



# The MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY

By HAROLD MAC GRATH



## \$10,000 FOR ONE HUNDRED WORDS.

"The Million Dollar Mystery" story will run for twenty-two consecutive weeks in this paper. By an arrangement with the Thanhouser Film company it has been made possible not only to read the story in this paper but also to see it each week in the various moving picture theaters. For the solution of this mystery story \$10,000 will be given by the Thanhouser Film corporation.

### CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE CONTEST.

The prize of \$10,000 will be won by the man, woman, or child who writes the most acceptable solution of the mystery, from which the last two reels of motion picture drama will be made and the last two chapters of the story written by Harold MacGrath.

Solutions may be sent to the Thanhouser Film corporation at 5 South Wabash avenue, Chicago, Ill., or Thanhouser Film corporation, 71 West Twenty-third street, New York City, N. Y., any time up to midnight, Jan. 15, 1915. This allows several weeks after the last chapter has been published.

A board of three judges will determine which of the many solutions received is the most acceptable. The judges are to be Harold MacGrath, Lloyd Lonergan, and Miss Mae Tinee. The judgment of this

board will be absolute and final. Nothing of a literary nature will be considered in the decision, nor given any preference in the selection of the winner of the \$10,000 prize. The last two reels, which will give the most acceptable solution to the mystery, will be presented in the theaters having this feature as soon as it is possible to produce the same. The story corresponding to these motion pictures will appear in the newspapers coincidentally, or as soon after the appearance of the pictures as practicable. With the last two reels will be shown the pictures of the winner, his or her home, and other interesting features. It is understood that the newspapers, so far as practicable, in printing the last two chapters of the story by Harold MacGrath, will also show a picture of the successful contestant.

Solutions to the mystery must not be more than 100 words long. Here are some questions to be kept in mind in connection with the mystery as an aid to a solution:

- No. 1—What becomes of the millionaire?
- No. 2—What becomes of the \$10,000,000?
- No. 3—Whom does Florence marry?
- No. 4—What becomes of the Russian countess?

Nobody connected either directly or indirectly with "The Million Dollar Mystery" will be considered as a contestant.

### SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Stanley Hargrave, millionaire, after a miraculous escape from the den of the gang of brilliant thieves known as the Black Hundred, lives the life of a recluse for eighteen years. Hargrave accidentally meets Braine, leader of the Black Hundred. Knowing Braine will try to get him, he escapes from his own home by a balloon. Before escaping he writes a letter to the girls' school where eighteen years before he mysteriously left on the doorstep his baby daughter, Florence Gray. That day Hargrave also draws \$1,000,000 from the bank, but it is reported that this dropped into the sea when the balloon he escaped in was punctured.

Florence arrives from the girls' school. Countess Olga, Braine's companion, visits her and claims her as a relative. Two bogus detectives call, but their plot is foiled by Norton, a newspaper man.

After failing in their first attempt, the Black Hundred trap Florence. They ask her for money, but she escapes, again foiling them.

Norton and the countess call on Florence the next day, once more safe at home. The visitors having gone, Jones removes a section of flooring and from a cavity takes a box. Pursued by members of the Black Hundred, he rushes to the water front and succeeds in dropping the box into the sea.

Accomplices of Braine kidnap Florence and hurry her off to sea. She leaps overboard and is picked up in a dazed condition by fishermen. Braine, disguised as her father, takes her back to sea with him. Florence sets fire to the boat and is rescued by a ship on which Norton has been shanghaied.

Concealed above the rendezvous of the Black Hundred, a man learns of the recovery of the box from the sea by a sailor and of its subsequent return to the bottom of the sea, and he quickly communicates the fact to Jones. A duplicate box is planted and later secured by the band, but before its contents are examined the box mysteriously disappears.

Finding himself checkmated at every turn, Braine endeavors to crush the Hargrave household in the law in order to gain free access to the house. The timely discovery of the plot by Norton sets the police at the heels of the pack and results in a raid on the gang's rendezvous, which, however, proves to be barren of results.

Following a telephone message Jones received from a mysterious person whom he addressed as "sir," Florence is again lured from her home and taken out to sea. Through Norton's daring and skill as an aviator she is rescued and returns to her home in time to confront an agent of the Black Hundred.

course, was due to Norton's policy of keeping the affair out of the papers.

Following Jones' orders, they made friends with no one. Those about the hotel—especially the young men—when they made any advances were politely snubbed. Every night Florence would write to her good butler to report what had taken place during the day, and he was left to judge for himself if there was anything to arouse his suspicions. He, of course, believed the two were covertly guarded by the detective he had sent after them.

When Braine called upon Olga he found Lis doctor there.

"Well, what's the news?" he asked.

"I had better run down and inquire how

The doctor leaned forward and whispered a few words.

"Well, I'm hanged!" Braine laughed and slapped the doctor on the shoulder. "The simplest thing in the world. Mad dog wouldn't be in it. I always said that you had gray matter if you cared to exert yourself."

"Thanks," replied the doctor dryly. "I'll drop down there tomorrow, if you say so, ostensibly to see the other patient. It will make a decent of a disturbance."

"Not if you scare the hotel people."

"That is what I propose to do. They will not want such a thing known. It would scare every one away for the rest of the season. But of course this depends upon whether they

writer. From time to time he paused and teetered his chair and scowled over his pipe at the starlit night outside. Bang! would go his chair again, and clickity-click would sing the keys of the machine. The story he was writing was in the ordinary routine; the arrival of a great ocean liner with some political notables who were not adverse to denouncing the present administration. You will have noticed, no doubt, that some disgruntled politician is always denouncing the present administration, it matters not if it be Republican or Democratic. When you are out of a good job you are always prone to denounce. The yarn bored Norton because his thoughts were miles southward.

He completed the story, yanked out the final sheet, called for a copy boy, rose and sauntered over to the managing editor's door, before which he paused indecisively. The "old man" had been after him lately regarding the Hargrave story, and he doubted if his errand would prove successful.

However, he boldly opened the door and walked in.

"Humph!" said the "old man," twisting his cigar into the corner of his mouth. "Got that story?"

Norton sat down. "Yes, but I have not got it for print yet. Mr. Blair, when you gave me the Hargrave job you gave me carte blanche."

"I did," grimly. "But, on the other hand, I did not give you ten years to clear it up in."

"Have I ever fallen down on a good story?" quietly.

"M. can't remember," grudgingly.

"Well, if you'll have patience I'll not fall down on this one. It's the greatest criminal story I ever handled, but it's so big that it's going to take time."

"Gimme an outline."

"I have promised not to," with a grimace equal to the "old man's." "If a line of this story trickles out it will mean that every other paper will be moving around, and in the end will discover enough to spoil my end of it. I'll tell you this much: The most colossal band of thieves this country ever saw is at one end of the stick. And when I say that counterfeiting and politics and millions are all involved, you'll understand how big it is. This gang has city protection. We are run-

"I'm not looking for bonuses. I'm proud of my work. To get this story is all I want. That'll be enough. Thanks for the extension in time. Good-night."

So Florence received a long night letter in the morning.

And the doctor arrived at about the same time. And called promptly upon his patient. "Fine!" he said. "The sea air was just the thing. A doctor always likes to find his advice turning out well."

He glanced quizzically at Florence, who was the picture of glowing health. Suddenly he frowned anxiously.

"You need not look at me," she laughed. "I never felt better in all my life."

"Are you quite sure?" he asked gravely.

"Why, what in the world do you mean?"

He did not speak, but stepped forward and took her by the wrist, holding his watch in his other hand. He shook his head. He looked very solemn, indeed.

"What is it?" demanded Susan, with growing terror.

"Go to your own room immediately and remain there for the present," he ordered. "I must see Miss Hargrave alone."

He opened the door and Susan passed out bewilderedly. He returned to Florence, who was even more bewildered than her companion. The doctor began to ask her questions; how she slept, if she was thirsty, felt pains in her back. She answered all these questions vaguely. Not the slightest suspicion entered her head that she was being hoodwinked. Why should she entertain any suspicion? This doctor, who seemed kindly and benevolent, who had prescribed for Susan and benefited her, why should she doubt him?

"In heaven's name, tell me what is the matter?" she pleaded.

"Stay here for a little while and I'll be back. Under no circumstances leave your room till I return."

He paced out into the hall, to meet the frantic Susan.

"We must see the manager at once," he replied to her queries. "And we must be extremely quiet about it. There must be no excitement. You had better go to your room. You must not go into Miss Hargrave's. Tell me, where have you been? Have you been trying to do any charitable work among the poorer class?"

"Only once," admitted Susan, now on the verge of tears.

"Only once is sufficient. Come; we'll go and see the manager together."

They arrived at the desk, and the manager was summoned.

"I take it," began the doctor lowly, "that a contagious disease, if it became known among your guests, would create a good deal of disturbance?"

"Disturbance! Good heavens, man, it would ruin my business for the whole season!" exclaimed the astounded manager.

"I am sorry, but this young lady's companion has been stricken with smallpox!" The manager fell back against his desk, his jaw fallen. Susan turned as white as the marble top.

"The only way to avoid trouble is to have her conveyed immediately to some place where she can be treated properly. Not a word to any one now; absolute secrecy or a panic!" The manager was glad enough to agree.

"She is not dangerous at present, but it is only a matter of a few hours when the disease will become virulent. If you will place a porter before Miss Hargrave's door till I make arrangements to take her away, that will simplify matters."

Smallpox! Susan wandered aimlessly about, half out of her mind with terror. There was no help against such a dread disease. Her Florence, her pretty rosy cheeked Florence, disfigured for life . . .

"Miss Susan, where is Florence?"

Susan stopped abruptly and looked into the friendly eyes of Norton.

"O, Mr. Norton!" she gasped.

"What's the trouble?" instantly alert.

"Florence has the smallpox!"

"Impossible! Come with me."

But the porter, having had the strictest orders from the manager, refused to let them into Florence's room.

"Never mind, Susan. Come along." Out of earshot of the porter he said: "My room is directly above Florence's. We'll see what can be done. This smells of The Black Hundred a mile off. Smallpox! Only yesterday she wrote me that she never felt better. Have you wired Jones?"

"I never thought to!"

"Then I shall. Our old friends are at work again."

"But it's the same doctor who sent me down here!"

Norton frowned.

What followed all appeared in the reporter's story, as written three months later. He and Susan went up to his room, raised the flooring, cut through the ceiling, and with the fire escape rope dropped below. One glance at Florence's tear-stained face was enough for him. Norton's subsequent battle with the doctor and his accomplices made very interesting reading. Their escape from the hotel, their flight, their encounter with one of the gang in the road, and Florence's blunder into the bed of quicksand, gave a succession of thrills to the readers of the Blade.

And all this while the million accumulated dust, layer by layer. Perhaps an occasional hardy roach scrambled over the packets, not doubt attracted by the peculiar odor of the ink.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



"SMALLPOX!" EXCLAIMED THE DOCTOR.

the young lady is progressing," said the doctor, who was really a first rate surgeon and who had performed a number of skilled operations upon various members of the Black Hundred and their encounters with the police. "I've got Miss Florence where you want her. It's up to you now."

"She ought to be separated from her companion. We have left them alone for a whole week, so Jones will not worry particularly. A mighty curious thing has turned up. Before Hargrave's disappearance not a dozen persons could recollect what Jones looked like. He was rarely ever in sight. What do you suppose that signifies?"

"Don't ask me," shrugged the man of medicine. "I shouldn't worry over Jones."

"But we can't stir the old fool. We can't get him out of that house. I've tried to get that maid to put a little something in his coffee, but she stands off at that. She says that she did as she agreed in regard to Florence, but her agreement ended there. We have given the jade five thousand already and she is clamoring for the balance."

"Have you threatened her?" asked Olga.

Braine smiled a little. "My dear woman, it is fifty-fifty. While I have a hold on her, it is not quite so good as she has on me. We are not dealing with an ordinary servant we could threaten and scare. No, indeed; a shrewd little woman who desperately wanted money. And she will be paid; no getting out of it. She will not move another step, one way or the other, after she receives the balance. Hargrave will have a pretty steep bill to pay when the time comes."

"She has no idea where the million is?"

"If she had, she's quite capable of lugging it off all by herself," said Braine.

The doctor laughed.

"Olga," went on Braine, "you must look at it as I do: that it is still in the middle of the game, and we have neither lost nor won."

"How do you know that Hargrave may not have at his beck and call an organization quite as capable if not as large as ours?" suggested the physician.

"That is not possible," Braine declared without hesitation.

"Well, it begins to look that way to me. We've never made a move yet that hasn't been blocked."

"Pure luck each time, I tell you; the devil's own luck always at the critical moment, when everything seems to be in our hands. Now, we want Florence, and we've tried a hundred ways to accomplish this fact and failed. The question is, how to get her away from her companion?"

"Simple enough," said the doctor complacently.

"Out with it, if you have an idea!"



FLORENCE FALLS INTO A BED OF QUICKSAND

are honest or in the hotel business to make money."

Again Braine laughed. "Bring her back to New York alone, Esculapius, and a fat check is yours. Nothing could be simpler than an idea like this. It's a fact; no man can think of everything, and you've just proved it to me. I've tried to do a general's work without aids. Olga, does any one watch me come and go any more?"

"No; I've watched a dozen nights. The man has gone. Either he found out what he wanted or he gave up the job. To my mind he found out what he wanted."

"And what's that?"

"Heaven knows!" discouragedly.

"Come, doctor, suppose you and I go down to Daly's for a little turn at billiards?"

"Nothing would suit me better."

"All aboard, then! Good-night, Olga. Keep your hair on; I mean your own hair. We're going to win out, don't you worry. In all games the minute you begin to doubt you begin to lose."

That same night Norton sat at his desk, in his shirt sleeves, pounding away at his type-

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### CHAPTER XVI.

#### TREACHERY IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

THE maid stole into the house, wondering if she had been seen. She wanted to be loyal to this girl, but she was tired of the life; she wanted to be her own mistress, and the small fortune offered her would put her on the way to realize her ambition. What had she not seen and been of life since she joined the great detective's force! Lady's maid, cook, ship stewardess, flash woman, actress, clerk, and a dozen other employments. Her pay, until she secured some fat reward, was but twelve hundred the year; and here was five thousand in advance, with the promise of five thousand more the minute her work was done. And it was simple work, without any real harm toward Florence as far as she was concerned. The whole thing rested upon one difficulty: would Jones permit the girls to leave the house?

One day Florence found Susan sitting in a chair, her head in her hands.

"Why, Susan, what's the matter?" cried Florence.

"I don't know what is the matter, dear, but I haven't felt well for two or three days. I'm dizzy all the time. I can't read or sew or eat or sleep."

"Why didn't you tell me?" said Florence, reproachfully. She rang for the detective-maid.

"Ella, I don't know anything about doctors hereabouts."

"I know a good one, Miss Florence. Shall I send for him?"

"Do; Susan is ill."

Jones was not prepared for treachery in his own household; so when he heard that a doctor had been called to attend Susan he was without the least suspicion that he had been betrayed. More than this, there had been no occasion to summon a doctor in the seven years Mr. Hargrave had lived here. So Jones went about his petty household affairs without more thought upon the matter. The maid had been recommended to him as one of the shrewdest young women in the detective business.

The doctor arrived. He was a real doctor; no doubt of that. He investigated Susan's condition—brought about by a subtle though not dangerous poison—and instantly recommended the seashore. Susan was not used to being confined to the house; she was essentially an out of doors little body. The seashore would bring her about in no time. The doctor suggested Atlantic City because of its mildness throughout the year and its nearness to New York.

"I'm afraid she'll have to go alone," said Jones, gravely.