek in her ears, and the girl worked for an hour, forgetful almost of where she was. Then there came a sudden and startling interruption.

While Miss Gussie was hitching her broncho to the plum tree and descending the gorge a man about thirty years old, neither good nor bad looking, but possessed of a fighting jaw, was routed out of his camp on the mountain trail above her ten miles away. Five men, all mounted, came upon him as he was saddling up and called upon him to surrender. He yelled back in defiance, and, taking cover, he stood them off for half an hour, wounding two and being himself grazed by a bullet. Then, as the survivors began to work around to his rear, the man mounted his broncho and fled down the trail at full speed. The three unwounded men pursued him, firing whenever the curving trail brought him into sight. The girl in the gorge heard the shooting and shouting, but could not locate the sounds. In her alarm she rose to her feet and was looking up and down, seeking to make out the situation, when a man and horse came over the top of the cliff above her and crashed into a tree fifty feet down. Thence they deflected into the top of a second tree, thirty feet lower, and as she gazed with wide open eyes the two bodies brought up in the creek almost at her feet. She heard the shouts of men and the clatter of horses' hoofs above, but both soon passed out of hearing.

The girl sprang from the rock and bent over the bodies in the creek. The horse was dead, but the rider lived. In a moment she had dragged him out of the creek, and as he came to he stared at her in stupid surprise. Sitting up after a moment, he dreamily asked:

"Did I come over the cliff there?"

"You did," was the answer, "and your horse lies dead in the creek. Those trees broke your fall."

"Much obliged to the trees. Did the sheriff's party keep on down the trail?"

"So the sheriff was after you?" she queried as she stepped back a pace.

"Yes, but give me a chance to tell my side of the story. I had a claim up on the mountain, and a hound of a man jumped it. I tried to shoot him out. That's the game in these parts, and there's nothing criminal about it. Don't be afraid of me. You belong to some camping out party, I suppose?"

"Yes, and I will ride back and get help for you."

"Don't do it. If you'll help me a bit I can get along here all right. Help me over against the wall. Thanks. Now, then, I'll want a blanket and some food, and I shall depend on you. You have the soul of an artist and therefore plenty of romance. We will stop at romance. It will be an incident for you to think of, and it will save me making long explanations to the sheriff. Shall it be as I say or will you leave me to make a dinner for the first bear that comes along? Don't take too much trouble, and keep thinking what a romantic incident it is. No love, no matrimony—just romance!"

There was something in the reckless nature of the man that appealed to Miss Gussie. She doubted that he had told her the truth about himself, but he was temporarily helpless, and she sympathized with him. She gave him her noonday lunch and rode away to camp, returning with a blanket and further provisions. She suggested the camp again, but the man made light of his shaking up and declared he was doing very well. Give him three or four days and he would be ready to go his way.

When the girl left the gorge on this occasion it was understood that she was not to return next day, but early next morning she stole a bottle of liniment from the medicine chest, bribed the cook to put up a luncheon for two and rode away for further sketching. She found the stranger stiff and lame, but more talkative than the day before. On this occasion she saw more romance in the affair. He was a fairly good looking man. He was a victim of injustice. He had passed through a great peril. He was what she had always hungered to behold—a hero.

Miss Gussie lingered for an hour and then left the things she had brought, taking her departure to reappear next day and the next and the next. In brief, her visits were made daily for the next seven days, and each day she saw that her bad man was making an improvement. On the last day she found him waiting at the plum trees. He had furbished himself up as best he could and looked more presentable. His lameness was about gone, and the saddle from his horse was on the ground beside him.

"My dear young lady," he began, "it goes without saying that my gratitude is unbounded. Did I promise not to make you a proposal of marriage?"

"I—I don't remember," prevaricated the girl as a red flush crossed her face.

"I think I did, and I will stick to my promise. It was to be romance and nothing beyond. No love, no matrimony—just romance. I might make an exception in your case, however."

"Please don't. That is—what are you doing with my saddle?"

"Removing it to make room for mine. There we have it. You see, I have got to borrow your horse. That will also be included in the romance."

"But I object. It is not my horse."

"Sorry, my dear girl, but I can't get away without him, and if I should be taken our little romance would be spoiled. For all your kindness I thank you, and should we meet again under different circumstances"—

Miss Gussie grabbed at the horse, but the bad man was too quick for her. He raised his hat and smiled as he rode away, and she sat down on a stone and cried. She was still crying when the sheriff and four men came galloping up and plunged down into the gorge. They were back in five minutes, and the official asked:

"Young woman, have you seen anything of a man around here this morning?"

"He rode off on my horse half an hour ago," replied the girl.

"So he lived through it?"

"But the men had no right to jump his claim when he was ill," said Miss Gussie in a spirited way.

"Jump his claim! Do you know who the feller is?"

"N-not exactly, but he was very nice. He had to take my horse to get away from you."

"Hear her talking. That feller is Bob Hill, the most notorious highway robber in four states. You must have nursed him up and helped him to vamoose, and I don't know but what I shall have to hold you as accessory."

That evening it was bright moonlight, and Miss Gussie was sitting well away from the camp watching the last rays of twilight fade into night. By and by young Mr. Caswell came over and took her hand and said:

"My dear Gussie, the fourth occasion has arrived. I know I am not to lick up your tracks in the dust, but"—

"You can consider that we are engaged," said the girl as she thought how mean it was of the stranger not to have made her at least a tiny proposal before he gobbled her horse and rode away—just enough of a proposal to enable her to brag about it among the other incidents of camping out.

A Maine Methuselah.

In a logging camp near Hulton, Me., a few years ago a man by the name of Peter Grimes was accidentally killed and his widow was left in rather poor circumstances.

Joseph Breed, a particular friend of the unfortunate man, being somewhat of a carpenter, decided to make Grimes' coffin and so cut down the funeral expenses. He told the widow of his intention and also of carving the name and age of her late husband on the lid, but he was rather worried when he found that the age was twenty-eight years.

"I am awful sorry, Mrs. Grimes," said Joe, "but I never could cut a figure 8."

"That's too bad," replied Mrs. Grimes; then as a happy thought came to her she asked him if he could cut a figure 7.

"Yes, I can cut a first rate figure 7."

"Well, then, why not cut four 7's? Everybody knows four 7's are twenty-eight."

So the following day Joe completed the coffin as she suggested.

The day of the funeral came and the late Rev. T. S. Black of Hulton was reading the service over the body and had arrived at that part where he was saying:

"Our dearly beloved brother, who departed this life at the age of"—

Here he glanced at the coffin lid for reference, and, his eyes lighting on Joe's row of four 7's, he gave a gasp and with a startled look in his eyes exclaimed:

"Good Lord, how did he ever miss the flood!"—Boston Herald.

Natural Enemies of the Quail.

Our quail have many natural enemies. They are often decimated by the severity of winter, and there are human beings so degraded and so lost to shame as to seek their destruction in ways most foul. A covey of quail will sometimes huddle as close together as possible in a circle, with their heads turned outward. I have heard of men who, discovering them in this situation, have fired upon them, killing every one at a single shot. There ought to be a law which would consign one guilty of this crime to prison for a comfortable term of years. A story is told of a man so stupidly unsportsmanlike that when he was interfered with as he raised his gun, apparently to shoot a quail running on the ground, he exclaimed with irritation, "I did not intend to shoot until it had stopped running!" This may be called innocent stupidity, but there is no place for such a man among sportsmen, and he is certainly out of place among quail.—Grover Cleveland's "Fishing and Shooting Sketches."

CAUGHT BY THE LEG

By James Larne

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Arthur Morrison, bachelor and clubman and, what is more, reputed to be always in funds, had heard his friend Johnson speak of his shore property a score of times without taking any particular interest in the matter. In a dim way he knew that it was down on Long Island; that it was on the shore of a body of water, presumably the sound; that Johnson was always kicking about the taxes and always abusing some one named Copeland, who owned property next to his domain, and that he himself hadn't the remotest idea of buying either shore or mountain property.

This was all before the great game of poker that will be talked about in the club for many years to come. There were but few members who didn't take a hand occasionally, but the play had seldom become exciting. On the occasion in question, when Morrison, Johnson and three others sat down, no one had any idea of what was coming. And what did come was all because of the extraordinary hands which the evening's play brought out. The deck seemed to be bewitched. Pat straights, flushes and full houses were as plentiful as pairs had been on other occasions.

By and by, when every player had a hand he could back for any reasonable sum, there was raising all along the line, and before three of them grudgingly dropped out and left Morrison and Johnson to fight it out between them there was a record pot on the table. When that had been raised to $2,000 Johnson put in his shore property and made it $10,000. He was raised $1,000 more. With that he put down four aces only to be beaten by a straight flush. Within three days the deeds of the property were in Morrison's hands.

In speaking of Dreamland, as Johnson had named his shore property, he had forgotten to mention one thing. The Copeland he had inveighed against was Colonel Copeland, a retired army officer, sixty years old, and a man very jealous of his rights. Having bought to the edge of the water, he fenced to the edge of the water. This raised a quarrel with the property owners on either side, and the fences had been repeatedly torn down and rebuilt, while the colonel had gone so far as to sit up nights with a shotgun to protect his vested rights. This summer, owing to the colonel's wife being in Europe, Dreamland was in the hands of a caretaker.

It was a month before Morrison went down to see his new property. He would not have gone then but for the letters he received from the caretaker. The latter stated that he had become afraid of his life and that he would flee the place if something was not done to protect him. Mr. Arthur Morrison was not a belligerent man, but he refused to be bulldozed. If Colonel Copeland, his neighbor, was carrying things with too high a hand he would drop down and let him understand that other Long Islanders had a few rights too. Morrison had heard of irascible old men with shotguns, and his belief was that all they needed was some one to talk right up to them.

He reached Dreamland one day just in time to prevent the caretaker from carrying out his project of hurried flight. And all this because in accordance with a standing order from Johnson, he had torn down the division fence, and Colonel Copeland had actually fired at him before proceeding to rebuild it. The injured man went on to give the old military hero such a reputation that Morrison was minded at first to return to New York and put the place in the hands of a real estate agent. But the caretaker urged that he assert his rights as a property owner, and, though it was with many misgivings, he started out to see about that shore fence.

The offending obstacle was nothing more or less than a rail fence that ran down through the scrub brush and over the sand to the edge of the water. It was all on the colonel's own property, and just why this old man should not have a dozen fences there if he wanted them was a puzzle to the newcomer. In fact, he thought it might be a good idea to fence his own shore and would have stopped at this but for the caretaker, who insisted that he climb the mooted fence and walk about on the colonel's land just to show him that he did not own the earth.

A man will do foolish things against his better judgment. Mr. Morrison did one on this occasion. He proceeded to climb the fence. As soon as his back was turned the caretaker made a retreat. If there was to be any shooting he did not want to be counted in.

When Mr. Morrison had hoisted himself to the top of the fence he sat there for a few minutes and surveyed the landscape. There was the same old Long Island sound; there were the same sand and brushes; there were the trees, and beyond the trees he knew was the site of the colonel's house. If the colonel had not told the caretaker that he would aim to kill at the next trespasser on his land Mr. Morrison would have continued to sit on the top rail of that fence until his back ached and then dropped back on his own side.

His spirit of defiance had been aroused, however, and he meant to walk at least a hundred steps and back. He made a move to get off the fence and fell forward. The next thing he knew his foot was caught between the rails, and he was hanging head downward, with a broken leg.

In firing on the caretaker, getting into a redhot temper and rebuilding the fence the colonel had taken a chill and was laid up in bed. He could no longer prowl along the shore to guard his vested rights. But he had a substitute, and he gave that substitute stern orders, commanding her to take the shotgun along and fire at any moving thing.

The substitute was his daughter Agnes. She was ruler of the colonel's house and the idol of his heart, and she had taken a more than ordinary interest in that shore fence question. She had announced, too, she was ready to perish in defense of her inalienable rights as heir to the property. This feeling was strong upon her as she donned her jaunty hat and walking skirt and headed for the beach that afternoon. If the fence was still erect, well and good. If it had been torn down again—

"Help, help, help!" were the words that reached the girl's ears as she made her way through the bushes, and the sounds startled her. Some one in tearing down that fence had come to grief. Should she play the good Samaritan? flashed through her mind. No, but she would take advantage of the occasion to give the offender a piece of her mind. Hastening forward, she soon came upon the spectacle of a well dressed stranger hanging head downward from the fence. He could touch the ground with his hands, but he had no power to release his leg.

While she was twenty feet away Miss Copeland made up her mind that the victim must be the new owner of Dreamland and that he had come down to make her father more trouble. She was almost sorry to observe that he was well dressed and in appearance a gentleman and that, though the blood had reddened his face until it had the color of a boiled lobster, he was nevertheless good looking. Mr. Morrison had ceased calling for help when he heard and caught sight of her, and as she approached nearer he politely observed:

"I have, as you see, met with an accident, and I hope it may not be asking too much of you to render me a little aid."

"What were you doing there?" demanded the girl, seeing only that his foot was caught.

"Well—I—er—I think I was admiring the landscape."

"I don't believe it. You were here to tear our fence down."

"I can hardly agree with you there. I should have merely taken a few steps on your land and then gone away."

"You wanted to defy us, did you? You wanted to show my father that you were not afraid of him?"

"If Colonel Copeland is your father, then you must be Miss Copeland," replied Mr. Morrison. "Excuse me, please, but if you will pick up my card-case I will introduce myself. The position is—er—somewhat embarrassing."

"I'm glad of it. You came to tear down the fence and make more trouble for poor old dad. You are caught in your own trap, and you can stay there for all of me. I'm going home."

"Perfectly natural feeling on your part, my dear young lady, and I must bow to the inevitable. I had no business here. If I am suffering it's all my fault."

"But I don't think you are suffering," she said as she turned back. "You've only caught your foot between the rails. If you call loud enough that man of yours will come and release you."

"Exactly. Don't let me detain you."

"But are you really suffering? If you are, why—why"—

"I am sure that I have broken my leg, and as for that man of mine, the coward seems to have deserted me. However"—

"Oh, that's different, of course. I thought, you know—I thought you were some one—not a gentleman—and that it served you right and that if you hung there for two hours it might do you good."

A panel of the fence was soon taken down and the foot released. Then Miss Copeland hurried home and returned with two men servants and a mattress. Mr. Morrison was removed to the Copeland house and a doctor sent for, the doughty colonel vowing and declaring that the patient should not be admitted. But he was, and his stay was prolonged for weeks.

After a few days the colonel could manage to bear with the situation. After a few more he asked after the patient. In a couple of weeks he spent at least two hours a day getting acquainted with the man who intended to trespass on his land. By and by there came a day when he was seized with a sudden idea, and he marched away to find his daughter Agnes.

"These things generally come out one way," was his blunt remark.

"Yes," she replied, with a blush.

"Well, don't let this come out that way," was his terse and only comment.

However, there are reasons for thinking that it did.

Short on Scripture.

Colonel John Cosgrove, afterward congressman, defending a client accused of some crime, in an eloquent climax shouted: "What does the state's attorney expect? Does he expect my client, like Daniel, to command the sun to stand still and have it obey?" Judge James W. Draffen, lawyer for the opposition, interrupted. "May it please your honor," he said, addressing the bench, "I object to Colonel Cosgrove's misquoting Scripture." "I beg pardon," blandly replied Colonel Cosgrove, "I forgot for the moment that it was not Daniel, but Solomon, who commanded the sun to stand still."

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IMPORTANT TO TRAVELERS.

Reduced Round Trip Excursion Rates To Pacific Coast in 1907.

During the summer season of 1907 reduced round trip excursion rates will be in effect from The East to the Pacific coast, Montana, British Columbia and Arizona points.

Rates from Chicago, via. direct lines to North Pacific coast points will be $75, and from Missouri river common points, Council bluffs to Kansas city inclusive, and St. Paul and Minneapolis, rates will be $60. St. Louis, Denver, Colorado springs and Pueblo $50. Rates to Spokane and points effected, will be $5 less than to the coast. Rates one way, via. California, will be $13.50 higher than those above mentioned. Tickets will be on sale daily, June 1st to Sept. 15th, with final return limit of October 31st.

Account of 23d International Ch Endeavor convention Seattle, July 10-15; Convention of Baptist YPU Spokane, July 4-7; Grand lodge of IOGT Seattle, July 16-22; rate of one lowest normal 1st class limited fare for round trip for direct routing with $12.50 additional one way through California, has been named to North Pacific coast points and Spokane from Chicago, St. Louis, Missouri river and Colorado points. Sale dates east of Colorado points, June 20th to July 12th, west, June 21st to July 13th, final return limit Sept. 15th.

Account National Eclectic Med. Association Long Beach, June 18-23, one lowest 1st class fare for the round trip has been authorized to Los Angeles and San Francisco with $12.50 additional for tickets routed one way, via. Portland. Sale dates, June 8th to 15, with final return limit August 21st.

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