

The MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY

\$10,000 FOR 100 WORDS

The publication of "The Million-Dollar Mystery" began Aug. 1 in The Advertiser. The story will run for twenty-two consecutive weeks in this paper. By an arrangement with the Thanet House 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 Advertiser district. For the solution of this mystery story \$10,000 will be given.

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 Thanet House Film Company, either at Chicago or New York, two weeks after the last installment of the story is published. Advertiser readers would have to submit their solutions on or before January 1st.

A board of three judges will determine which of the many solutions received is the most acceptable. 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 theatres having this feature as soon as it is practical to produce same. The story corresponding to three motion pictures will appear in The Advertiser.

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.

(Copyright, 1914, By Harold MacGrath.)

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 one night enters a Broadway restaurant and there comes face to face with the gang's leader, Braine.

After the meeting, during which neither man apparently recognizes the other, Hargrave hurries to his magnificent Riverside home and lays plans for making his escape from the country. He writes a letter to the girls' school in New Jersey where eighteen years before he had mysteriously left on the doorstep his baby daughter, Florence Gray. He also pays a visit to the hangar of a daredevil aviator, Braine and members of his band surround Hargrave's home at night, but as they enter the house the watchers

outside see the balloon leave the roof. The safe is found empty—the million which Hargrave was known to have drawn that day was gone. Then some one announced the balloon had been punctured and dropped to the sea.

Florence arrives from the girls' school, Princess Olga, Braine's companion, visits her and claims to be a relative. Two bogus detectives call, but their plot is foiled by Norton, a newspaperman. By bribing the captain of the Orient Norton lays a trap for Braine and his gang. Princess Olga also visits the Orient's captain and she easily falls into the reporter's snare. The plan proves abortive through Braine's good luck and only hirelings fall into the hands of the police.

After falling 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 Hand who have been watching his movements, he runs to the water front. A thrilling race in motor-boats ensues. Jones drops the box into the sea and with his automatic sets fire to the pursuing boat.

[Copyright, 1914, by Harold MacGrath.]

CHAPTER VI.

"Did you get the range?" asked the countess, when late that night Braine recounted his adventures. "My girl, haven't I just told you that I had to fight for my life? My boat was in flames. We had to swim for it. The last two reels, which will give the most acceptable solution to the mystery, will be presented in the theatres having this feature as soon as it is practical to produce same. The story corresponding to three motion pictures will appear in The Advertiser.

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at seeing himself checked. Again, the whole thing may have been worked up for my benefit, a blind. But if that's the case, Jones has us on the hip, for we can't tell. But we can do what in all probabilities he expects we'll cease to do—watch him just as shrewdly as before.

Olga caught his hand and drew him down beside her. "I wasn't going to bother you tonight, but it may mean something vital."

"What?"

For reply she rose and walked over to the light button. She pressed it and the apartment became dark. "Come over to the window, quick!" She dragged him across the room. "Over the way, the house with the marble frontage."

A man emerged, lit a cigarette, and walked leisurely down the street. "No!" she cried, as Braine turned to make for the door, doubtless with the intention of finding out who this man was. "Every night after you leave he appears."

"No. And that's what bothered me at first. I believed he was watching some apartment above. But regularly when I turn out the light he comes

think. Every morning I rub out the wrinkle I go to bed with."

"I wish you could rub out the general stupidity which is wrinkling my brain. I've made three moves and failed in each. What's come over me?"

"Perhaps you've had too many successes. The wheel of chance is always turning around."

"May I smoke?"

"Thanks. At least it proves you still have some consideration for me. I would smoke whether it was agreeable or not. But I like the odor of a good cigar. And it always helps you to think."

Braine lit the cigar and began his customary pacing. At length he paused. "Suppose we have a real old-fashioned coaching party out to the old mansion we know about?"

"And what shall we do there?"

"Make the mansion an enchanted castle where sometimes people who enter can't get out. Do you think you could get her to go?"

"I can try."

"Olga, I must have that girl; and I must have her soon. Sometimes I find myself mightily puzzled over the whole thing. If Hargrave is alive, why doesn't he turn up now that it's practically

hat. A dead cigarette dangled between his lips.

"How much do you want?" asked the night city editor.

"Column and a half."

"Off with your glad rags!"

"Anything good?" asked the managing editor.

"The lid has been jammed on tight. No wine in any restaurant after 1 o'clock. There'll be a roundup of every gunman in town."

"Good work. Go to it."

It was 1 o'clock when Norton turned in his last sheet of copy and started for home. Just outside the entrance to the building a man with a slouch hat drawn down over his eyes stepped forward.

"Mr. Norton?"

"Yes." Norton stepped back suspiciously.

The other chuckled, raised and lowered his hat swiftly.

"Good Lord!" murmured the reporter.

"Will you take a ride with me in a taxi?"

"All the way to Syracuse, if you say so. Well, I'll be tinker damned!"

"No names, please!"

limits of the city, when the coach was forced to take a sharp turn to avoid an automobile in trouble. The man, cowering at the engine, waved his hand vigorously.

"A coaching party," he murmured; "and your Uncle James was not in the mood. Oh, very well!" He laughed, and suddenly grew serious. It would not hurt to find out where that coach was going.

He set to work savagely, located the trouble, righted it, and set off for the Hargrave home. He found Susan and bombarded her with questions, which to Susan came with the rapidity of rain upon the roof.

"So Jones went along?"

"In his capacity of butler only."

Norton smiled. "Well, I'll take a jaunt out there myself. You are sure of the location?"

"Yes."

"Well, good-bye. I'll go as a waiter, since they wouldn't invite me. I'm one of the best little waiters you ever heard of, and all things come to him who waits."

What a pleasant, affable young man he was! thought Susan as she watched him jump into the car and go flying up the street.

Jones was a good deal surprised when Norton turned up at the old Chilton-mansion.

"What made you come here dressed like this?" the butler demanded.

"I'm a suspicious duffer, maybe that's the reason."

"Do you know anything?"

"Well, no. I can't say that I do. But, hang it, I just had to come out here."

"Maybe it's just as well you did," said Jones moodily.

"I know this place. The housekeeper used to be my nurse, and if she is still on the job she may be of service to us. You don't think they'll question or recognize me?"

"Hardly. I'll put in a word for you. I'll say I sent you, not knowing."

He had enough servants to take care of the luncheon.

"And now I'll go and hunt up Meg."

Sure enough, his search was not long in charge of the house; and when her "baby" disclosed his identity she all but fell upon his neck.

"But what are you doing here, dressed up as a waiter?"

"It's a little secret, Meg. I wasn't invited, and the truth is I'm very desperately in love with the young lady in whose honor this coaching party is being given. And . . . maybe she's in danger."

"Danger? What about?"

"The Lord only knows. But show me about the house. I've not been here so long I've forgotten the run of it. I remember one room with the secret panel and another with a painting that turned. Have they changed them?"

"No; it is just the same here as it used to be. Come along and I'll show you."

Norton inspected the rooms carefully, stowing away in his mind every detail.

He might be worrying about nothing; but so many strange things had happened that it was better to be on the side of caution than on the side of carelessness. He left the house and ran across Jones carrying a basket of wine.

"Here, Norton; take this to the party. I want to reconnoiter."

"All right, m'lud! Say, Jones, how much do you think I'd earn at this job?"

"Get along with you, Mr. Norton. It may be the time to laugh, and then it may not."

"I'm going back into the house and hide behind a secret panel. I've got my revolver. You go to the stables and take a try at my car; see if she works smoothly. We may have to do some hiking. Where is the countess in this?"

"Leave that to me, Mr. Norton," said the butler with his grim smile. "Be off; they are moving back toward the house."

So Norton carried the basket around to the lawn, where it was taken from his hands by the regular servant. He sighed as he saw Florence, laughing and chatting with a man who was a stranger and whom he heard addressed as count. Some friend of the countess, no doubt. Where was all this tangle doing to end? He wished he knew. And what a yarn he was going to write one of Gaboriau's tales. He turned away to wander idly about the grounds when beyond a clump of cedars he saw three or four men conversing lowly. He got as near as possible, for when three or four men put their heads together and whisper animatedly, it usually means a poker game or something worse. He caught a phrase or two as it came down the wind, and then he knew that the vague suspicions that had brought him out here had been set in motion by fate. He heard "Florence" and "the old drawing-room," and that was enough.

He hurried about for Jones. It was pure luck that he had had old Meg show him through the house, otherwise he would have forgotten all about the secret panel in the wall and the painting. Jones shrugged resignedly. Were these men of the countess' party? Norton couldn't say.

Norton made his hiding place in safety; and by and by he caught the guests moving about in the room. Then all sounds ceased for a while. Norton strained his ear against the panel. A door closed sharply.

"No; here you must stay, young lady," said a man's voice.

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded the beloved voice.

"It means that no one will return to this room and that you will not be missed until it is too late."

The sound of voices stopped abruptly, and something like stifling ensued. Later Norton heard the back of a chair strike the panel and some one set heavily upon it. He waited perhaps five minutes; then he gently laid back the panel and his very eyes were met by the work of a moment to liberate her.

"It is I, Jim. Do not speak or make the least noise."

"What took place in that taxicab was never generally known. But at 10 o'clock the next morning Norton surprised the elevator boy by going out. Norton proceeded downstairs to the National Bank, where he deposited \$5,000 in bills of large denominations. The teller had some difficulty in counting them. They stuck together, the sudden appearance of money retained the sudden appearance of money recently submerged in water.

Florence was delighted at the idea of a coaching party. Often during her school girl days she had seen the fashionable coaches go speeding along the road, with the sharp, clear note of the bugle rising above the thunder of hoofs and rattling of wheels. Jones was enthusiastic; neither was he a killjoy. "But you are to go along, too," said Florence.

"I, Miss Florence?"

"The countess invited you especially. You will go with a hamper."

"Ah, in my capacity as butler; very good, Miss Florence. To her he gave no sign of his secret satisfaction.

The hour arrived, and the gay party bowed away. They wound in and out of the streets toward the country, to the crack of the whip and the blare of the horn. Florence's enjoyment would have been perfect had it not been for the absence of Norton. Why hadn't he been invited? She did not ask because she did not care to displease the countess her interest in the reporter. They were nearing the

imposed upon the countess."

"Do you think so?" with a strange look in his eyes.

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing just now. The idea is to get out of here just as quickly as we can. See this painting?"

He touched a spot on the wall and the painting slowly swung out like a door.

"Come, make our escape to the side lawn from here."

At the stable they were confronted with the knowledge that Norton's car was out of commission; Jones could do nothing with it. Then Norton suggested that he make an effort to commandeer the limousine of the countess; but they were men about, so the limousine was out of the question.

"Florence" whispered Jones. "There are several saddle horses, already saddled. How about these people, the owners?"

"Oh, they are beyond reproach. They have doubtless been imposed upon. But let us get aboard first. There will be time to talk later. I'll have to do some explaining, taking these nags off like this. We won't have to ride out in front where the picnicers are. There's a lane back of the stable, and a slight detour brings us back into the main road."

The three mounted and chattered.

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