

The MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY By HAROLD MAC GRATH

\$10,000 FOR 100 WORDS.

"The Million Dollar Mystery" story will run for twenty-two consecutive weeks in this paper. By an arrangement with the Thanhouser 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 Thanhouser 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 and the last two chapters of the story written by Harold MacGrath.

Solutions may be sent to the Thanhouser Film corporation, either at Chicago or New York, any time up to midnight, Jan. 14. 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 Tince. 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 newspapers, 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. 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 \$1,000,000?
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 girls' school, where eighteen years before he mysteriously left on the doorstep his baby daughter, Florence Gray. That day Hargrave also draws one million dollars 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 girls' school, Countess Olga, Braine's companion, visits her and claims to be a relative. Two bogus detectives call, but their plot is foiled by Norton, a newspaper man. By bribing the captain of the Orient Norton lays a trap for Braine and his gang. Countess 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 Hundred, he rushes to the water front and succeeds in dropping the box into the sea.

Braine conceives the idea of giving a coaching party, to which Florence is invited. Jones and Norton both go along and are fortunately on hand to save Florence from being imprisoned in the country house to which she is lured.

Florence goes horseback riding and is captured by one of Braine's men along the roadside. Norton rescues her. They are pursued, however, and the pair make their complete escape only after Norton has exploded a tire on the fast approaching machine with a bullet.

Countess Olga, scheming to break the engagement now existing between Florence Hargrave and Norton, invites them both to her apartments and pretends to faint in the reporter's arms. Florence appears in the doorway just at the planned moment, and as a result gives Norton back his ring.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LEAP IN THE DARK.
So far as Jones was concerned, he was rather pleased with the turn of affairs. This was no time for lovelorn; no time for silly, innocuous quarrels and bickerings, in which love must indulge or die. Florence no longer rode horseback, and Norton returned to his accustomed haunts, where one made the slightest attempt upon his life. In his present state of mind he would have welcomed it.

"What's the matter with Jim?" asked the night city editor, raising his eye shade.

"I don't know," answered the copy reader.

"Goes around as if he'd been eating dope; bumped into the boss a while ago and never stopped to apologize."

"Perhaps he's mapping out the front page for that Hargrave stuff," laughed the copy reader. "Between you and me and the gate post, I don't believe there ever was a man by the name of Hargrave."

"O, there was a chap by that name, all right. He's dead. A man can't swim 300 miles in rough water. Life busy or no. They

ought to have funeral services, and let it go at that."

"But what was the reason for that fake cable from Gibraltar saying that Orts was alive? I don't see any sense in that."

"The man who pulled it off did. I think, for my part, that both Orts and Hargrave are dead, and that the man picked up by the tramp steamer Orient was riding some other balloon."

"You're wrong there. The description of it proved that it was Orts' machine. O, Jim probably has got a man's size yarn up his sleeve, but he's a long time in delivering the goods. He's beginning to mope a good deal. Woman back of it somewhere. Haven't held down this copy job for twelve years without being able to make some tolerable

What did they ask you to do?"

"You asked me to come down to the office at once, and I requested you to come to the house, and you said you could not. I declined to stir."

"What do you think?"

"Exactly what you're thinking—that they have come to life again."

"Jones, is Miss Florence awake?"

"No."

"Do you think there is any hope of having her understand what really happened?"

"I am here only to guard her. I cannot undertake to read her thoughts."

"You're not quite in favor of a reconciliation?"

"O, yes, if it went no further. Young people are young people the world over."

they say. We've got two ends of the net down, and with a little care we'll have them all. Now, let me have a hundred."

Norton drew out a packet of bills and counted off five twenties.

"Why don't you draw the cash yourself?"

"It happens to be in your name, son."

"I forgot," said Norton. "But what a chance for me! Nearly five thousand, all mine for a ticket to Algiers!"

A grunt was the only reply.

"I want you to tell me about the Perigoff woman."

"I know only one thing—that Braine is there every night."

"No!"

"The orders are for you to play the game just as you are playing it. When we strike, it must be the last blow. All this hide-and-seek business may look foolish to you. It's like that Japanese game called 'jo.' It looks simple, but chess is a tyro's game beside it. Can you find your way back all right?"

"I can."

"Well, you'd better be going. That's all the light I have, in this torch here. Got a lot to do tomorrow and need sleep."

Norton stole away with great caution. His first intention was to proceed straight to the city, but despite his resolution he found himself within a quarter of an hour gazing up at the windows of the Hargrave house. "Not at home!"

Quite unconscious of the fact, he was as close to death as any mortal man might care to be. The policeman, suddenly looming up under the arc lamp, proved to be his savior.

The lull made Jones doubly alert. He was

he was ushered into the deserted office of the first he sent his card in. The doctor replied in person. His face was pale and his hands shook.

"Good afternoon," said Braine, smiling affably.

The doctor eyed him like a man hypnotized. "You . . . you wished to see me on some particular business?"

"Very particular," dryly. "My car is outside. Will you be so good as to accompany me?"

The doctor slowly went into the hall for his hat and coat. He left the house and got into the car with never a word of protest.

"Thinking?" said Braine.

"I am always thinking whenever I see your evil face. What devilment do you require of me this time?"

"A mere stroke of the pen."

"Where are we going?"

"To call on another physician of your standing," significantly. "It is a great thing to have friends like you two. Always ready to serve us, for the mere love of it."

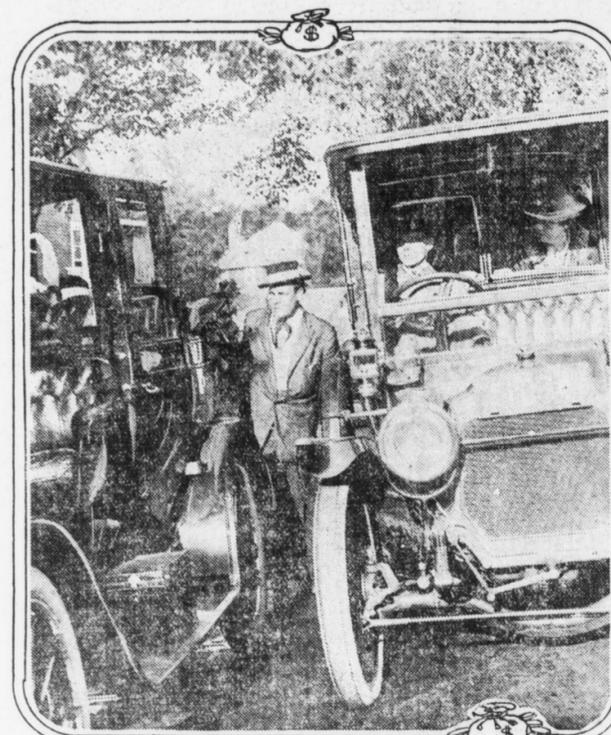
"There's no need of using that kind of talk to me. You have me in the hollow of your hand. Why should I bother to deny it? I have broken the law. I broke it because I was starving."

"It is better to starve in freedom than to eat fat joints up the river. Today it is a question of sanity."

"And you want me to assist in signing away the liberty of some person who is perfectly sane?"

"The nail on the head," urbanely.

"You're a fine scoundrel!"



FLORENCE AND SUSAN WENT SHOPPING.

guesses. Jim's a star man. When he gets started nothing can stop him. He covered the Chinese Boxer rebellion better than any other correspondent there. I wonder how old he is?"

"O, I should say about thirty-one or two. Here he comes now. 'Lo, Jim!'"

"Hello! Where's Ford? He gave me a ticket to the theater tonight, and I want to punch his head. What's drama coming to, anyhow? Cigaretts and booze and mismatched couples. Can't they find good enough things out of doors? O, I know. They cater to a lot of fools who believe that what they see is an expression of high life in New York and London. And it's rot, plain rot. It's merely the scum on the boiling pot. And any old housewife would skim it off and chuck it into the slops. Life? Piffle!"

"What's the grunch?"

"Looking for the dramatic job?"

"No. I've just been wondering how far these theatrical managers can go without sitting the golden goose."

Norton sought his desk and began rummaging the drawers. He was not hunting for anything; he was merely passing away the time. By and by, when the pastime no longer served, he pulled his chair over to the window and sat down, staring at stars such as Copernicus never dreamed of. Ships going down to sea, ferries swooping diagonally hither and thither, the clockwork signs; but he took no note of these marvels of light.

"Not at home!" he muttered.

He had called, written, telephoned. No use. The door remained shut, Jones answered the telephone, and the letters came back. He began to think very deeply concerning the Perigoff woman. Had she played a trick? Had that fainting spell been blunder for his benefit as well as Florence's? But he had not a shadow of a proof. The thing that puzzled him equally with this was that all attempts against his life had miraculously ceased; no safes thundered down in front of him, and no autos tried to carve him in two. The only thing that kept him active was the daily call of Jones by wire. Miss Florence was well; that was all Jones was permitted to say.

Restlessly Norton spurned his chair and walked over to the telephone booth. It was midnight. He might or might not be able to get Jones. But almost instantly a voice said, "What is it?"

"Jones?"

"Yes. Who is it?"

"Norton."

"Why, you called me up not ten minutes ago."

"Not I!"

"It was your voice, as plain as day."

"What did I want?" keen all at once.

The reply did not come immediately. "You are certain it was not you?"

"Wait a moment and I'll call the editor. He will prove to you that I've been here for an hour, and that this is the first call I've made. Some one has been imposing on you.

"What does that mean?"

"That they would not create imaginative heart aches if they were not young. Better let things remain exactly as they are. When all these troubles are settled finally, the lesser trouble may be talked over sensibly. But this is not the time. There is no news. Good-night."

Norton returned to his chair, gloomier than ever. With his feet upon the window sill, he stared and stared and dreamed and dreamed till a hand fell upon his shoulder. It belonged to one of the office boys.

"Note f'r you, sir."

Norton read it and tore it into little pieces. Then he rose and distributed the pieces in the several yawning waste baskets which strewed the aisle leading to the city desk.

"I'm not wanted for anything?" he asked.

"No. Clear out!" laughed the night city editor. "The sight of you is putting everybody in the gloom ward."

Norton went down to the street. At the left of the entrance he was quietly joined by a man whose arm was carried in a sling. He motioned Norton to get into the taxicab. They were dropped in a deserted spot in Riverdale. On foot they went forward to their destination, which proved to be the deserted hangar of the aviator William Oris.

"I want you to tell Jones that a tug and several divers are at work on the spot where he threw the chest. That's all. Now, doctor, rewind this arm of mine."

The amateur surgeon made a very good job of it; not for nothing had he followed fighting armies to the front.

"Did they find anything?"

"Not up to date. But we might if we cared to. They have left a buoy over the spot they're exploring. But just now it floats a quarter of a mile to the east of the spot."

"Who were the men in the motor boat that chased Jones?"

"Only Jones can tell you. Queer old codger, eh?"

"A bit stubborn. He wants to handle it without police assistance."

"And he's right. We are not aiming to arrest any one," sinisterly. "There can't be any draw to this game. Here, no smoking. Too much gas afloat."

Norton put the cigarettes back into his pocket. "What's the real news?" he demanded. "You would not bring me out here just to rebandage that arm. It really did not need it. Come, out with it."

"You're sharp."

"I'm paid to be sharp."

"I've found where the Black Hundred holds its sessions."

"By George, that is news!"

"The room above is vacant. A little hole in the ceiling, and who knows what might happen?"

"What do you want me to do?"

"Tell Jones. When the next meeting comes around I'll advise you. I've stumped upon a dissatisfied member. So, buck up, as



BRaine IS THERE EVERY NIGHT

positive that they were preparing to strike again. But from what direction and in what manner? He had not the gift of clairvoyance, so he had to wait; and waiting is a terrible game when perhaps death is balancing the scales. It is always easier to make an assault than to await it; and it is a good general who always finds himself prepared.

But it made his heart ache to watch the child. She went about cheerfully—when any one was in the room with her. Many a time, however, he had stolen to the door of her bedroom and heard the heart rending sobs, a vain attempt being made to stifle them among the pillows. She was only 18; it was first love; and first loves are pale, evanescent attachments. It hurt now; but she would get over it presently. Youth forgets. Time, like water, smooths away the ragged places.

The Countess called regularly. She was, of course, dreadfully sorry over what had happened. She had heard something about his character; newspaper men weren't always the best. This one was a mere fortune hunter; a two faced one, at that. She was never more surprised in her life when he threw his arms around her. And so on, and so forth, half lies and half truths, till the patient Jones felt like wringing her neck.

From his vantage point the butler smiled ironically. He could read the heart of this Perigoff woman as he could read the page of a book. The affront! And all the while he must gravely admit her and pretend when the blood roiled in his veins at the sight of her. But he dared not swerve a single inch from the plans laid down. It was a cup of bitter gall, and there was no way of avoiding the putting of it to his lips. She emanated poison as nightshade emanates it, the upas tree. And he must bow when she entered and bow when she left! Still, she had done him an indirect favor in breaking up this love business.

One afternoon Braine summoned his runabout and called upon two physicians. When

"Not so loud!" warningly.

"As loud as I please. I am not forgetting that you need me. I'm no coward. I recognize that you hold the whip hand. But you can send me to the chair before I'll crawl to you. Now, leave me alone for a while."

The other physician had no such qualms of conscience. He was ready at all times for the generous emoluments which accrued from his dealings with the man Braine.

The Countess Perigoff was indispensed; so it was quite in the order of things that she should summon physicians.

There is a law in the state of New York—just or unjust, whichever you please—that reads that any person may be adjudged insane if the signatures of two registered physicians are affixed to the document. It does not say that these physicians shall have been proved reputable.

There were, besides the physicians, a motherly looking woman and a man of benign countenance. Their faces were valuable assets. To gain another person's confidence is, perhaps, among the greatest human achievements. A confidence man and woman in the real sense of the word. In your mind's eye you could see this man carrying the contribution plate down the aisle on Sunday mornings, and his wife Kate putting her mite on the plate for the benefit of some poor, untidy Hottentot.

On Tuesday of the following week Florence and Susan went shopping. The chauffeur was a strong young fellow whom Jones relied upon. If you pay a man well and hold out your fine promises, you generally can trust him. As their car left the corner another followed leisurely. This second automobile contained Thomas Wendt and his wife Kate. The two young women stopped at the great dry goods shop near the public library, and for the time being naturally forgot everything but the marvels which had come from all parts of the world. It is as natural for a woman to buy as it is for a man to sell.

In some manner or other Florence became

separated from Susan. She hunted through aisle after aisle, but could not find her; for the simple reason that Susan was hunting for her. It occurred to the girl that Susan might have wisely concluded the best place to wait would be in the taxicab. And so Florence hurried out into the street, into the arms of the Wendt family, who were patiently awaiting her.

The trusted chauffeur had been sent around to the side entrance by the major domo. The young lady had so requested, so he said.

Florence struggled and called for the policeman, who came running up, followed by the usual idle, curious crowd.

"The poor young woman is insane," said the motherly Kate, tears in her eyes. The benign Thomas looked at heaven. "We are her keepers."

"It is not true!" cried Florence desperately.

"She has the hallucination that she is the daughter of the millionaire Stanley Hargrave." And Thomas exhibited his document, which was perfectly legal, so far as appearances went.

"Hurry up and get her off the walk. I can't have the crowd growing any larger," said the policeman, convinced.

So, despite her cries and protestations, Florence was hustled into the automobile, even the policeman lending a hand.

"Poor young thing!" he said to the crowd. "Come, now, move on. I can't have the walk blocked up. Get a gait on you."

He was congratulating himself upon the orderliness of the affair when a keen eyed young man in the garb of a chauffeur touched his shoulder.

"What's this I hear about an insane woman?" he demanded.

"She was insane, all right. They had papers to prove it. She kept crying that she was Stanley Hargrave's daughter."

"My God!" The young man struck his forehead in despair. "You ass, she was Stanley Hargrave's daughter, and they're kidnaped her right under your nose! What was the number of that car?"

"Cut out that line of talk, young fellow; I know my business. They had the proper documents."

"But you hadn't brains enough to inquire whether they were genuine or not! You wait!" shrieked the chauffeur. "I'll have you broken for this work." He wheeled and ran back to his car, to find Susan and the countess in a great state of agitation. "They got her, they got her! And I swear on the book that they never should, so long as I drove the car."

Susan wept, and the countess tried in vain to console her.

And when Jones was informed he frightened even the countess with the snarl of rage which burned across his lips. He tore into the hall, seized his hat, and was gone. Not a word of reproach did he offer to the chauffeur. He understood that no one is infallible. He found the blundering policeman, who now realized that he stood in for a whiff of the commissioner's carpet. All he could do was to give a good description of the man and woman. Word was sent broadcast through the city. The police had to be informed this time.

Late in the day an officer whose beat included the ferry landing at Hoboken said he had seen the three. Everything had looked all right to him. It was the motherly face of the one and the benign countenance of the other that had blinded him.

At midnight Jones, haggard and with the air of one beaten, returned home.

"No wireless yet?" asked Norton.

"The George Washington of the North German Lloyd does not answer. Something has happened to her wires; tampered with, possibly."

"So long as we know they are at sea, we can remedy the evil. They will not be able to land at a single port. I have sent ten cables. They can't get away from the wire. If I could only get hold of the names of those damnable doctors who signed that document! Twenty years."

Jones bent his head in his hands, and Norton tramped the floor till the sound of his footsteps threatened to drive the moaning Susan into hysterics.

"It is only a matter of a few days."

"But can the child stand the terrors?" questioned Jones. "Who knows that they may not really drive her insane?"

On board the George Washington every one felt extremely sorry for this beautiful girl. It was a frightful misfortune to be so stricken at her age.

"She is certainly insane," said one of the passengers, who had known Hargrave slightly through some banking business. "Hargrave wasn't married. He lived alone."

After the second day out Florence was permitted to wander about the ship as she pleased.

A good many of the passengers were mightily worried when they learned that the wireless had in some mysterious way been tampered with after the boat had made the open sea. It was impossible to put about. The apparatus must be fixed at sea.

And when finally Norton's wireless caught the wires of the George Washington he was gravely informed that the young lady referred to had leaped the rail off the Banks at night and had been drowned. She had not been missed till the following morning.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)