

The Hope Diamond Mystery — by

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NOTHING in history, fiction or the extraordinary record of which, stolen two thousand years ago, came to May Yohe, the lordly estates and prospects of a prince



LITTLE VINSON McLEAN, THE HUNDRED-MILLION-DOLLAR BABY.

The most carefully safeguarded child on the face of the earth, who suddenly dashed from his nurse and rushed out of the gate of the McLean residence in Washington and plunged to his death under the wheels of an automobile. Mrs. McLean was the unlucky possessor of the Hope Diamond. This happened a little more than a year ago, and is one of the latest recorded tragedies connected with the famous jewel.

By May Yohe (Lady Francis Hope)
CHAPTER XIV.

(Continued from Last Sunday.)

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ON a previous Sunday I told my readers how I was determined, when Captain Strong stole my jewels from my bank in New York and fled to Europe, that I would follow him to the ends of the earth if necessary until he had redeemed his promise to marry me and restore to my name the honor he had filched from it. I described the beginning of this hunt—through London and Paris to Portugal, where I found him standing just across the international boundary line, where a warrant that had been issued in New York for his arrest could not be served. He smiled as I went up to him. I had been furious, but my first glance at him reawakened all the old love. He did not even re-arouse my anger by his greeting, which was:

"Hello, Maysie; got any money? I'm broke."

As I have told before, we went to Lisbon, on my money—I bought the tickets from the boundary line to the capital—where we were entertained by Don Carlos, the brother to the King.

During all these days in Lisbon I determined every time Captain Strong was out of the hotel and out of my sight that when he came into the room where I was I would "have it out with him"—that I would upbraid him for his despicable treatment of me.

But the moment he came into the room I was as clay under the thumb of the potter. The devil's advocate is a woman's own desire, ninety-nine times out of a hundred. I wanted to trust Captain Strong, because I loved him, although my better judgment told me that the more I trusted him the more I would be deceived. A woman is a fortress that can never be carried unless there is treachery within—her heart. Mine was treacherous every time

Captain Strong smiled at me and put his arm around my neck and said, in that wonderfully soft, lying voice of his, "Now, don't be angry, Maysie; you know it's only ugly women who look pretty when they're angry; a pretty woman always looks ugly. And you're pretty, you know, Maysie dear."

He would say that and smile at his memory, and mine, of the many, many times I had wilted before him at that same speech. And I'd have to smile, too, at the consummate nerve of his re-employment of it—and I could never be angry and smile at the same time.

He had no money—he never had. I paid the bills at Lisbon. He had squandered the proceeds from the sale of the jewels he had stolen from me. Accordingly I sold some of the jewels I had with me, enough for our passage to South America, with enough over to see us through a season down there. Before our steamer sailed we went down to Monte Carlo with a party headed by Don Carlos.

I have said before that I always was a gambler—and everyone knows the old saying, "Unlucky at love, lucky at cards." I had with me about two thousand dollars in money—the cash we were to have when we arrived in South America. When I saw the others playing about the tables, winning and losing, I could not restrain myself any longer.

"This two thousand dollars won't go very far with us, Bradlee," I said to Captain Strong. "Let's risk it on the throw. You play it according to my inspirations, and let's see if we can't make a killing. If we go broke—well, I've got some jewelry left and we'll pawn some more."

He was eager to play, but I made him promise to follow my tips. I told him what to play, when to play and just how to stake our money, in little sums at first, and then, if he won, to double up; if he lost to trim his bets until his winning streak should come. He promised, and went away with our little hoard, the gaming lust in his eyes. I waited at the hotel with my Japanese maid, Yori, not daring to trust myself to watch the play where so much was at stake.

After a whole afternoon, which we spent at the hotel window watching for him to return, we saw him coming up the path. My heart went into my mouth and I dropped weeping to the floor behind the window sill. He was walking with his head down, his manner dejected and his hands thrust deep in his pockets.

When he came into the room I was breathless with dread. He just shook his head and flung his hat into a far corner. "But did you play as I told you?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "but it was no use, Maysie; luck was against us. I lost every cent. Won a few times at first, but couldn't keep it up. Sorry—but it was your suggestion, you know, not mine."

I didn't know what to do. But Yori, my maid, did. She was truly Oriental, and her eyes were sharp. She was looking at Captain Strong all the time he was speaking. Suddenly, in the midst of my tears, I saw that she was standing behind him, signalling to me to follow her into another room. Mystified, I got up from the floor and went into my dressing room.

"He got wicked look in his eyes," Yori said in her eager, emphatic way. "He tell lie. He no lose—he win; win big. I know because can tell from face. Man can make lips lie, but no can make eyes and face lie. You see."

I went back to him, firmly believing what Yori told me. I began to question him. He turned his trousers pockets inside out and flung me his pocketbook—empty, all empty. But I was not satisfied. I went up to him and suddenly ran my hand into his inside jacket pocket. And I pulled out a handful of bank notes—equal to \$14,380. He had made a wonderful killing instead of losing. And he was trying to "hold it out" on me!

Most men would have been abashed after being caught like that, but he just laughed impudently. He said he was only trying to scare me for a joke. Yori said, "No joke. Eyes tell might" mad 'cause discovered."

At last we sailed for the Argentine. Captain Strong threw all our past troubles over his shoulder the moment we boarded the ship, and was the wonderful sweetheart

again, smiling, debonair, fascinating. It was a new honeymoon. When we landed in the Argentine I counted myself the happiest woman in the world.

While we were living as man and wife, openly, at the most fashionable hotel in Buenos Ayres, every one knew, of course, that we were not married, and that I still was Lady Hope. When we arrived the newspapers mentioned our coming, and told the story of my elopement with Captain Strong all over again. But it made no difference. The people of Argentine are the broadest minded people on earth, I think. They ask a young couple only the one question: "Are you in love with each other?" If they are, or if their actions indicate they are, and they are not common, there is nothing more to be said. It is wrong, of course, but it made everything pleasant for me during my stay in South America.

Breach of promise suits, suits for damages because of libelous affairs in which women's names are apt to figure, never appear in courts in Argentine. Men dispose of wounds to their feelings, or of slights to their lady loves, by the duel. And there are, indeed, many affairs of this kind that have to be settled in this way, for there is no place under the sun where there is so much lovemaking, clandestine correspondence between fair señoritas and lovelorn caballeros.

If a maiden demurely droop here eyelids over shining black eyes on the evening promenade when a gay caballero looks at her with meaning glance as he passes by, then a love affair is born. Every day the caballero waits for his enchantress. Every day she lifts here eyebrows and then droops her lids as she passes him. After a few days she drops her handkerchief. He picks it up, and in handing it to her passes her a note. The next day the comedy of the handkerchief again is played out, only this time he abstracts his answer from the piece of linen before he returns it. The duenna is looking on all the time, of course, and, of course, she knows just what is going on—but she doesn't see the note, nor the telegraphing of the eyes, so she says nothing.

After awhile there is another caballero who attracts the maiden. The handkerchief no longer is dropped for the first. Promptly the jilted one challenges his rival to a duel. The maiden's heart is thrilled and she waits breathlessly through the day she knows the duel is to take place. That evening at the promenade on the plaza one of the two caballeros passes and sweeps his hat to her. She knows he was the conqueror, and the vanquished knows better than to ever notice her again.

And when it is the suitor who jilts the maid she would never think of taking his love notes into court and asking damages for a breach of promise. She simply tells her brother or another admirer—perhaps an admirer to whom she has never spoken nor written a note, but whose yearning glance she has met on the plaza, that Senor So-and-So has wounded her. Ah! Quickly go gallant feet to hunt up the Senor So-and-So, who, upon being found, is slapped across the cheek. Senor So-and-So bows gracefully to his assailant. He even offers him a cigarette, which is accepted. Sometimes they will stroll away arm in arm, discussing the time and place of to-morrow's meeting and whether they are to use pistols or swords. No woman's name is besmirched, you see, for the Senorita who is to be avenged or chastened, according to the outcome of the duel, is never mentioned nor referred to. Not even the seconds know who she is. It may be fantastic and old-fashioned, but I think it's the most romantic and the best way to settle the arguments of love.

It was while I was in Buenos Aires that good news came from England. Lord Francis had divorced me. Now I was free to demand my honor from Captain Strong.

That afternoon I faced him. The time had come, I told him, when he could make good the promise he had so often made me, and give me a name. He demurred. He said it would be bad policy for us to do such a thing there where we had been accepted already as man and wife—that he would marry me as soon as we returned to the States, etc., etc.

"Bradlee," I said to him, just as quietly as if we were talking over a commonplace subject, "you swore to me