

THE DIAMOND FROM THE SKY

By Roy L. McCardell



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

for an idea for a Sequel to

"THE DIAMOND FROM THE SKY"

The American Film Manufacturing Company's
Picturized Romantic Novel in Chapters.

This contest is open to any man, woman or child who is not connected directly or indirectly with the Film Company or the newspapers publishing the continued story.

You are advised to see the continued photoplay in the theaters, read the story as it runs every week, and then send in your suggestion. By following the narrative in print and observing the action on the screen you will be given a splendid opportunity to supply a suggestion for a sequel.

A board of three judges will decide which of the suggestions received is most acceptable. The judgment of that board will be absolute and final.

SPECIAL NOTICE:

Suggestions for a sequel will be accepted up to and including February 20, 1916. As it is the IDEA that is wanted, no attention will be paid to literary style. Contestants must confine their contributions to 1,000 words or less.

The prize award to be payment in full for all literary, dramatic and motion picture rights.

Send all suggestions to THE AMERICAN FILM MANUFACTURING COMPANY, 6227 BROADWAY, CHICAGO, ILL.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

A bitter feud, engendered over an incident—the diamond from the sky—found in a motor by an aviator, has existed between Col. Arthur Stanley and his cousin, Judge Lamar Stanley. The feud is suggested by the fact that the succession to the Stanley estate in England may come to an American family. When his wife dies after having given birth to a daughter Col. Stanley buys and substitutes as heir a new born gypsy boy. Three years later the gypsy mother, Hazel, steals the gypsy's daughter, who is being reared in secret, and obtains possession of the "diamond from the sky" and a document that holds the secret of the false heir.

lady held the fort against the battering police outside. The house had been a fine mansion in its day, and the stout old door held staunchly. But at last it gave way and in poured the police, who could gain no information from the screaming, scratching haridan, who endeavored to bar their way, and so they promptly laid hands on the landlady and such of her lodgers as had not fled, and haled them out to the patrol wagon and bore them off.

to the porch and gave him directions to proceed to Los Angeles with part of the money that had so mysteriously come into her hands. "I will follow you," whispered Esther. "I will not stay in this house, where Mrs. Randolph, as Blair's cousin, cannot or will not see how villainous and despicable he is."



ESTHER BREATHLESSLY PRESENTED THE CHARGES OF BRUTAL TREACHERY AGAINST BLAIR.

coolly. "There isn't anything you would not dare for me or for anything else you desire—either Harding, for instance." Blair winced. "Ah," continued Vivian, mockingly, "I see that shot went home and it was a chance one. It bears out just what I am telling you and just what you say. There isn't anything you would not dare. You dare to love me and you dare to love the shy and timid gypsy girl. Well, if we have double lives why may we not have double loves? Now, don't scowl, Blair, my dear; you can't frighten me for one moment. Physically you are stronger than I am and I have no doubt if you had me alone some place you might strangle me, but you could not frighten me. Let us talk this matter over sensibly and you try to control yourself. You are too rash, too apt to be carried away by your evil passions. There, that is better," she added, as the scowl left Blair's face and a wondering

look of puzzled curiosity succeeded the glare of murderous anger in his eyes. "Now listen," said Vivian. "You know how the desire for the diamond obsessed you when you saw it in the hands of the old doctor whom you murdered for it. I do not care if this diamond rightfully belongs to you or whether it rightfully belongs to Arthur Stanley and I do not care whether your suspicions as to his being in your way wrongfully are correct or not. I only know that Arthur Stanley is known out here as John Powell, and I only know that John Powell has many millions and is making more. You cannot expose him, because, after all, he knows he is not guilty of the murder of Dr. Lee, and he knows you are. That he has tacitly accepted the guilt by his flight from Virginia and living here under a false name does not concern me. I only know that you hate him and that he is fond of you. In the minds of those who know him in Virginia he is believed to be a murderer, and he lets this onus rest on his name, or rather the name he wore back there, for your sake."

made him selfish? Did he still love her, as sister or sweetheart? Lonely, apprehensive, even disheartened, Esther felt that to be coolly received by Arthur would be the last straw. The secret joy she had felt to realize that she was the rightful heir of Stanley had passed. She had been denied her birthright so long that she could feel no gladness at the thought of being accepted as Esther Stanley rather than Esther Harding, the poor gypsy girl. Only Arthur, only the love she bore for him, made her steadfast. She felt she could go away and die of a broken heart if he had changed and with his millions had grown arrogant, selfish, and cold toward her. She regretted she had gone into the wilderness that morning. Might she not have better stayed in Los Angeles till Arthur returned and met him there? But then there was Blair. Blair was seeking Arthur, too.

Arthur had been Blair's comrade in their wild boyhood and even wider young manhood. Blair might poison Arthur's mind against her. Blair was a despicable enough for such an action. No, she would keep on, she would see Arthur. If his eyes lit up with love and joy at the sight of her she would tell him all and beg his protection from Blair.

And so Esther mused as the stage rocked and creaked on its way up the mountain passes to the mines. Meanwhile Blair is making his way in the roadster he has hired for the purpose as best he can over the rough roads through the mountains that he curses continually. It is prophetic of his curses and forebodings that the stage does not meet any train here save the earlier one, in order to avoid a journey that would be made doubly perilous by darkness.

From Lovell Blair, after mutual proffers of friendship and assistance, learns that Arthur Stanley, or John Powell as he is now known, has left for other mines he is considering purchasing, far across the valley in another range of mountains.

Meanwhile Quabba, disobeying Esther's commands through his very affection for her, has taken the next train and arrives at the lonely station, only to be informed that the stage to the mines does not meet any train here save the earlier one, in order to avoid a journey that would be made doubly perilous by darkness.

A group of fishermen to whom the islands of the wild seacoast heretofore offer good fishing in their waters, are alighted with Quabba. They banter the poor fellow that he is anxious to reach the mines thirty miles away up the mountains. One proffers him a slightly broken fishing rod and tells him to be philosophical and fish till the stage shall come on the morrow and take him to his destination. Quabba wonders if he may not miss Esther if he goes afoot. Irresolutely he takes the fishing rod and follows the fishermen. He is told that the mountaineers and miners sometimes come down to the coast for the fishing and that he may be given a ride back by buckboard or wagon to the mine by some of these who may be returning. So Quabba plays his luck and goes fishing, not so much for a fish as to angle for a ride to the mountain mine where Esther has gone seeking and that he, Quabba meets with no friendly fishermen returning to the mine. He fishes and wishes he had started afoot, let the distance and the roughness of the road be what it may.

The sport is good, save that Quabba is annoyed by the aggressive boldness, or friendliness, Quabba can hardly tell which, of a persistent pelican. It is a great fat, white pelican, which reminds Quabba very much of a certain pompous, long nosed, corpulent southern magnate who sold a white waistcoat and muffled Quabba of \$10 for playing hand organ music without a license. Quabba remembers this magnate with extreme distaste, and the pelican resembles him so much that Quabba hated the pestiferous bird all the more in consequence.

The stage to the mines stops at the blacksmith shop. A broken linchpin is giving trouble. Luke starts to adjust a new lynch pin. Blair Stanley, within the darkened shop, for he half expected recognition by some one, saw Esther, as Esther shrunk back from the window at sight of Luke. Luke, in turn, was busy at his work at the wheel and gave no attention to the passengers, except one, an Englishman with side whiskers, who hung out of the coach and annoyed him with foolish questions.

When Luke came into the shop for tools Blair drew him to one side and whispered: "There is some one in that coach who will ruin our game with Arthur Stanley. You know what to do!" Luke had a dim remembrance of the English lawyer, and not having seen Esther in the coach, deemed Blair referred to that pestering individual. Luke nodded grimly and replaced the broken linchpin with the broken linchpin, and called to the driver, "It's all right, grandly waving aside the driver's proffer of 'two bits,' for Blair had paid for the work with a twenty dollar bill.

Down by the rugged coast line thirty miles away Quabba was fighting the fight that is the true fisherman's delight with some great and game fish, and had forgotten the pestiferous pelican lurking badly near.

Far away along the crest of the mountain, beside a precipitous dizzying declivity the broken linchpin does its work. The wheel comes off and spins away, the coach topples over, the tongue and the coach strikes a great boulder and smashes as an egg would smash. A spurt of dust and then stillness.

From tragedy to comedy-drama the distance is thirty miles. On the rocky seacoast Quabba lands his quarry, a great, quivering fish. Caught in its gills, and partly hanging from its mouth is a chain of antique workmanship, and from it dangles the diamond from the sky.

And then the great white pelican swoops down and bears off the fish and the great glittering jewel—the diamond from the sky is no longer the diamond from the sky. (To be Continued.)



THE POLICE RUSHED THE LANDLADY OUT TO THE PATROL WAGON.

Arthur, for applying the robber's loot as payment to look to see Stanley Hall from the hands of strangers and into the hands of his own. He emboldens Tom Blake the detective, instructs him to follow the man who has returned her to normal condition an operation costing \$1000 will be necessary. Mrs. Stanley offers Esther the money on condition that she marry Blair, but Esther refuses.

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CHAPTER XIV.

FOR LOVE AND MONEY.

OUT from the rickety old mansion, long gone to statters shabbiness as a lodging house, came Detective Tom Blake in his habit of overgrown bootblack. He led the dazed and bewildered Esther by the wrist, and following after her, forgetting in his excitement the hurts he had sustained, came the devoted Quabba. Whispering inquiries unheeded by Esther as to whether she had been hurt, and divided between his worry over his young mistress and the frightened chatter of Clarence, the monkey who clung desperately to him, Quabba submitted to being hustled after Esther into the waiting taxicab, which drove off as though at command, leaving the bootblack upon the scene.

From the dark and dingy interior of the lodging house came a cloud of dust, raised by the fall of the rickety old stairway and landing in the battle with Blair.

The blowy and gin-sodden landlady, roused now to an acute perception of the trouble to come from the police, stood in the doorway, screaming, as the hide-and-seek population of that mean part of Richmond came flocking to the scene, wondering if it were murder, robbery, or both. Blake in his bootblack guise mingled with the throng as a spectator, waiting to see if Blair would be brought out from the interior wreckage, living or dead. At the arrival of the police wagon the screaming landlady slammed the door and barred it inside, among the wreckage of the fallen staircase and landing. Blair, revived from the stunning effects of his fall, pulled himself to his feet, rejoicing that beyond a bruise he was not injured. He scrambled over the debris and down the cellar steps and over the dirty-littered back yards and away, while yet the hysterical land-

more than indignant Esther breathlessly presented their charges of brutal treachery and perjury against Blair, who still insistently proclaimed his innocence with an air of half indignation, half puzzled good nature.

"I am sure I do not know what to say!" moaned Mrs. Randolph. "But surely, Esther, you and this uncouth gypsy person with you, with his horrid monkey, must be mistaken. No Stanley would do such a thing, I am sure! No Stanley would associate with uncouth gypsy persons who constantly fondled spidery monkeys! I begged you not to go without a chaperon, and now see what has happened! She should not have gone without a chaperon, should she, Blair? And as for accusing Blair of such dreadful things, hasn't the poor boy told you that you are mistaken?" Seeing that Mrs. Randolph was utterly unable to believe Blair guilty of his despicable actions, and utterly astounded at the cool effrontery of Blair and his brazen denials, Esther dismissed her one faithful, loyal friend, the uncouth gypsy person with the spidery monkey, as Mrs. Randolph designated Quabba, and with head erect and blazing eyes she followed Quabba

and feel of which he detested, and immediately sought for "John Powell." Under this name Arthur Stanley was a leading figure in Los Angeles, and Quabba soon found himself at the offices of the Good Hope Oil company.

Here a supercilious office boy and a condescending telephone girl reluctantly informed the strange looking inquirer that Mr. John Powell had gone far off into the distant Sierras to acquire some mines. It would seem that John Powell, the new oil millionaire, was extensively branching out into other industrial investments.

It was this same information, but more agreeably given, that was vouchsafed to Blair when he called later in the day, at the suggestion of Vivian Marston when Blair had joined in Los Angeles this vivacious lady, who had married him in haste for the diamond and parted from him in equal celerity at the loss of it.

"If the diamond rightfully belongs to Arthur Stanley I will marry him for it, even as I married you for it, and if you say a word I will send you to the gallows. As desperate as you are, my dear Blair, I can see you do not wish to go to the gallows; you do not wish even to be charged and tried and imprisoned for the murder you know you are guilty of, although you told Arthur that Dr. Lee died from excitement when you broke into his house to get the diamond."

"If you are the rightful heir to the diamond and the earldom, all well and good. I want the diamond and I would dearly love to be Lady Stanley of Stanley castle, Warwickshire. But your very recklessness has placed you in your present position. You can claim nothing. So, if you will think it over you will see that while we had better work together it must not be as man and wife. You are apt to venture too rashly and I cannot be identified with you. The diamond from the sky has disappeared, but John Powell's millions are very tangible. No matter what I do to gain the money or the diamond you must not interfere. If all goes well we may gain the diamond, the earldom, and John Powell's money together. We hold Arthur Stanley's secret, and that is a good advantage at the start."

"Now you go and find him; he is at these mines he has just bought. He will be as glad to see you as he was in Richmond. He does not know your true character as I do. He will make you his manager or partner, for he is generous and will be glad to have his kinsman, if you are his kinsman, and boyhood comrade with him."

"On my part I will interject myself into his claim either with your aid or without. We will work together and I promise you that in the end if all goes well we will have our desires. Mine is to have money, to be Lady Stanley, and, above all, to possess the diamond from the sky. Your desire is to throw yourself into Arthur's way—help me get the diamond; help me get 'John Powell' in my power—we may need his money for all our purposes!"

So this was their strange compact, and Blair departed for the mines in an automobile to throw himself into Arthur's way. Quabba, passing the hotel where Blair and Vivian had their meeting, got a glimpse of them parting in the street. He telephoned to Esther where she was stopping and Esther resolved to start at once to find Arthur before Blair reached him. Again Esther thought it best that she go alone. But Quabba, parted with at the depot, took the next train after Esther, first leaving Clarence, the monkey, and the pony and the other equipment in good hands.

There was another seeker for "The Golden Man" in Los Angeles. It was none other than Marmaduke Smythe, the eccentric English legal representative of the

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