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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 Thinker 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 Thinker 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. The last two chapters of the story written by Harold MacGrath.

Solutions may be sent to the Thinker Film corporation at 5 South Wabash avenue, Chicago, Ill., or Thinker Film corporation, 71 West Twenty-third street, New York City, N. Y., any time up to midnight, Jan. 14, 1918. 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 Tines. 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 newspaper, 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. There 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 girl's school where eighteen years before he mysteriously left on the doorstep his baby daughter, Florence Gray. That day Hargrave also draws \$10,000,000 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 girl's school. Countess Olga, Braine's companion, visits her and claims her as a relative. The Black Hundred then see a means of making Florence a target for their attacks. They are after the \$10,000,000, and Braine, their leader, sets traps for Florence. The Black Hundred, after a number of attempts, fail, due to the wisdom of Jones, the Hargrave butler, and Norton, a newspaper man.

Concealed at 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 bank, but before its contents are examined the box mysteriously disappears.

Finding himself checkmated at every turn, Braine endeavors to smash 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.

The Black Hundred begin to fear Norton and plan to dispose of him. Again the unnoticed butler shows his hand by rescuing Norton and defeating Braine.

Braine and Countess Olga plan daring attempt to capture Florence and Norton at a masked ball given by Princess Parlova. They defeat their own plan by overanxiety.

By chance Florence discovers a cave used by the Black Hundred. Being seized by members of the band, she conceals herself and then learns of a mysterious paper which is of vital importance to her father's safety, and at great risk to herself secures the paper.

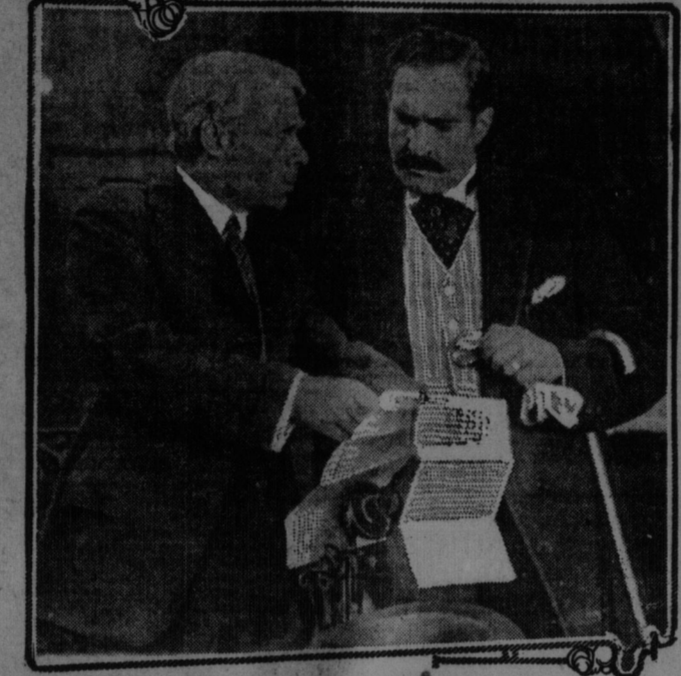
"And they will trace it back to you in a straight line," she warned. "I will not have it!"

"I can go elsewhere," he replied coldly. "You would leave me?"

"The moment you cross my will," emphatically.

It became her turn to pace. Torn between her love of the man and the danger which stared her in the face, she was for the time being distracted. All the time he watched her with malevolent curiosity, knowing that in the end she would succumb with his evil plans.

"Very well," she said finally. "But he heard 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 newspaper, 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.

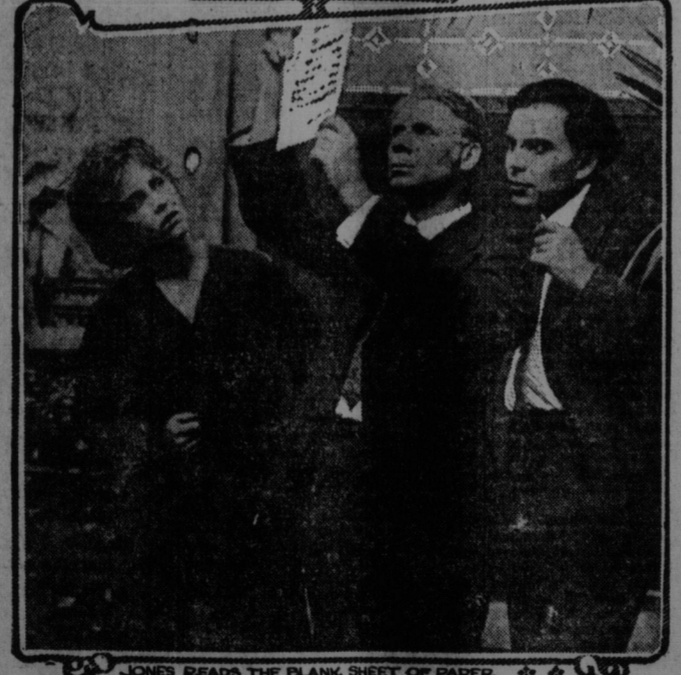


JONES AND HENRI SERVAN, RUSSIAN MINISTER OF POLICE, CONSIDERING TO TRAP BRAINE AND HIS ACCOMPLICES.

ten; we shall be found out. Never doubt that. Your revenge will cost us both our lives. I feel it."

"Bah! The law will have no hand in my end. I always carry a pellet; and that ring of yours would suffice a regiment. She will not die. She will merely become a kind of paralytic; the kind that can move a little but not enough; always wheeled about in a chair. I'll bring in the peaches; rosy and downy. One bite, after a given time, will do the trick. If they suspect and throw them out we have lost nothing but the peach. A trusted messenger will carry them to the Hargrave house. And then we'll sit down and wait."

Meantime, in the library of the Hargrave house, Florence and Jim were puzzling over



JONES READS THE BLANK SHEET OF PAPER.

the blank sheet of paper.

"I'll wager," said Jim, "the water washed all the writing away. The fire does not seem to do any good. We'll turn it over to Jones. Jones'll find a way to solve it. Trust him."

"What are you two chattering about?" asked Susan, who was arranging some flowers on the table.

"Secrets," said Jim, smiling.

"Humph!"

Susan pattered about for a few minutes longer, then crossed to the reception room, intending to go upstairs. At that moment the maid was admitting a messenger with a basket of fruit.

"For Miss Hargrave," said he. He gave the basket to the maid, touched his cap awkwardly, and swung on his heel, closing the door behind him. He was in a hurry to deliver another message.

"O, what lovely fruit!" cried Susan, pausing. "I'm going to steal one," she laughed. She selected a peach and began eating it on

Florence knelt beside her friend's bed and cried softly.

"You called me just in time. An hour later, nothing would have saved her. She would have been paralyzed for life."

"Who are you?"

"I am Hargrave's confidential man, sir." The two men eyed each other cautiously. "You speak Russian?"

"No. I am able to scribble a few words; that is all."

The Russian lit a cigarette and smoked leisurely. He was in no hurry.

"No, I am not the minister; but I am his accredited agent. I am empowered to bring back to Russia a man who is known here by the name of Braine, another by the name of Vron, and a woman who calls herself a countess and unfortunately is one. All I desire is some damaging proof against them that they are outlaws in this country. The rest will be simple."

"They have all three taken out naturalization papers?"

The Russian waved his hand airily. "Once they are in Russia those documents will never come to light. This man Braine, it has been learned, has long been in the pay of Prussia, and has given the general staff of that country many plans of our frontier fortifications. I do not know what any one of the three looks like. That is why I sought Hargrave."

"I will gladly point them out to you," said Jones, rubbing his hands together, a sign that he was greatly pleased.

"That will be very good of you, I'm sure," in a rumbling but perfectly legible English.

"And suddenly they all three will disappear?"

"Suddenly; and you may believe me that from that time on they'll be heard of never more."

"All this sounds extremely agreeable to me. Mr. Hargrave will be happy to hear that his long enforced hiding will soon come to an end."

"All you have to do, sir, is to point them out to me."

"It may take a week or ten days."

"My government has waited for ten years to gather in this delectable trio. A month, if you like."

"The sooner the better. I shall call this evening after dinner. We shall begin with Mr. Braine; and generally where he is the woman Vron will be the most difficult."

"After dinner, then, since you know some of his haunts. There is a reward."

Jones laughed shortly. "Keep it yourself, sir. Mr. Hargrave would willingly double whatever this reward is to eliminate these despicable creatures from his affairs."

"Thanks."

While this conversation was taking place Norton idled about; and feeling the cravings for a cigarette, prepared to roll one, only to find that he hadn't the "makings." So fate urged him to step into the nearest tobacconist's. He asked for his favorite brand and passed over the silver.

Braine and his companions saw Norton enter the shop. It agreed with their plans perfectly. The tobacconist happened to be afflicted with the order. So they hurried into the shop. Jim instantly realized that he was in a trap.

"How can I get out of here?" he whispered to the tobacconist.

The latter smiled. "I have to obey these gentlemen. I don't know what they want you for; but if I made a move to help you I should find my own throat cut without saving yours."

"Tee devil!"

Jim made a dash for the rear door, to find it locked. Even as he fumbled with the key, Braine and his companions flung themselves upon the reporter and overpowered him.

"Ah, my friend Braine!" he said.

"My friend Norton!" jeered the victor.

"And what do you want; some peaches?"

"A paper, my friend, a little sheet of paper with invisible writing on it. We promise to give you something in exchange for it."

"What?" asked Jim with as much nonchalance as he could assume.

"Life."

"Search," said Jim. "You won't object to my smoking?" He began to roll a cigarette while they passed over him. He struck a match; the pleasant aroma of tobacco floated about his head.

"He's got it on him somewhere. I saw him take it. He's got his nerve with him."

The cigarette glowed. Jim smoked hurriedly.

Through every pocket they went. The contents of his wallet lay scattered at his feet; his watch dangled from the chain. The cigarette grew shorter and shorter. Suddenly one of the men stretched out a hand and whisked the cigarette from Jim's lips. He threw it to the floor and stamped out the coal.

"I thought so!" he exclaimed, holding out the scrap of burnt paper towards Braine.

The words "Dear Hargrave" were all that remained of the message. With a snarl of rage Braine whipped out his revolver.

"I will give you one minute to tell me what that paper contained."

"And after that minute is up?"

"A bullet in your stomach."

Quick as a flash Jim's hand shot out, caught the loosely held revolver, gave it a wrench, and brought it down savagely upon Braine's head. Then he reversed it and backed toward the front entrance.

"Au revoir, till we meet again, gentlemen!"

The Russian was standing by a window

"What's this?" inquired Florence, as the maid held out the basket. She selected a peach and was about to set her white teeth into it when Jim interposed.

"Wait a moment, dear," Florence lowered the peach. Jim turned to the maid.

"Who sent it?"

"I don't know, sir. A messenger brought it, saying it was for Miss Hargrave."

"Let me see if there is a card," but Jim searched in vain for the card of the donor. At once all his suspicions arose. "Don't touch them. Better let the maid throw them

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