

The Scarlet Runner

Vitagraph Company

From the Popular Novel of the same name
by C. N. and A. M. Williamson

Stars of This Episode

MR. EARLE WILLIAMS as CHRISTOPHER RACE
MISS EDITH STOREY as DOROTHY HERBERT

Next Week Another Story and New Picture

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CHAPTER XII.

The Car and the Girl.

Christopher and his uncle had just been to look at the cars that were to start next day to the great "freak race," as the coming event was popularly called, and for which Scarlet Runner was already entered at the Impudent relativity's request.

The Royal Automobile club, under whose auspices the races were to be run, had taken up a collection in big new garages to house the competitors, and ever since early morning, when the cars had begun to assemble and to put themselves on view, devotees of motoring had been pouring in and out.

Everyone was interested, for not only was a well-known millionaire offering a \$10,000 prize and several cups for the encouragement of originality among inventors, but most of the motors themselves were worth seeing.

As for the old man who held Christopher Race's destiny in his hands, he was not to be best against it.

"I wouldn't care to bet high on it," laughed Christopher. "There will be a monster, if you like, judging from what one hears. But it doesn't seem as if the gyroscopic would 'go tomorrow.'

"You mean because the thing isn't with the lot in the garage?"

"Yes, if it were ready it would be there, getting all the preliminary ad' that was to be got."

"You think old Dick Herbert won't run his car?"

"I should think it's premature to call it a car. My idea is that it's proved a big disappointment."

"I wonder. Poor old chap! It won't be the first he's had."

"He is a mere name to me," answered Christopher, "associated only with the failure of the compressed-air business; no, naturally I don't expect much now. And if he's old he may well funk tomorrow."

There was a sudden brisk movement at the next table, so brisk that it attracted Christopher's attention. The younger of the two ladies had twisted round in her chair, sitting with her arm flung over the back, her flushed face turned upon her surprised neighbor.

"He funks nothing," she said, in a low but intensely angry tone. "It's sheer jealousy which makes you talk like that. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. It's disgusting. To call your sneers at a brilliant inventor and his invention bad taste is to me, too."

"Dorothy!" protested handsome Madame du Guesclin, with her charming French accent. But the girl, flaming in beauty and rage, like a wind-blown poppy, would not listen.

"Beware of the monstrosity tomorrow," she went on, her voice quivering. "Like a monster, it may devours you and all your self-conceit. When you're swallowed up, when you're just simply nowhere, perhaps you'll be sorry for speaking as you have of a man like Richard Herbert behind his back."

Christopher was overwhelmed by the烈怒 of her wrath, and vexed as he was at having inadvertently given offence to such a young and vivacious creature, he was half-inclined to laugh in the midst of his astonishment, so extraordinary, so almost childish was her tirade.

"I am indeed sorry," he ventured, "to have unintentionally distressed you."

"You have not 'distressed' me," broke in the girl. "You wouldn't have the power to do that. You have annoyed me for I do hate jealousy and injustice, and I felt bound to protest—that's all."

"Allow me to say that I think you exaggerate my offense," pleaded Christopher, holding his hands.

"Nothing against Mr. Herbert or his invention, and would not have dreamed of doing so. If you can recall what I did say I believe you would have to admit that, as you proclaim yourself a friend of justice. But I don't ask you to admit anything. On the contrary, I apologize for my indiscretion in expressing any doubts whatever of any invention, without stopping to think that the absent inventor might have present friends." As he made this apology, worded with a sense of boyish malice, to which he was tempted by the girl's onslaught, Christopher's eyes twinkled a trifle, though the face was perfectly grave and expressive of regret. That twinkle was as the glint on the last drop of water in an overflowing cup. The girl gave him an indignant look from her great eyes, and, without deigning to bandy further recriminations, turned a well-shaped and slender back upon him.

He was thinking complimentary thoughts alike about the inventor, car and chauffeur when the masked young woman raised her voice to a tone loud enough for him to hear. "Yes," she said laughing, "we are the freakiest freaks of all. And I'm glad, for this is a race for new inventions, and the newest ought to win. I really don't see what that poor old, uninteresting red thing is doing in this galore, do you?"

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