

In the Play of Chance.

Frank Ballou sat looking out of one of the windows at the club, occasionally puffing at a cigar. He was wondering over several things, chief of which was the expression used by Colonel Draven while talking to him the evening before. He was much taken by the colonel's daughter, Helen, and felt his position keenly, when Helen's father had insinuated that he was a worthless dog, though those were not his exact words. He had been forbidden to see Helen again and he felt this more bitterly than the other.

He was trying to analyse himself and see wherein his worthlessness consisted. He was not particularly industrious to be sure, but did he not have enough money to make this unnecessary? He did not know of any young fellows who were industrious. Then he was not idle. Had he not traveled around the globe a half a dozen times in his yacht and hunted in Africa, and India, and the Rockies until he knew them all?

What was he to do? Helen had seen him since at a little picnic, and told him it would be all right after a while, for her father was just a little worried now about some stocks or something. Having finished his analysis and his cigar, he got up and stretching himself went out for a walk.

He had not been out for more than fifteen minutes when he caught sight of Helen ahead of him, and he hurried to catch up with her.

"Oh, Frank, do you know those Rosenbaum's have got father mixed up in some sort of a business affair and I heard him say that if he did not go to the wall he would get squeezed any way so he would barely get out. He never slept a bit last night. Only walked the floor, and walked and walked. I could hear him all night long. What did he mean by 'going to the wall' and getting 'squeezed'?"

"Oh," said Frank, laughing a little uneasily, "he doesn't mean anything—at least not much." And he began to plan with her an excursion down the river to take place in a week or so.

However, when he left her there was a frown on his face and he took a cigar from his pocket and chewed it vigorously. This was a habit of his when thinking hard. Suddenly he stood stock still for a full minute, and then ran into a bank near by. Something passed before he returned, but at last when he came out he was smiling, and he went away humming a song until he came to a confectioner's, where he ordered a box of Pegretti's chocolates to be delivered at Helen's.

All the evening he smiled to himself and was so cordial to others that one of his companions whispered to another that Frank must have patched the mat-

ter up with the colonel.

At 10 o'clock the next morning Frank sauntered along until he arrived at the colonel's office which he entered nonchalantly and seated himself, apparently not interested in what was going on. The colonel had greeted him with a scowl and the other gentlemen had raised their eyebrows inquiringly; but matters went on.

"I have business here," he had whispered, and was permitted to remain.

A gentleman whose looks indicated that he was the afore mentioned Rosenbaum, rose and smilingly announced that business was ready to proceed and that the matter of the Chilian Lode mine was in order. A gentleman who appeared to be a brother of the speaker arose and made a certain proposition, and then sat down smilingly.

Colonel Draven rose to his feet firmly, though a little pale. "If this is carried out it means ruin to me. I carry forty per cent of the stock. If you give me a month I can do it."

"The proposition will then be worthless," said he who had proposed it.

"Very well," said the colonel "I vote against it."

The other twelve or fourteen gentlemen smiled knowingly, and Frank Ballou, who was yawning, saw they mocked at the colonel.

The list was read, each recording his vote. The votes steadily piled up against the colonel until there was forty-eight per cent.

"There is scarcely any need to read this last name," said he who called the roll, "nothing whatever has been learned of him or his whereabouts. The name is Gerald Stanwick."

"I vote 'no,'" said Frank quickly, "with twelve per cent."

"Who are you?" said several together.

"Ballou, sir; purchaser of twelve per cent of stock in this mine. Here is a deed of sale with witnesses in abundance. I was down at Inadeira last summer yachting about and ran across Stanwick. He was hard up and sold me the stock."

"The proposition is lost," said the elder Rosenbaum, chairman, in a weak voice. The meeting stands adjourned if there is no objection, I believe."

Frank was making for the door when the colonel rushed to him and seized his hand.

"Come and take dinner with me this evening at the club."

"Can't do it," said Frank, "I have an engagement."

"Postpone it if you can," said the colonel.

"I can't do that," returned Frank smiling, "but perhaps you can be present. It is with Helen."

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