

ZUDORA

A Great Mystic Story by Harold McGrath

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This story is being shown every Sunday and Monday evening in photo-play at the Vining. One chapter will be printed each week in the future and then be followed in the photo reels.

SYNOPSIS.

Zudora is left an orphan at an early age. Her father is killed in a gold mine. Zudora and the fortune from the mine, which grows to be worth \$20,000,000, are left in the guardianship of Frank Keene, Zudora's mother's brother. Zudora, giving promise of great beauty, reaches the age of eighteen. The uncle, who has set himself up as a Hindu mystic and is known as Hassam Ali, decides that Zudora must die before she can have a chance to come into possession of her money, so that it may be left to him, the next of kin. Hassam Ali sees an obstacle to his scheme in the person of John Storm, a young lawyer, for whom Zudora has taken a fancy, and he commands the girl to put the man out of her mind. Zudora insists that if she cannot marry Storm she will marry no one.

The negroes were not dying; they were fleeing. This mystery was no idle fancy, no idle rumor. It was a living fact, visible to the eye. She and her husband had seen the thing themselves, and they were normal minded people.

Something must be done soon or there would not be a servant left in the county.

No one could get close to it. Invariably it vanished at the approach of any living being. This ghastly



Hassam Ali and Jimmy Bolton.

thing waxed and waned, something after the manner of the coal of a man's pipe.

Of course it was plain trickery, but one could not impress the excitable negro mind with this fact, and, more than this, there were many white people who were quite assured that this skeleton hand presaged the coming of the end of the world.

Something must be done at once. Would her dear son come immediately and see if he could put this mystery where it belonged? He wired back that he would.

Of course there was no doubt in his mind that some one was playing a practical joke of a gruesome sort, but he also realized that it might turn into a serious affair if it was permitted to continue.

He laughed at one moment and swore at the next. Why the perpetrators of the joke had selected the hill back of the Storm place set him thinking deeply.

He decided to go home and lay the ghost, as the saying goes. He packed up, sent a letter to Zudora and left town.

When Zudora received the letter she was greatly perturbed. It seemed to her that what appeared as a bit of coarse foolery might have as its base something serious regarding the welfare of her love and his people. Rather diffidently she sought Hassam Ali's advice.

Her uncle shrugged. "Some country bumpkin is playing a joke on the more simple minded. Go and solve it if you wish, only you'll have your trouble for your pains."

"But how do you account for the hand?"

"Trickery, pure and simple; phosphorescence mayhap. The negro mind—at least the southern negro—is full of kinks, like his hair. He will take it as a sign that the world is coming to an end."

"Some negroes have already deserted. It looks to me something more than an idle jest."

Hassam Ali gave her a quick, shrewd glance. He wondered what was going on in the girl's mind. Had she any suspicions? It was inherent for her to speak the truth.

"Have you intimated to Storm of the gold?" he asked.

"No," rather scornfully. "I have given my word. You ought to know that I never break it."

"But often regret giving it?"

"Well, my advice is, stay home. There is no reason why you should take any risks on account of Storm's people."

"You said it was probably a bumpkin's joke."

"Yes, but the negroes cannot be trusted in a case where their imagination may get the better of their common sense. Better wait until you hear from this foot of a lover of yours."

"I am better able to judge John Storm than you," coldly. "He is not a fool."

"Hoity-toity! Hasn't it ever occurred to you that Storm is young, alone and built like most young men?"

turned on his heel and retired to his den, rather well satisfied with himself. But Zudora's love was like a shield. The barb bounded off harmlessly. John Storm was a clean man in thought and in life. She had not passed through this peculiar schooling of hers without being able to read between the lines. She was absolutely certain that love could not blind her to any defects in John. All Hassam Ali accomplished by his innuendo was to enlarge that smoldering suspicion which was ever in her heart.

A good many of us are nearsighted mentally. It is easier to judge things in the distance than close at hand. While the general world knew that Hassam Ali was a miser, Zudora was quite ignorant of the fact. Had she definitely known of his inordinate love of gold, her subsequent miseries might have been avoided to some extent.

Storm went south immediately. The home was simple and comfortable. There were two or three bits of antique furniture which had been saved from the wreck. It was night when he arrived. The country railway station had, with its usual nondescript crowd of idlers, witnessed his arrival, and the news traveled quickly. He regretted that he had not come secretly and gone about his investigations unobserved. But the damage was done and proved conclusively that he was not cut out for a detective.

He was greeted fondly by his parents, and they repeated with elaborations what had been recounted to him in the letter. It was downright serious, no laughing matter. The help were declaring that the mystic hand was the warning of the world's end. Not a few of the poorer class of white folk were accepting the hoax as a serious affair. Some of the negroes were even going so far as to kneel down to the hand (from a safe distance) and intone prayers.

"Humph!" muttered Storm. "I want a good look at this thing. And some one is going to get a rattling good kicking before I go back to town. Why the dickens should they pick out our hill for their tomfoolery?"

"Father says it's because some one has a grudge against the family," said his mother.

"An imaginary grievance," she added. "Who could possibly have a grudge against you two, who have done everything to make life decently worth while to the help?"

"You never can tell," said old Mr. Storm, digging into his pocket for his pipe.

"What time does it generally appear?"

"Oh, any time between sundown and midnight."

"All right. I'll take a shotgun and go hunting for Mr. Ghost this very night," Storm declared wrathfully. But he wasted his time. Also the night following nothing came of his vigil. The third night he was called to the door in time to see the hand flicker for a moment and then vanish. He rushed toward the hill, but found nothing. He began to grow very angry. He admitted, the little time he saw it, that it was gruesome enough. It was eight or ten feet in height, with a shadow in the palm like an embedded bullet. Subconsciously he seemed to recognize something vaguely familiar about the shape of the hand.

He did not go into the village, but prowled around in the vicinity where the hand appeared most frequently. There was no evidence of phosphorescence, no footprints except those made by the negroes some two or three hundred yards below the hill. John was puzzled and irritated at the same time. This joke was being perpetrated by some one who had brains. Meanwhile the crops lay ungathered and were beginning to rot in the fields. Something must be done in a hurry, else he would be compelled to send to the city for emigrants, who would doubtless take to their heels after the same manner as the negroes. So he telegraphed for Zudora.

And Zudora came. The Storm family had heard about her, you may be assured. But until

she appeared in the flesh they had entertained some doubts about this niece of a man whose business they held in supreme contempt. They fell in love with her at once, rather shamefacedly when up to that moment they had been quite positive that she had laid a siren's trap for their boy.

Old man Storm pondered a good deal. It did not seem possible that this slender, handsome, dark eyed girl was a detective. It did not match up with the tales he had read in books. She was just like any other girl, nothing mysterious whatever.

"It's really serious, Zudora," said John. "I've tried my hand at detectiv-

work, but I haven't gained an inch. I admit that I am totally at sea. I've seen the thing once at a great distance, and I don't wonder that the natives are barking for other parts."

"Have you any old time enemies?" she asked.

"I come back once or twice a year for a day or two. I seldom go into the village. I've been in New York for nearly fourteen years and have quite forgotten how the neighbors look. How the deuce could I have any enemies?"

"I mean your father. He may have discharged some one who aims at having revenge," she suggested.

"There hasn't been any one discharged from this place since I was a kid, and you can take it from me that the chap who is playing this game has a brain better educated than the run of help hereabouts."

"I am going to make some investigations, and you must let me go my own way. No tagging after me when I want to go into the village. Some one in the village will know what is going on. No one would come from the outside to play a game like this."

"All right. If any one can get to the bottom of this muddle it will be your lovely self. Good luck, sweetheart!"

Three or four days passed. Zudora went about her work systematically. One day she came upon a bit of news that startled her profoundly. It was of such a character that she dared not impart this news to John. He must be kept in total ignorance. The brain that had instigated this really criminal joke was in New York. It was the tool of this cunning brain she must bring to light and confusion. Her uncle! How the man hated John, to play so despicable a jest upon his people! The old suspicions returned, stronger than ever. She was growing a bit afraid of this uncle of hers; she was beginning to understand that flesh and blood did not always count. But why? Why should he wish to harm John Storm? It was an unanswerable question. She realized that from now on she must be on her guard. Her uncle must never learn that she entertained the least suspicion.

That night they all received a shock. The hand suddenly appeared on the side of the house, and even as they rushed out to look at it it slowly faded. Zudora threw a quick, circling glance.

me. I have forbidden you the hospitality of this house."

"I am well aware of that," returned Storm, quite as coldly as Hassam Ali. "I have not come for hospitality. What I demand to know is, what the devil do you mean by setting a half witted boy up to such a beastly game as that spectral hand?" Storm shook his fist under Hassam Ali's nose.

All the fury against this young man bubbled up in Hassam Ali's heart and incautiously was permitted to overflow the brim. He wanted John Storm dead, dead at his feet. He suddenly drew back his hand, but Storm was too quick for him. Amed, seeing his master in danger, seized a vase and stole up behind Storm.

But from her boudoir above Zudora had heard the loud voices. She held in her hand only a book. She flung it with more accuracy than is generally credited to the feminine arm. It hit Amed squarely on the shoulder; and the vase clattered to the floor.

John flung Hassam Ali from him and faced Zudora.

"I am sorry, dear, to have a rumpus like this, but I lost my temper."

"And perhaps I lost mine," said Hassam Ali, recognizing the need of a bit of diplomacy. "I had forbidden him the house, Zudora. He pushed his way in with threats of police."

"You were wrong, John," said Zudora, with no small diplomacy herself. "There is nothing to prevent my seeing you when and where I will, but this is my uncle's house. He has a perfect right to deny you admittance if he so wishes."

John swallowed hard. He was not expecting a rebuke from such a quarter. He apologized again and left the house. At his apartments a telegram awaited him. The specter had returned, and the farmers were patrolling the

distance to confirm her suspicions that a "magic lantern" was being focused against the side of the house. The result of this visitation was the final exodus of the help, with the exception of the housemaid and the boy who did chores about the house. The matter had been fully explained to these two. None the less they were badly frightened.

When the spectral hand appeared the next night old man Storm seized his shotgun and started out with blood in his eye. The result of his rage and excitement was a badly lacerated arm for the housemaid. The old man accused her, but John intervened. The poor girl had only been curious to see how near she could get to the specter. She was fortunate to have escaped with her life.

Later John began to show preoccupation, and when questioned by Zudora he admitted that there had been an episode of his younger days that he had all but forgotten. The dark spot in the palm of the hand had finally brought back the scene vividly.

"I used to come home during college days to hunt a little. There's quail and partridge galore in November. I used to take young Jimmy Bolton along to carry the game. He was only a kid. Well, to make a long story short, I was careless in handling the gun, and some of the charge went into Bolton's hand. The best thing we can do, then, is to locate him. He wasn't always quite right in the upper story. But how the dickens he should come to think up such a hoax and spring it after all these years gets me."

Zudora said nothing. There was nothing for her to say.

"So we'll take a look into Jimmy's affairs," concluded John.

But Jimmy had not been seen by any one for several weeks. The specter suddenly ceased operations. A week passed, and both Storm and Zudora concluded to return to town, but to return secretly the first time the hand made its appearance again.

Oddly enough Storm also had vague suspicions regarding the brain behind Bolton, but, perhaps foolishly, he refrained from confiding to Zudora. He had become reasonably sure that Hassam Ali was somewhere in the background. Jimmy Bolton was incapable of perpetrating a hoax of this peculiar

order without capital. At any rate he was determined to put the matter boldly to Hassam Ali.

Amed was not going to admit him at first. Orders were orders. But when Storm declared that he would come back with a policeman Amed concluded to accept the lesser of two evils. Storm found himself in the familiar drawing room. Zudora seemed everywhere—in the arrangement of the flowers, the pictures, the music rack.

"Well, sir," said a cold voice from behind, "this is an honor forced upon

the slightest hesitancy she sought the shack, knocked intrepidly and was suddenly dragged in and securely bound. In the dim light she could see that Bolton was not untouched with insanity.

Storm had promised not to follow, but she never went out at night without his being somewhere near. He too had seen the flashing eye. A brief tableau of Zudora struggling in the doorway was enough. He was nearly as mad as poor Jimmy Bolton. He used the fellow roughly and left him exhausted and thoroughly cowed in a corner and then liberated Zudora.

In the attic of the shack was a giant stereopticon, capable of throwing a concentrated ray a thousand yards or more. The plate projected was really an X ray exposure of Bolton's hand. John threatened and cajoled and even offered money to Bolton if he would confess who had set him up to this trick. But Jimmy refused to divulge his secret. He feared the threats of Hassam Ali far more than the threats of his victim.

A week later the crops were being harvested, and Zudora and John returned to the city, each secretly wondering what the next ordeal would hold for them.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE MOST FAMOUS SONG.

An Air Familiar to Almost Every Country in the World.

A London paper recently asked the question, "Which is the world's most famous song?" and then proceeded to make an unexpected answer—namely, that it is not "Auld Lang Syne," "Auld Laurie," "Home, Sweet Home," "God Save the King," "America," "The Watch on the Rhine," "The Marchioness" or "The Last Rose of Summer," all of which would seem to be probable candidates for the honor. What is it, then? The answer is "Malbrook," whose refrain, "We won't go home till morning" and "For he's a jolly good fellow," are equally familiar in Europe and in America.

The air of the song has been sung in Europe since the time of the crusades, when it was carried to the east and so became familiar to Turks and Arabs. The modernization of the song dates from some time after the battle of Malplaquet, when it was first sung by a French muse at Versailles, whence it spread to Paris and throughout France and, as has been said, gave the great Duke of Marlborough more celebrity than all his victories. The words were printed on fans and screens and were sung in palaces and on the streets.

The still further modernization for the exigencies of roistering melody was the last touch which insured the song universal popularity. Incorporated in opera bouffe by Bizet, sung by Marie Antoinette in the Follies, introduced by Beaumarchais in "The Marriage of Figaro" and by Beethoven in his symphony and hummed by the great Napoleon whenever he entered a battle, the air of "Malbrook" has literally sung itself into the heart of the world.

And Du Maurier understood its infinite possibilities when he had "Tilly" transform it into a great lyric tragedy.

A Lucky Imitation.

Marshal Gourko, the famous Russian general, was a terrible autocrat. On one occasion an impersonator of celebrated men was performing at a theater in Odessa. One evening he received a mysterious message, which read, "Study General Gourko." In Russia it is better not to inquire into matters that one does not understand, and so the artist spent an hour in privately impersonating the autocratic Russian.

Just as the evening performance was about to commence an order of arrest signed by Gourko was presented to the impersonator, and without explanation he was led through the streets to the marshal's palace and into an apartment where the terrible man was seated. "They tell me that you impersonate celebrated men," he roared. "Impersonate me!" Giving a hasty look at Gourko, the performer turned to the mirror to "make up." It was an anxious time, for if the marshal should take exception to the representation he had unlimited power to inflict punishment. The impersonator dragged himself together and turned to the marshal a copy of his own face and overbearing manner. Gourko burst into a roar of laughter, and the dangerous moment was over.

When Paderewski Was Poor.

Paderewski's first really important engagement as a pianist was in Paris. He was engaged to play in the drawing room of a lady famous for her musicals, and his fee, which seemed to him enormous, was \$20. He managed to persuade the humane agent to pay him in advance, and when Paderewski had redeemed his dress suit from pawn and paid for shoes, gloves, tie and other essentials he had no money left for cab hire, so he was forced to walk to the scene of his engagement. The music loving audience inspired him. He played with feeling, passion and mastery of his instrument as never before. His success was instant and unmistakable. The poor player had suddenly become the lion of the hour, and fame and fortune were assured him. At last, after disengaging himself from his admirers, he turned to leave, when his hostess, remembering with regret the smallness of the fee for so marvelous a performance, offered him her carriage for his return home. But Paderewski's pride came to the rescue. In his courteous yet reserved way he made a formal bow, and, saying, "No, thank you, madame; my own is waiting," he stepped out for his long walk homeward.—Pearson's Weekly.



The Old Man Accused Her, but John Intervened.



The Skeleton Hand Appeared on the Side of the Hill.



Zudora Was Suddenly Dragged In and Securely Bound.