

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 paid 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 heirloom, "the diamond from the sky," found in a meteor by an aviator, has existed between Blair Stanley and his cousin, John Powell. The feud is aggravated 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, Stanley remarries and acquires as his new-born army heir. Three years later the young mother, Lazar, steals the child'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.

When the daughter, Esther Stanley, grows up, Lazar returns with her to Stanley hall. Mr. Lee, acting as a coadjutor, has been "diamonded from the sky," and the supposed Blair Stanley II, who is Lazar's son, will marry Esther and become mistress of Stanley hall. Blair Stanley, Arthur's cousin, who would be the rightful heir to the mansion if the truth were known, also falls in love with Esther.

In endeavoring to steal the "diamond from the sky" from Mr. Lee, Lazar causes the old doctor's death. Arthur, who is the son of the murdered doctor, hopes that he himself will escape and that, who is a girl, will live a stranger life. Lazar and Esther are established in Stanley hall after Lazar has established Blair's guilt through a forged document. Blair in the meantime has fallen in love with Vivian Marston, an aviator, and, despite and in possession of the "diamond from the sky," elopes with her, although the marriage ceremony has not yet taken place. Mrs. Stanley, seeing that Esther is the real heir, plans to make friends with her and effect a marriage between her and Blair Stanley, her disgraced son. She reasons that if Esther marries Blair, she will withhold any accusations of guilt of Blair in connection with the murder of Mr. Lee. Esther in the meantime has found Lazar's strong box and found proof that she is the daughter of the murdered doctor. She goes to Los Angeles to see Mrs. Stanley's request. Esther and Lazar, returning to Mr. Powell, Randolph's in Richmond, "diamonded" the train on which Blair and Vivian are riding and take from them the "diamond from the sky." Vivian, enraged, drives over Blair and Esther, who are in the car, and escapes the diamond.

Blair returns to Los Angeles and, finding Esther agreeable, efforts to induce her to cross the journey of Vivian. Lazar, who is a friend of the aviator, offers to provide for Blair and Esther, and offers \$1,000 will be necessary. Mrs. Stanley offers Esther the money on condition that she marry Blair, but Esther refuses.

Arthur by spying the father's foot on a monument in the park, saves Stanley Hall from the hands of strangers and helps Esther and Lazar. His cousin Tom Blake, the detective, is introduced. The plot of the diamond is exposed and the diamond is found. Blair Stanley, Arthur, Blair, following his cousin, goes to Los Angeles. Luke Lovell, the aviator, by a trick of fate again comes across the diamond from the sky and goes to Los Angeles. At the sight of the "diamond" he is overcome by the fact that Esther has departed "for ever and never." This he announces to the diamond, Luke and his fellow aviator, Jigger quarrel over his possession and the diamond sinks into the Pacific, near Santa Barbara.

Vivian, learning of Arthur's death, returns her attention to Blair in the hope that together they will be able to stop him of his gold. Blair and Vivian and Esther and Quabba separate and go to Los Angeles in search of Arthur. Marmaduke Smythe also is in search of Arthur in California, and up in the mountains where Arthur is seeking an investment a contact is made to determine which will be the first to reach Arthur.

CHAPTER XVI

THE path of peril leads through the heart of the mountains. The path of peril is across the deeps where the dimpling of the waters shows the footprints of the wild upon the sea. Through the heart of the mountains, in the dark and dripping tunnel of the mine, goes the dingy little electric motor bearing Esther and faithful servant, Quabba, the hunchback.

Behind them, blundering through the darkness, peering at the new desperate and determined, came the Virginia aviator, well and the gypsy outlaw, Blair Stanley, and Luke Lovell.

tered man and hardly had Vivian sprang into the water with a scream than Arthur dove overboard. There was a hurried rush to the starboard rail, the quick command of the sailing master, the hurried lowering of a boat, the casting over of life preservers, while other daring members of the crew plunged headlong into the sea to aid the gallant young aviator, "John Powell," in his rescue of the reckless young woman who, through feckless daring, had attempted to cross the bow of the swift yacht in her tiny sailboat.

Arthur in his excitement did not notice the fair face of the woman he had plunged overboard to save was a somewhat familiar one—the face of the gracious Vivian Marston. In fact, until now, Arthur's encounters with Vivian had left but the slightest impression upon him. Even when he had first beheld her at the ball in Richmond with the diamond from the sky, his heart was not broken. He had the thought for her sake to wonder by what strange and mysterious manner the great jewel he had left in the pawnshop the day before had come to gleam



THE SAVAGE ABOUT TO SCALP HIM IS ATTIRE IN A DRESS SUIT.

upon the neck of this roid, handsome woman. Let him be the rightful heir of Stanley, impoverished by his own profligacy and a fugitive from justice in Virginia, or let him be "John Powell, the Golden Man," as he was known in California—in either case Vivian Marston will have a handsome groom, even as she has snatched his desperate kinsman, Blair Stanley. Which of these two got the diamond it mattered not to her now. Vivian felt convinced the great gem would come to her from the hands of either of them. If it came rightfully as a heritage to her, she would have it. If it were to be bought for money, "John Powell" had the means to buy it for her. She had done well, she thought, to take the path of peril to find the diamond by throwing herself in the arms of Arthur Stanley, alias John Powell.

So Vivian sighed with vague contentment, and, being seemingly semi-unconscious, as Arthur as they were hauled into the compartment and into the handsomely furnished cabin of the yacht's owner who had rescued her, she could have laughed aloud for sheer joy at the success of her wild plan.

In the mine the path of peril is dark and fearsome to the timid girl who is driven over it pursued by the desperate men who will stop at nothing to prevent her from reaching Arthur Stanley with the Stanley document that they believe she carries with her. The operation of a mine electric motor is simple enough, but when it balks in the treacherous hands of Quabba then indeed the dangers of this path of peril grow manifold.

"I don't know what's the matter with him, all the time now, Miss Esther!" whimpers Quabba. "Some wire loose, maybe? Eh, what you think?"

"We are far ahead of them," says Esther encouragingly. "Even if the motor will only do this well they will not overtake us. It seems to me we have gone miles and miles through this dreadful darkness. The driver of the stage told me about these mines. This is the main tunnel he told me about, I know. It goes straight through

the mountains for four miles to the openings at the workings in the opposite valley.

"She stops; she don't go no more!" means Quabba, as the little motor grinds and halts, then goes forward a few feet and stops with a jerk.

"Do you think you can fix it?" asked Esther eagerly.

Quabba's courage returns as he notes in Esther's question a tone of confidence in his ability as an amateur electrical engineer.

"Ha!" he says. "Plenty time I fix the organ. I find what's the matter and fix

tached to her. He had protected her in some measure before, perhaps he would do so again; but dominated as he was by greed and the stronger, wickeder mind of Blair Stanley, Esther felt no great confidence in Luke Lovell's further protection, if protection it might be called.

While Quabba fussed and perspired in his inexperienced efforts to remedy or find cause of the balking of the motor Esther sat listening with strange ears to the weird and eerie subterranean sounds of the ceaseless dripping of the water from the mine roof and the occasional rattle and fall of loosened earth and rocks in the dark depths of the tunnel.

at the appearance of so strange a pair bursting out from the tunnel and speeding down the track on the electric motor that had been left at the other end of the portal of the tunnel. The trackmen dropped their tools. The mine foreman and his wife joined with the throng of miners that surged around the motor and the strange pair that drove it—a pallid gypsy hunchback and a half-fainting girl with a face like a flower.

They told their wild story to sympathetic ears. Turning Esther over to the ministering attentions of the big hearted shaver of his joys and sorrows, the mine boss and several assistants reversed the

under the spell of Vivian's alluring charms, the sensuousness of the Hawaiian love song of the sky flowers, and the magic of the moonlight over the sea.

Under the spell of Vivian's languorous eyes Arthur Stanley, "John Powell," millionaire now, trends the path of peril in his turn, but the path is not plain to him, for it is hidden by the deadly flowers. The flowers on the path of peril seem sweet and fair to him; they may be such as are in the chaplet on Vivian's dark locks, for Arthur bends over these and murmurs, "I would give you anything in the world!"

An eager glow comes into Vivian's dangerous eyes, a deeper flush suffuses her fair cheeks. "You would give me anything in the world?" she whispers. "Then get me the diamond from the sky!"

"It has disappeared utterly off the earth," answers Arthur. "If it comes to light it may not be mine to give. And he leans over to clasp her in his arms. But, putting like a child denied, Vivian holds him aloof. "You do not care for me," she says with affected plaintiveness, "or you would promise." And Arthur, such is the wifery of a wanton woman, such is the magic of the moonlight, presses her.

The magic of the moon casts no spell over Frank Durand. In faraway New York Durand has no dreams or illusions. He is a practical person, known in the sphere that he adorns as the "King of Diamonds," for he is the most expert of a "band of international jewel thieves and swindlers." Mr. Abe Bloom, prosperous gambling house keeper in Richmond, is almost in despair about the great diamond that slipped through his fingers once. In this half-despair and desperation Mr. Bloom has written to Mr. Durand, his New York acquaintance of the upper underworld. Mr. Bloom's letter to the wily Durand is brief and blunt: "My dear Durand: The last heard of the diamond from the sky was train robbery stolen in California. It was a good one, bunch of crooks can get it I have a syndicate to pay you your own price. Further details later. Our mutual friend Vivian is after it. An afraid she will double cross you. This diamond is worth half a million dollars. Yours."

In his luxurious bachelor apartments the "King of Diamonds" receives his dapper and alert lieutenant, Felix de Vaux, alias Count de Vaux, and shows him the letter from the sententious Mr. Bloom.

"So our old friend Vivian is after the diamond?" says the dapper little count as he turns to face the frank, plain speech of Vivian Marston that occupies a place of honor in Durand's handsomely furnished apartments. "Vivian was always clever. Remember she wrote about this stone?"

The handsome Durand strokes his close-cropped Van Dyke beard and muses, "I always thought that diamond was a myth," he says finally. "So many of these old ones, supposedly priceless heirlooms turn out to be junk when an expert gets his hands on them," and Mr. Frank Durand placed a peculiar emphasis on the word "expert."

"We have records of this so-called diamond from the sky," continues the arch crook, "but nothing much was known of it except it was supposed to be in the possession of an old Virginia family. But no one knew much of it except there was an old family tradition glorifying some Jimcrack that perhaps would prove worthless even if it really existed."

"Well," interjected the dapper little count, "if Abe Bloom says there is such a stone and that it is worth half a million you can be sure it is a real diamond and worth much more. Abe Bloom and his little brother Ike, the Richmond pawnbroker, are two of the best judges of diamonds in the country."

"We should know that," assents Durand. "We have paid them well more than once to come on to New York and appraise stones for us when even we were in doubt. And now, good night. We start west tomorrow. Pleasant dreams about the diamond from the sky to you, Felix!"

Pleasant dreams about the diamond from the sky!

Vivian Marston, three thousand miles away, dreams of the diamond.

Quabba, a humble hunchback organ grinder, sleeping by a fire in a mine shed, dreams, too, of the diamond. No selfish dream is Quabba's. There is one person on all the earth he loves above all others, and that one is his young fair mistress, Esther. Quabba longs and dreams of the diamond that he has so strangely found and lost twice in his lovely life. He longs for the diamond that he may give it to his fair young mistress as a tribute from her devoted servant.

Quabba, a humble hunchback organ grinder, cursing a fate that led him to lose himself in the wilderness while seeking the heir of Stanley for the Warwickshire earldom, dreams, too, by a dining fire. But his dreams are not of diamonds. He dreams a horrid savage leers at him through a monocle—a savage who is a stickler for the niceties. For even in his dreams the timid London lawyer knows that it is night, and he is impressed by the fact that the savage about to scalp him is attired in a dress coat. The lawyer wakes with a shriek of fear, and on his ears fall the harsh croakings of the unseen enemies who constantly alarm him. Not redskins, as he thinks, but greenskins. Not savages in ambush, but frogs in the marsh. Stirred by the frightful memory of his dream, Marmaduke Smythe springs to his feet and discharges his shotgun into the marsh. Then all is still. The silence brings back courage to the heart of the British barrister lost in the wilderness.

"Ha!" he says, "I must have jolly well exterminated the natives I thought I had reconnoitered! But caution, Marmaduke, caution!" he counsels himself. "Perhaps they are endeavoring to draw me into an ambushade!"

He creeps forward stealthily and parts the bushes by a marsh puddle. There lies the corpse of his foe, a great green frog, extremely defunct. Near by, caught in the low tangle of marsh shrubbery, is a curious gleaming object in the moonlight. The lawyer stoops down and picks it up.

It is the spool the pelican despised when he shook it from the fish that brought it, from the depths. Worthless to fish or fowl, the eccentric London lawyer grasps it with a startled cry of wonder and surprise.

Marmaduke Smythe has the diamond from the sky!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



THROUGH THE DARK TUNNEL OF THE MINE, GOES THE ELECTRIC MOTOR BEARING ESTHER AND QUABBA

Then there came through the darkness from far off behind them the sound of footfalls through the water that covered the tunnel floor. Like moving stars in the distant darkness she saw the lights of the candles borne by the relentless pursuing Luke and Blair. She knew it must be them, for the mine and all its workings had been as deserted as a place of the dead. "They are coming, Quabba!" she cried. "What shall we do?"

The hunchback's usual kindly face took on a set expression of murderous determination, strange to Esther's eyes.

"This time I kill them!" he exclaimed.

Leaving his task of searching for the trouble in the mechanism of the motor, Quabba slipped under to the back of it and pushed the little machine, with many

motor and drove back resolutely into the mine depths to find the men whom Esther and Quabba told of, dead or alive.

They returned at nightfall, having cleared away the debris of the blast, but finding no trace of Luke Lovell and Blair Stanley. The wicked have luck alike with the good. At the edge of the blast Blair Stanley had been struck down and hurt slightly, and Luke had borne him back through the choking smoke all the weary way whence they had come, until they, too, reached daylight and safety, as Esther and Quabba had reached it, but on the far side of the mountain mine.

That night by the fire in the office shack of the mine boss Esther and Quabba told again such parts of their story as they cared to tell to the rough but sympathetic new found friends around them. Esther told of her search for Arthur, calling him



THE DESPERATE MEN WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO PREVENT ESTHER FROM ESCAPING.

grunts and straining efforts, from the dangerous spot near the set blast and its warning sign.

Pushing and panting, he shoved the heavy little machine over the water covered tracks a hundred yards or more down the tunnel. Then he rushed back under the electric light by the set blast and, seizing the blast battery by its leather handle and uncoiling the loops of wire, the other ends of which were fastened deep down in the blast holes to the detonator in the dynamite, Quabba slipped back through the darkness and called to Esther in a tense whisper to come around behind the sliding bulk of the motor with him. From the blast battery box he carried trailed the length of wire that would carry the vital spark of the forces of destruction.

Now Blair Stanley and Luke Lovell had located them by the single light upon the electric motor. They pressed forward with exultant shouts; then, just as they reached the wide space where the blast was set at the new heading, Quabba, a hundred yards away and shielded with Esther behind the motor, drove the plunger of the battery down swift and hard.

There was a deafening boom and crash, a burst of fire, the sound of showering rocks, a heavy fall of earth and debris that seemed to heave out and groan and rattle and settle—then a choking fog of blast smoke and silence!

Whatever had been the matter with the motor, the shock and jar of the explosion had settled the loosened wire back in place to a proper contact, for when, shaking with fright and excitement, Quabba had dragged Esther aboard the motor again and turned the lever the little machine moved forward like a living thing, slowly at first and then, gaining speed, glided smoothly and swiftly out of the smoke and on and on, swift, fast, under the hunchback and the trembling girl left a breath of fresh air from outside blow upon them and saw a gleam of daylight and sped on and out from the dank mouth of the mine into God's good sunlight!

The men called to this side of the mountain to the new workings were astounded

only by the name that he was known by as oil magnate and owner of these newly acquired mines. She said that he was a friend, a relative, and that for reasons she was unable to solve the desperate men who had tracked her were evidently desirous she should not meet up with him.

"He is a fine young man, Mr. John Powell is, my dear," said the kindly wife of the mine boss. "I will take good care of you and in the morning my husband will have one of the boys drive you to the railroad station. Mr. Powell has gone to Santa Barbara. They say he has bought a beautiful new yacht which is there to meet him. He will protect you and take care of you, I know, and you know. As for those rascals you got away from, it is fourteen rough miles across the mountain trail from the north portal of the tunnel. If they escaped with their lives they will hardly make their way over the mountains tonight."

"If they come this way I promise them a warm reception," remarked the mine boss grimly. "The boys are just naturally pining to get hold of those two fellows. There will be work for the copper if the boys catch them. And the coroner had better bring in a verdict of 'frozen to death,' too."

The moon shone on the waters of Santa Barbara bay. It shone down upon the broad white deck of a great yacht that moved majestically across the waters. Beneath the moon the sensuous strains of a love song chanted in a minor key arose. In snowy white, with flower garlands on their breasts, a Hawaiian orchestra played "The Love Song of the Sky Flowers." It is seductively sweet in the vernacular. In English it may be sung:

"Beloved, the stars are sky flowers in the night!
The flowers are ground stars, dear, by day.

And all the air is soft for your delight:
Then let us love, sweet heart, while yet we may."

Beneath the moon, a chaplet of flowers in her hair, a clinging white gown of Grecian simplicity setting off her languorous beauty, reclines Vivian Marston. Near her is Arthur Stanley, enraptured, enraptured

See This Story in Film at the Lion Theater Today