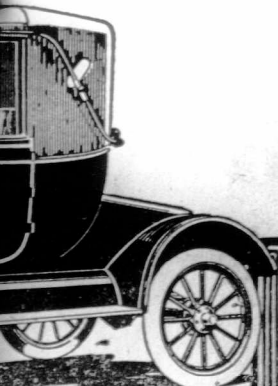


find his first story in the
y issue of Nobody's Maga-
His name's Vernon Proctor,
k for—

tor sprang to his feet, send-
s chair crashing against the
"Vernon Proctor!" he cried,
you say Vernon Proctor!"

Then, recovering, he nod-
affirmatively. "You don't
that you know him, do you?"
ed eagerly. "He's tall and
and has the lightest hair I
aw on any man in my life.
old men, by the way, that
his home town—"

ector reached out his hand.
he gasped, "why, old
he's my brother!"
ector had his Christmas story!



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THE DIAMOND from the SKY

By Roy L. McCardell

\$10,000 for 1,000 Words or Less

for an idea for a Sequel to

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Send all suggestions to THE AMERICAN FILM COMPANY (Inc.), 6227
BROADWAY, CHICAGO, ILL.

SYNOPSIS OF "THE DIAMOND FROM THE SKY."

A diamond that fell in a meteor centuries ago
belongs to the side branch of the Stanley family in
Virginia. This diamond goes with the title to the
Stanley baron in England, that now comes to the
Virginia Stanleys. To cheat a later claimant of both
the diamond and the title, the Stanley baron, bought
down its natural father, for the little daughter born
to him. His young wife dies, the colored gypsy
mother returns and takes in revenge the Stanley
girl baby, reared in secret, and rears the child as
her own. The gypsy's son grows up to a reckless
wastrel and becomes great friends with Blair Stanley,
who is rightful heir. Blair is reckless and desperate
and hates Arthur, but dissembles. Arthur strangely
learns he is only a gypsy changing and does well
under the assumed name of John Powell, taking the
blame of a murder Blair has committed—Blair telling
Arthur it was not murder but an accident—Arthur be-
lieving he has wronged and cheated Blair. But Arthur
does not tell Blair he is the false heir and Blair the
rightful one. The diamond from the sky passes from
hand to hand, sought for its value by many, and it
causes tragedies. In California Arthur becomes a
millionaire and is surrounded by enemies who seek his
wealth. He is injured in an accident, and these enemies
make a drug deed of him. Esther, supposed to be
only a gypsy girl, learns she is really Esther Stanley,
and comes to California seeking Arthur, whom she
loves. Vivian Marston, an adventuresome, secretly mar-
ried to Blair, together with Durand and De Vaux,
heads of a diamond gang, and Blair Stanley, plot to
keep Esther from Arthur. Blair takes charge of Ar-
thur's great business affairs, while Durand, De Vaux,
and Vivian lead "John Powell," the mad millionaire,
—as Arthur is known to wider disquisitions, the
whole plot being to ruin Arthur morally, financially,
and physically. Blair seeks Arthur's wealth and chil-

matly his death, that he (Blair) may gain the di-
amond from the sky and the earldom. Vivian also de-
sires the diamond, as do Durand and De Vaux. Blair
doublecrosses his former gypsy accomplice, Luke
Lorell, and redeems him to prison. Esther is married
at Arthur's strange contrivance—for the plotter convinces
their drug victim he is going insane, and that sym-
ptoms of this are his hallucinations. Blair, who
loves Esther, Esther's foster mother, is but slowly
recovering from a blow that Blair dealt her, which
rendered her temporarily deranged. Meanwhile, Esther's
devoted friends, Quabba, a sunback, and Marmaduke
Smythe, an English lawyer seeking the heir to the
Stanley earldom, are her only friends. Esther
learns Arthur is addicted to drugs, and in disgust
spurns him, understanding at last the cause of his
strange behavior. She casts aside the diamond from
the sky he proffers. Luke escapes from prison and
seizes the diamond. Luke sends the diamond to
Esther and Hagar in Virginia and they return it by
express, with a prayer, to Arthur. Disheartened at
the treachery of Blair and Vivian and the sorrow he
has caused his gypsy mother and the devoted Esther,
he resolves to kill himself. But Luke Lorell, break-
ing in upon him, drinks the poison and being further
disgusted while attired in Arthur's apparel, etc., his
body is supposed to be Arthur's, or rather, "John
Powell's." Arthur escapes in an aeroplane, finds
Esther, receives his dying mother's blessing, and
shakes off his drug addiction. Arthur marries Esther,
and lives with her happily among the gypsies. Arthur
Stanley, alias "John Powell," thought to be dead
and buried in the body of the disgraced Luke Lorell,
Blair gains all the supposed dead man's wealth and
goes to England with the Diamond from the Sky and
claims the Stanley Earldom. Vivian accompanying
him as Lady Stanley.

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CHAPTER XXX.

BLAIR STANLEY, who had been dealt his
blow, stood before the door of the
Stanley House, while within they could
hear the shrieks of Lady Vivian re-
sounding through the corridors. The
Tudor mansion, Smythe, keener than the
servants, though not renowned for quick-
ness of wit, sensed that some murderous in-
truder, cause of the commotion within, had
barred the great door.

The lawyer ran around to the back of the
house just in time to see De Vaux, who had
shed the armor he had concealed himself
in, jump through the old Gothic window
from the stair landing, the window turning
back and snapping shut again.

Charging swiftly down upon the to him
unknown intruder the lanky man of law
made a perfect low tackle, although he was
no exponent of football. In any case, he
grabbed the hastening De Vaux below the
knees, and down went thief and barrister.

The diamond from the sky, which De
Vaux still clutched, flew from his hand at
the impact and, curving through the air,
dropped unnoticed into the upturned hat
that had fallen upon the ground from the
lawyer's pate.

Meanwhile Vivian in her coronation robes
was bending over the stricken form of Blair
in his court dress and peer's attire. In-
stinctively Vivian realized what had hap-
pened; she hardly needed to place her hand
upon the breast of Blair—the diamond from
the sky was gone!

The lackey who had been carrying out
the tea tray from her boudoir when the
sound of Blair's fall in the hallway below
and the clanking down of the discarded
armor told some tragedy had befallen the
American earl, ran to the door past his
countess and the bleeding earl prone in the
hallway. With trembling fingers the foot-
man threw back the door and his fright-
ened fellow servants, shoving and beating
outside the door, fell in almost upon their
noble master.

Blair by this time was recovering from

the dreadful blow that had been dealt him
by the mad figure with the battle mace.
The blood trickled down his ghastly face
and empudded and smeared the snowy shirt
front of his court attire and stained the
ermine of his coronation robes.

With a sickening pang at her heart
Vivian realized there would be no pomp and
ceremony for Blair, Earl of Stanley, and
Vivian, his fair countess, to grace this day.
George, king of Great Britain, emperor of
India, and ruler of dominions beyond the
sea, would be crowned today surrounded by
the nobles of his realm, but the American
Earl of Stanley and his lady would not be
there.

Something of this must have passed
through Blair's dulled, aching conscious-
ness. "Stop him! He struck me down! The
diamond is gone!" He gasped and fumbled
at his blood stained tunic as he spoke.

The Gothic window had closed back in
place. Seemingly the armored assailant had
vanished as if by magic, only the heap of
old mail accouterments and helmet on the
floor told how the murderous intruder had
hidden. The servants stood open mouthed
and helpless, as Blair rose to his feet, as-
sisted by Vivian, and then he roused to
drive them out by his fierce commands and
curses.

The struggle at the back of the house
was strenuous but brief. The doughty law-
yer was no match for the younger and more
muscular De Vaux. Throwing Smythe aside
and striking and kicking him viciously, De
Vaux sprang to his feet and made off just
as the servants, followed by the earl and
his lady, came around upon the scene.

Suspicious and ever distrustful of Smythe,
Blair refused to believe the lawyer had at-
tempted to stay the mysterious assailant
who had struck him down and borne away
the diamond. Forgetting his grievous
wound and the blood that trickled down his
livid face, Blair screamed hoarsely in his
wild frenzy of anger and chagrin. "Pack
your things!" he shrieked. "You were in
the plot, you were an accomplice, and I'll
have your life for it!"

"Pack up your things and get!" said
Blair. "Your own things and nothing but
your own things, remember!"

Smythe answered dutifully, but crisply,
"As your lordship wishes," and picked up
the parchment of the Harding gypsy genesis
from the floor. His bags were already
packed, and he now shouldered the gun he
had carried in the wilds of America and was
turning to remove the deer head—the cher-
ished souvenir of his second visit to the
Yankee jungles—when Blair's exclamation,
"Leave that alone!" caused him to wheel
around startled.

The gun went off, pointed back over
Smythe's shoulder and the heavy charge of
shot struck the deer head far between the
eyes. The impact loosened whatever bound



A JOYOUS GYPSY FESTIVAL

Vivian paled, a chill went through her
being. "Come, come!" she whispered
tensely. "Come, dear, let us go into the
house; you are badly hurt and the diamond
is gone. Never mind, we will recover it!
Everything will be all right; yes, every-
thing will be all right!" And for the first
time in her wicked life that pity which is
akin to love filled her heart with a deep
affection. After all, wicked as he was,
Blair was a man who had fought his way,
unscrupulously and desperately, it is true,
but he had fought and never whimpered
and for her! And in this ill hour preceding
more evil days to come Vivian felt a wild
affection for the stricken man beside her
which was never to falter nor weaken.

In far away Virginia there is love and
happiness, increased and greater, in the joy-
ous hearts of Esther and Arthur in the
sweet, dear year that has passed. At the
gypsy rendezvous, unveiled by the outside
world, Arthur and Esther, man and wife,
have seen the happy year aped by and in
its course bring them their hearts' desire—
a child.

Again a joyous gypsy festival, the christ-
ening of the little gypsy prince. Again the
stranger minister, who was brought to
officiate at their wedding from distant Rich-
mond, comes. This time there is no such
wild revelry as at the masquerade which
so amazed and interested the good
man. But once again the gypsy musicians
play and once again Quabba is drunk with
joy.

At the hillside fountain that gushes in a
crystal stream into the hollow trough that
is nature's own christening font the minis-
ter from Richmond dips his fingers and
sprinkles the son of Esther and Arthur and
says: "I christen thee Arthur Stanley
Harding!"

Then after the christening feast and the
strange gypsy rites by which a man child is
taken into the tribe, the person departed,
contentive and at ease, he has brought proper
strange gypsies are these who are ruled in
love and kindness by a young king and
queen bearing every evidence in speech and
action of education and refinement. But
that is their secret, and the good man re-
spectfully and goes as he has come and says
no word to any one, as he has pledged him-
self to do.

The pursuit of the murderous thief
had halted and when Blair had been helped
back to his chambers in Stanley House,
the still bewildered Smythe, dully smart-
ing under the unjust accusation of
Blair, had retired to his room and, as he
sentimentally had placed it upon his
head. He winced as he felt a sharp,
heavy object fall down within the crown
and rap him smartly on the skull. He
scratched his head and then in mild sur-
prise felt his fingers entangled in a jeweled
chain. He drew it down and gazed at it
dismayed.

"My word," he said, "if it isn't the bally
old diamond from the sky!"

Stupid, as Blair might think, yet wise as
the serpent, as Blair might also think,
Marmaduke Smythe took the great jewel
and placed it carefully in the inside breast
pocket of his frock coat and then buttoned
that most respectable garment tightly
around his attenuated form.

One afternoon a few days later when
Smythe returned to his room, half bed cham-
ber, half old library and office, quarters
sacred to him as family solicitor of the
earls of Stanley for over thirty years, he
found the present earl busied among the
papers and documents in his files and read
on his desk. The curious old parchment
Hagar had given him—the gypsy family
tree of the Hardings—had been tossed upon
the floor contemptuously by Blair, who re-
garded it as some personal old trumpery of
Smythe's.

"Pack up your things and get!" said
Blair. "Your own things and nothing but
your own things, remember!"

Smythe answered dutifully, but crisply,
"As your lordship wishes," and picked up
the parchment of the Harding gypsy genesis
from the floor. His bags were already
packed, and he now shouldered the gun he
had carried in the wilds of America and was
turning to remove the deer head—the cher-
ished souvenir of his second visit to the
Yankee jungles—when Blair's exclamation,
"Leave that alone!" caused him to wheel
around startled.

The gun went off, pointed back over
Smythe's shoulder and the heavy charge of
shot struck the deer head far between the
eyes. The impact loosened whatever bound

the deer head to the wooden mount. The
deer head dropped forward, held at the
lower part of the neck to the mount as
though by a hinge. A little puff of dust
marked the breakaway, and then from
within the hollow neck a little package of
yellow parchment, bound with faded tape,
fell to the floor.

Smythe picked it up and saw it was an-
notated in ancient, angular handwriting,
the ink faded to rust color by age. The
lawyer's eyes opened wide as he scanned the
faded markings.

"Herewith the Marriage Lines Of My
First Wife Rachel Harding, A Gypsy
Mayday, Who Bore Me A Son, But Left Me
In Dudgeon And Grief Of My Name Re-
turning To Her Own People With The
Child, Nor Would She See Me More."

(Signed) ARTHUR STANLEY.

"The King's Province of Virginia, Novem-
ber 6, 1625 A. D."

"What was that? Hand it here!" snarled
the American earl.

The mild mannered Marmaduke was
roused to revolt. "If I jolly well will do
nothing of the sort!" he retorted. "I
bought that deer head at the auction at
Stanley hall, Virginia, and carried it over
the whole bally United States. It and all
in it is mine!"

Blair moved forward as if to take the
paper, but Smythe shoved the library table
between himself and the angry earl, pin-
ning the latter to the wall in a most un-
dignified position. At other times Blair
could have easily freed himself and thro-
tled the contumacious Smythe. But he was
weak from the injury he had suffered and
he pressed his hand to his throbbing head
and regarded the rebellious lawyer fur-
iously.

"And then the door opened and a group
of arm faced men entered."

"I beg your pardon, my lord," said the
first of the intruders. "I am Inspector
Forde of Scotland Yard. This is an Amer-
ican detective and he has brought proper
regulation papers, and this warrant has
been issued against you!"

A heavy set man who towered behind the
dapper inspector, stepped forward.

"I arrest you for the murder of Dr. Henry
Lee in Virginia three years ago!" he said.
Blair moaned and staggered back against
the wall. This then was the end, Blake,
the Richmond detective, had struck at last!
Without a word Blair stepped forward
and held out his hands. For once in his
life he was cowed, beaten.

"O, not that, my lord," said the little in-
spector agitatedly. "It wouldn't be neces-
sary to put handcuffs on a man of your
station or anything of that sort, my lord.
Doubtless there is some terrible mistake,
which will all be rectified, my lord, and I
hope you will not hold it against us, my
lord, that we were compelled to do our
duty!"

Vivian had heard the strange tread of
several men upon the stairs, and the start-
led butler had burst in upon her with the
crushing information that officers from
Scotland Yard had asked for his lordship,
and it was not concerning the thief who
had assaulted his lordship, they had said.
"For," the trembling butler added, "that
was the first thing I asked them, my lady!"

Vivian ran from her boudoir, her beau-
tiful hair in disorder around her fair shoul-
ders. One glance told her that Fate,
Weaver of Destinies, had called Blair to
account for his crimes. She shrieked and
fell into his arms. In prosperity, in their
wild scheming, she had not loved him
as she did now in the hour of his down-
fall and humiliation.

At a nod from the inspector, Blair's
valet brought his hat, stick, and street
coat. One last, passionate parting embrace,
and Blair walked with his captors down
the great Gothic stairs as a felon—where
he late had trod as a noble of the realm!

De Vaux escaped scot free, but without
the diamond, wondering if he had been
recognized under the visor of the helmet
or by Smythe, laid low for several days,
and then got into his motor car, and gave
his chauffeur orders to speed for Dover,
where he would take boat and escape to
France.

But it was fated De Vaux should not gain
Paris for some time yet to come, nor alone.
For as his car sped swiftly through May-
fair it struck a taxicab with terrific force
at a street intersection. The heavy fender
of De Vaux's big open car saved it from
injury, but the lighter taxicab went over
on its side and the uniformed bobby and
the driver on the front seat were thrown
to the ground.

from the uppermost door of the over-
turned taxicab a stalwart figure clambered.

It was Blair, sometime Earl of Stanley!

In his hand he held a heavy walking
stick, and, acting with swift intuition, he
turned and thrust the stick through the
handle of the door and behind the taxi-
meter, fastening the door hard and tight.
Within the muffled cries of two men could
be heard. De Vaux sprang from his auto
and faced Blair in surprise for one brief
moment. And then the fellowship of the
desperate was swiftly invoked.

"The traps have got me!" cried Blair.
And the two adventurers sprang into the
big, undamaged car, which at a sign from
De Vaux, the chauffeur backed from the
wrecked, overturned taxi, turned in the
broad street, and darted away.

Ten minutes later, from the rooms of De
Vaux, Blair sent the latter, his sworn ally
now—such are the strange decrees of
destiny—to Vivian with a note. It read:

"Our old friend De Vaux has saved me.
You hold the fort as Countess of Stanley.
De Vaux and I will search for the diamond
from the sky. We are not beaten yet!
Lovingly, Blair."

It may be understood that in all the des-
perate intimacy that followed, De Vaux
never let Blair or Vivian know that he was
the mysterious mailed assailant who had
struck down Blair in his coronation robes
and had borne away the great jewel, only
to drop it in his fight.

Stupid in some things, but with the wis-
dom of serpents in others, Smythe studied
the strange documents, evidently placed in
hiding in the deer head by the adventurer
colonist, the first Sir Arthur Stanley, in
Virginia, three centuries before. The Hard-
ing gypsy family tree gave strange con-
firmation to the other antique documents.

There was Rachel Harding, born in Kentish
town, England, in 1606. A son was born to
her, christened Matthew, after her own
father. Then descended from this Mat-
thew, through all the generations, the Mat-
thew born in Virginia in 1860. This Mat-
thew Harding married one Hagar Lee of
another gypsy tribe in America. There
was noted a son born to these two, but the
record was blotted here on the parchment
of the gypsy genesis.

A month after the Earl of Stanley's sen-
sational arrest and still more sensational
escape, Vivian, Countess of Stanley, mi-

grated secretly to Paris and Smythe sailed
for America with much on his mind.
Searched the ancient colonial records in
obscure Virginia parishes, and, with the
wisdom of serpents, gathered all his proofs.
These proofs were that Arthur Stanley,
born son of Hagar and Mat Harding, was
strangely Arthur Stanley in name and
right, and, in name and right, the direct
descendant in a direct line of the adven-
turer Sir Arthur Stanley—and the gypsy,
rightfully also the heir to the Stanley earl-
dom and the diamond from the sky!

These proofs and the diamond Smythe
brought to Esther and Arthur.

"It's all romantic and very pleasant,"
said Smythe, "to be a jolly king and queen
of the gypsies and to dwell in Arcadian
and primitive simplicity with these odd
people, don't you know. But you have a
duty to perform. A duty to your lineage,
and a greater duty to your child! You must
accept your rank and the diamond from the
sky that I here restore to you!"

"We want none of these things for our-
selves or for our child," said Arthur, draw-
ing Esther to him tenderly. "Stanley and
wealth bring nothing but sorrow and heart-
ache. The diamond from the sky has been
a curse and not a charm against harm. It
cannot be thrown back to the sky, so let
us cast it into the sea and rid the earth
of its evil presence. As for the earldom,
for myself and my son I deem it better
that we be plain American citizens rather
than English earls."

And Esther earnestly coincided.

"But your lordship!" expostulated
Smythe, while Arthur smiled at the title.
"Your lordship may remain an American
citizen and still legally hold a British title.
I can cite you an instance, several of them."

And Smythe did so. The skeptical may
consult Burke's Peerage for the precedence
in question. "Besides," Smythe went on,
"you deal nobly unjustly with her lady-
ship. Her ladyship should at least be safe-
tress of Stanley hall, as was her mother!"

And so the world and station called
Arthur and Esther Stanley back to Stanley
hall and thus the wrongs of many a cen-
tury were righted. Perchance the dead,
whose living hearts had loved and hated,
were more at ease for this.

The guilt of Blair, a fugitive somewhere
on the continent, had been known some
months. Arthur, freed from all suspicion
of the murder of Dr. Lee, received at Stan-
ley hall, with Esther and their infant son,
every heartfelt greeting a generous minded
Virginia welcome could offer.

A great reception was given them by the
high of Fairfax and the humble. Stanley
hall, brave in flags, saw happy throngs
upon its lawns and within its stately walls
again. Vying with the Fairfax band, the
gypsy orchestra, led by Quabba, now ruler
in Romney instead of King Arthur and
Queen Esther, abed in his favor, played
the wild Romney wedding strains.

Arthur and Esther, with the ever attentive
Smythe beside them, held the little Amer-
ican earl in their arms. On his baby
breast gleamed the great jewel of the Stan-
leys and ever his dower faced young
mother murmured to herself and to him—
"O, child of my heart, not a diamond, but
a mother's prayer is the true 'charm
against harm'!"

So sped the happy day and so the soft
Virginia twilight gathered. Beneath the
lampions glow upon the lawns the murmur
and the pleasant laughter hushed as to the
accompaniment of violin and guitar a clear
young voice thrilled the dusk—ah, how
fittingly, the singer never knew—with the
appealing words of that sweet old melody,

The tale of one who wandered over earth
By land and sea, by home and foreign shore,
Until into her eyes he gazed and knew
His search was o'er, his search was o'er.

Esther's bosom stirred with a happy sigh.
Arthur's strong arms were about her, the
child smiled on her breast, the loyal lips
of Quabba kissed her hand ere yet she stole
quietly away—with the humble gypsy peo-
ple. The joy that transfigureth all sorrow,
sin, and death, filled Esther's tender heart.
It seemed to her that the loving gaze of
Hagar rested on them in the dusk in ben-
ediction.

And so love and peace dwelt again at
Stanley hall. The little American earl, son
of Arthur and Esther, has the diamond
from the sky, and all ends happily as Hagar
prayed—except that somewhere in the
world, hidden and perhaps waiting for
strike, is the desperate and bitter Blair.

With him is his cunning ally, De Vaux,
and also Vivian, she who is the incarnation
of desire for the diamond from the sky!

THE END.



BLAIR WAS RECOVERING FROM THE DREADFUL BLOW THAT HAD BEEN DEALT HIM