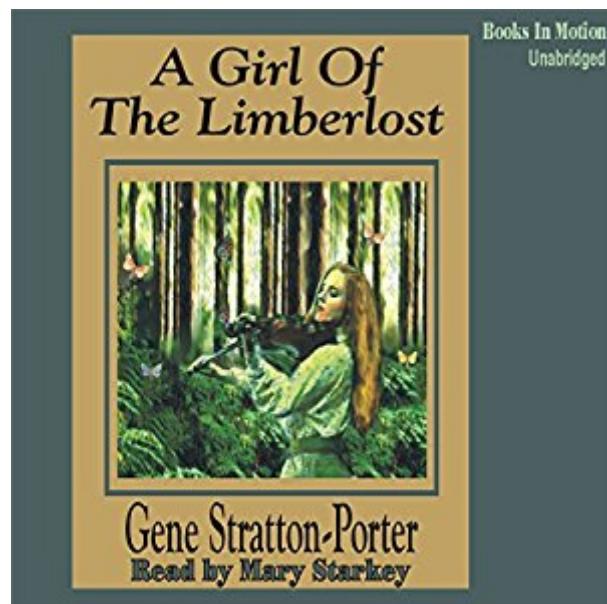


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# A Girl Of The Limberlost



## **Synopsis**

The scene is laid in the same country as that of "Freckles", which appeared a few years before. A number of the characters in "Freckles" are introduced here, and Elnora, the chief character, has the same deep love for the woods that possessed the boy Freckles. She has also become the proud owner of all his books on birds, insects, etc., and has tried to preserve the wonderful room he had made on the edge of the swamp. Elnora is a strong character, and although she has many things to contend with, she accomplishes what she has set out to do "namely, win for herself the education she craved. Through the money she received from the Bird Woman for the specimens she gathered and carried to the city she is able to pay her way through the High School and eventually is able to accept the position of Lecturer on Natural History in the city schools.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Elnora's mother holds a grudge! And, she just won't let go. Elnora does everything she can to please her mother, but try as she may--nothing works. Her mother just can't let go of the emotional pain of having lost her husband when Elnora was born. The child is just too much of a reminder of what she could have had in her life if he had lived. Life was hard in 1909. Money was tight. Even though Elnora's mother could sell some of the timber on the land (and be set for life) she refuses to do it. Again, it's that old nagging reminder of her husband and why they bought this place to build a life. It's a living memorial in her mind. She won't hand over a pittance to Elnora--not even for clothes to go to school. The plucky teenager won't let that stop her. She wants ever so much to go to school.

Her whole heart is wrapped up in that dream. The first day, her mother sends her off intentionally in clothes that look ridiculous on her. Of course, she is teased and ostracized from all the girls for looking silly in her old fashioned clothes and her clunky boots. Most girls would clam up and not go back to school. But, not Elnora! She is so determined to succeed. She is determined to find "some way" to make this work. And, that is when things begin to change in her family. From the time she was quite young, Elnora had been collecting butterflies and moths from the forested swamps around her house. The Limberlost had been her playground and refuge; and, she cultivated a wonderful love of nature that was quite unusual for girls of that time period. With a deep passion and ingenuity, she comes up with a plan to not only get the money for school, new clothes, and books, but also to mend her mother's broken heart. Why not follow Elnora to the Limberlost to find the healing magic of the woods and learn how one determined young girl lays the groundwork for her future and all those around her. If you love books like Little House on the Prairie, Little Women, Anne of Green Gables and Cheaper by the Dozen, you will certainly fall in love in the Limberlost.

Elnora Comstock, the plucky, resourceful heroine of this classic novel, first published in 1909, is a character who is still relevant and fascinating for today's readers. "A Girl of the Limberlost" was one of my favorite books as a girl, and it was one of my mother's and my grandmother's favorites. Like other timeless literary heroines who overcome great odds to achieve happiness (such as Anne of "Anne of Green Gables" and Jo of "Little Women"), Elnora is eternally fiesty, admirable and loveable. When the novel opens, Elnora is determined to attend the high school in a nearby township. Her neglectful, sometimes abusive mother, Katharine, is equally determined to discourage her and ruin her dreams. Elnora and Katharine live in a cabin on the edge of the great Limberlost swamp, a place of wonder and danger, located three miles from the township where Elnora wants to go to school. The hard, cold Katharine is haunted by the death of her husband on the very day Elnora was born. She blames her only child for the death of her beloved husband because her birth kept Katharine from having the strength to aid her husband when he was drowning in the swamp. On the first day of high school, Elnora's tacky clothes and inability to fit in with the snooty mean girls, along with the fact that she learns she will need an unexpected amount of money for books and tuition leads her to brief despair. But her own ingenuity, along with the help of a loving neighbor couple, Margaret and Wesley Sinton, solve some of Elnora's problems. I love the many intricate details in this book about Elnora's life in a rural early twentieth century world. For instance, the Sintons purchase clothing and accessories so that Elnora can fit in with her classmates. One article is a wonderful leather lunchbox which contains lidded dishes to hold small sandwiches, salad,

condiments, dessert, milk, utensils and a cloth napkin. The descriptions of the different foods which are used to fill this lunchbox, and how Elnora's lunches eventually play a part in her meeting some destitute children whom she ultimately aides, are just fascinating. Elnora is able to earn her way through school by her mastery of the natural world around her. She collects moths, butterflies, old Indian relics, bird's nests, specimens of tree leaves, flowers and grasses, and then either sells them or uses them to teach classes in natural history to grade school children. Her forays into the Limberlost, and what she finds there are described in loving detail. The characters in the book are also memorable. How Katharine Comstock comes to change her outlook on life, and learn some hard lessons about the importance of motherhood and the real character of her dead husband is told with great depth of feeling. But this is not a cloying or overly sentimental book. These characters are very real and hold up very well to a twenty-first century reader's more sophisticated tastes. Even the romance at the end of the novel, between Elnora and a handsome lawyer from Chicago, who are brought together by their love of the outdoors, is believable by today's standards. A deliciously malevolent and spoiled ex-fiancee who seeks to ruin Elnora's chance at true love is introduced, but all ends happily for everyone. I recommend this novel highly. Gene Stratton-Porter was an important, prolific writer, and if you like this book, you should seek some other titles, especially "Freckles". "Freckles" is the prequel to "A Girl of the Limberlost" and is also a wonderful story about a young man overcoming adversity and finding love. This review is for the Kindle edition of the novel, which contains the complete text and is available free for download to your Kindle, as the novel has entered public domain. The novel is also available in paperback and hardback editions, some of which contain copyrighted essays and criticism.

I was looking through the Kindle free books for older books that I had not read, when I discovered Gene Porter-Stratton and A Girl of the Limberlost. The sample reading intrigued me, so I ordered this book and after reading it, I downloaded other works by this author, such as Freckles, The Harvester, A Daughter of the Land. Obviously, if I hadn't liked the first book, I would not have continued to order others. I liked the style & the way the characters and story were presented. Each book held my attention. I felt drawn into the surroundings and could imagine as I read. I am happy to have introduced myself to these older books and their author. The author let me step back in time. Thank you Gene Porter-Stratton

How pleased I was to find the Kindle version of A Girl Of The Limberlost. The irony in reading of a time where automobiles and telegrams were enjoyed by the privileged, and doing so on a device

instead of a book does not escape me. In fact, hopes are high that other works of Gene Stratton Porter are available. Do yourself a favor, and start with *Freckles*. It makes the experience all the sweeter.

I must give this book five stars for nostalgia. Written over a century ago, it still moves me as it did when I read it in the 1950's, and 60's. I read it several times in my youth, and it was like visiting old friends. Elnora and her mother, aunt and uncle, Phillip, A glimpse of *Freckles* and his Swamp Angel, the Bird Lady who all give a helping hand. It might not hold the attention of most today, but I have enjoyed reading it again after all these years, and surprised at the impact it must have made on me to remember so much of it after fifty or so years. I might have to find '*Freckles*' to read too.

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