

The Diamond From the Sky

By ROY L. McCARDEL

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This instalment of this romantic novel and absorbing narrative will be shown in motion pictures at The Casino Theatre on Thursday afternoon and night.

\$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. No literary ability is necessary to qualify as a contestant.

You are advised to see the continued photo play in the theaters where it will be shown—to read the story as it runs every week, and then send in your suggestion. Contestants must confine their contributions for the sequel to 1,000 words or less. It is the idea that is wanted.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

A feud has existed between Colonel Arthur Stanley and his cousin, Judge Lamar Stanley, over an heirloom, the diamond from the sky, found in a fallen meteor by an ancestor. Also, the succession to the Stanley earldom in England may come to an American. When a daughter is born to the colonel and the mother dies, the colonel buys a gypsy boy and substitutes him. Three years later the gypsy mother, having had no part in this bargain, steals the girl, being reared in secret, and leaves her son undetected as the heir. The gypsy has obtained possession of the diamond from the sky, and a document with the Stanley secret. When Esther is grown a beautiful young girl, Hagar, now gypsy queen, returns to Virginia with her, Dr. Lee, the late Colonel Stanley's friend, adopts Esther, but demands that Hagar turn over to him the diamond from the sky. Arthur Stanley, son of Hagar, falls in love with Esther and so does his companion and cousin, Blair Stanley, rightful male heir of Stanley. In stealing the diamond Blair causes the death of the doctor and tries later to put the blame on Arthur, who takes the diamond from him. The sheriff attempts to take Arthur into custody, but he eludes his pursuers and joins Hagar, who reveals his identity and upbraids him for his wild life. Needing money, he pawn the diamond in Richmond. At a ball, at which a supposed New York belle, Vivian Marston, is the guest of honor, Arthur and Blair find the diamond on the visitor. She is an adventuress who has borrowed it.

Luke Lovell, Hagar's gypsy guard, steals the diamond, and to avoid detection drops it into a mail box. Arthur leaves Richmond and goes to the west. The diamond passes into a mail bag, picked up by Quabba, organ grinder. Quabba's monkey steals the diamond. Hagar takes Esther to Stanley hall.

Tom Blake, a detective of Richmond, who is hired by Hagar, produces finger prints convicting Blair. Hagar proposes silence to Mrs. Stanley as the price of Hagar's and Esther's being received in Fairfax society. Blair strikes down Hagar and steals the finger prints, leaving the gypsy demented. The diamond is found by a negro boy and is taken by a tramp. The latter is murdered by Hung Li. It is stolen just as a shambling party enters Hung Li's den. Hagar is again with Esther among the gypsies. Marmaduke Smythe, lawyer, arrives to announce Arthur is heir to the deceased Earl of Stanley. Learning Arthur is a fugitive he seeks Blair instead. To win Vivian, Blair steals the diamond, later marrying her and leaving for the west. Their train is robbed, Vivian losing the diamond, which a slain train robber drops in the desert. The \$100,000 he stole is found by Arthur, now known as John Powell, sheep herder. Vivian deserts Blair, telling him he must regain the diamond for her. Luke Lovell, driven from the camp after learning Hagar's secret, leaves to seek Blair. Hagar is under treatment and Esther is in Richmond society, protégée of Mrs. Stanley, who suspects her real name, and of Mrs. Randolph. Abe Bloom, gambler, who knows Blair's guilt, covets the diamond and calls it the price of his secrecy. Blair will not listen to Lovell, and Arthur also insists on his silence. Blair returns to Richmond and, instigated by his mother, pays unwelcome court to Esther. Mrs. Stanley asserting Vivian had been married before. The diamond is picked up by an Indian woman. Dr. Lee, Arthur learns, died of heart disease. Becoming very rich he buys Stanley hall, sold at auction, through Blake, and also provides for Hagar and has money left secretly in Esther's room. Luke Lovell buys the diamond from the squaw, but loses it in a fight on Santa Barbara bay, the gem sinking. At the auction Smythe buys a mounted deer head. Vivian, desiring aid to ensnare Arthur, sends for Blair. The latter is wanted in an attempt to take the Stanley document from Esther, defended by Blake and Quabba.

Esther and Quabba, also Blair, go to the California mines to seek Arthur. Blair to learn the whereabouts of the diamond for Vivian. Smythe is sent west by Blake. Lovell repairs the coach in which Esther and Smythe ride. Quabba catches a fish with the diamond in his gills, but a pelican bears off the gem.

CHAPTER XXIX. Desperate Chances.

THE rumble of the old mountain stage coach down the hillside came clearly to the ears of Blair and Luke. The coach had not gained a thousand yards from the mountain top blacksmith shop when the broken linchpin that Luke Lovell, at Blair's instigation, had replaced gave way. The tongue had snapped like a pipestem, and the driver, tangled in the reins, had been dragged by the frenzied horses along the road. His helper lay as dead where the coach had toppled and plunged down the mountain side when the wheel came off.

Bounding like a boulder down the hillside, the coach rolled and tumbled, while its passengers, Esther and the eccentric English lawyer, Marmaduke Smythe, held as best they could to the straps and interior trappings of the old coach for a few brief seconds of mute horror.

Then the crash—and all was still. Luke and Blair, panting with exertion and excitement, paused not nor gave any heed to the seeming dead man in the road nor the driver, bruised and dragged by the bolting, frenzied horses. They sped down the steep hillside to witness their work, nor stopped till they stood beside the shattered old coach body.

There, prone among the wreckage, lay Esther and Marmaduke Smythe. Esther's eyes were closed, but she had been thrown out providentially, it would seem, with a cushion from the coach that had saved her even from shock and bruise.

No longer a timid gypsy maiden, but a resolute young woman now, realizing she was a Stanley of the blood, Esther had become as wise as the serpent, though seemingly as mild as the dove. Was it love for Arthur or was it the old feudal courage of her forebears that prompted her to do this?

Luke a flash, once the shock and danger of the accident had passed, Esther realized it was Blair Stanley speeding down the hillside and close beside him Luke Lovell. The wisdom of the ser-

would never look at me, but I have always loved her. I might have been a better man if she had cared for me."

"You forget that I am fond of Esther too," murmured Blair. "But if she is dead or if she is unconscious, if she lives she will have no thought of you and me," added Blair. "It is she who has the proof we seek to make our fortune, the proof Arthur Stanley will give all the millions he has made as John Powell to keep suppressed. Esther has the Stanley document," and as he said this Blair stooped over the seemingly unconscious girl.

"Don't you touch her! Don't you lay a hand on her!" cried Luke. "I will carry her. She isn't dead, thank God!" Esther stirred and sat up and gazed resolutely at them both. Luke picked her up as though she were a child. "You bring her baggage," he said roughly to Blair, and he nodded his head indicating the dress suit case that had fallen from the crushed and shattered coach.

In this way Esther was borne to the blacksmith shop. She knew the document was safe from these evil hands, under the rock by the coach, and had as she knew Luke Lovell was, she felt no great harm would befall her while he was by.

This proved to be the case, for when Esther declared to them that the Stanley document—and she professed to know nothing of such a document—was not upon her person Luke believed her, and Blair Stanley was constrained to do likewise.

"Look in her suit case, then," said Luke, and Blair, picking up a chisel, forced the lock. As desperate as was the situation, Esther could hardly restrain a smile when Blair, with an expression of disgust, brought forth from the suit case a pair of striped pajamas, a flask, some shirts and collars and other male belongings, more than evidently the property of the precise English lawyer, Marmaduke Smythe.

"We have got the wrong baggage," snarled Blair to Luke. "You go back to the coach and find hers, and I will guard her here."

"I would as soon trust her with a wolf," growled Luke. Then he turned to Esther and held his arms out to her. "You say the word, Esther," he said, "and I will kill this blackguard for you."

But Esther shrank from the fierce, passionate gypsy. "I hate you as I hate him," she said. "You will get no document, you will get nothing, and I do not fear either of both of you. Arthur Stanley will repay you well and fittingly for even daring to lay a hand upon me!"

"Well, to you up then, missy," said Luke, shrugging his shoulders. "If I can't have the lady I will take the gold. Matt Harding, your dead father, if he was your father, made his fortune out of the Stanley secret, and I will make mine. As for Arthur Stanley, he can't help you! We know enough to disgrace him if we expose him here in California and show he is not John Powell, the millionaire, but Arthur Stanley, wanted for murder in Virginia!"

Esther scorned to answer. The two worthies, neither trusting the other, tied her securely and went together back to the wrecked coach to find her suit case and, as they hoped, the Stanley document. But at the coach, in their absence, Marmaduke Smythe had revived before the driver had secured his horses and, bruised and dazed, had recovered sufficiently to revive his comrade and then seek for his passengers. When the driver had flung down the hill to the wrecked coach and inquired of the recovering Smythe where the young woman passenger was, Smythe had replied, "I do not know where she is gone, but I jolly well know I am going myself!" And gathering up the suit case he thought was his, and taking his gun and the mounted deer head, the trophy that he prized beyond all his possessions, the English lawyer tottered off into the wilds in the direction of the Lady Veronica mines, as he thought.

When Luke and Blair arrived upon the scene they told the driver his young lady passenger was safe at the blacksmith shop and they had come for her belongings. None could be found, however, and Luke and Blair returned reviling each other.

Darkness was falling at the time the accident occurred. It was dark in the blacksmith shop, but Esther felt the braver at the absence of the two men. She struggled and freed herself from the ropes that had bound her and beat upon the great heavy door of the shop, crying for help.

Quabba, mourning his young mistress and bewailing his fate that he had so strangely found and so strangely lost the diamond from the sky again, had set out on foot for the mines to find Arthur, but especially to find Esther, his young mistress. It was just at nightfall that he reached the forge, some three miles yet from the mines. It was locked, gloomy and deserted in the darkness. But from within he heard a voice he recognized, the voice of his young mistress appealingly crying for help. A sledge stood by the door. Quabba seized it and shattered down the door and soon he was shedding tears of joy as he clasped the hands of Esther.

There was no time for explanation now. A look from Esther and the two sped off through the darkness, to be followed a few moments later by Blair and Luke returning to find their fair prisoner had been freed and was gone. Over the mountains, through the darkness went pursuers and pursued, while by a log near a marsh Lawyer Marmaduke Smythe gathered up some dry trash and lit his fire to camp for the night. He had lost his way, but philo-

sophically he accepted the situation.

"I am a lucky beggar that I thought to bring a tin of biscuit and a flask of brandy in my luggage," he remarked half aloud. And he opened the suit case he had borne so far together with his other impedimenta of gun and deer head. "My word, the wrong portmanteau!" he exclaimed as in the fire light he brought forth a woman's dainty nightgown and boudoir cap. "Well, no matter," he added resignedly; "they will protect me from the drafts in this jungle. Now, if I only had a night light in case my fire goes out. I am used to having a night light, and if I had that and my portable bathtub I could stand the wilderness. But if the late Lord Cecil Stanley could only see me now!" he added fervently as he surveyed himself in his strange night attire. "By Jove, this is roughing it with a vengeance!"

The moon came up, and as if waiting for it as a signal the harsh, discordant chorus of croaking marsh frogs sounded on all sides.

"Indians! Savage Iroquois!" cried the alarmed lawyer, seizing his gun. "But no," he added to himself; "I will not shoot. Their warwhoops on every side show they surround me. I will scout off in the darkness like one of those bally astute western American prairie loopers, such as the subtle Arizona Alfred previous English travelers to these wilds have written about. But just won't I write a book that will thrill Piccadilly when I get back unscathed—if I ever do!"

And softly dropping the marshmallows which he was toasting, a box of which he had found among Esther's effects, the frightened barrister stole softly away, but he was not so frightened as to leave his baggage behind. He bore with him the deer head, the suit case and the gun, and on higher land, out of earshot of the savage war cries of the greenskins, he camped quite uncomfortably, thank you, in the crotch of a large live oak tree.

CHAPTER XXX. Planning to Win a Millionaire.

DAY broke on the other side of the mountain at the Lady Veronica mines. The horse whistle at the power plant woke the echoes of the mountain gorge. The miners tumbled from their banks and stormed the greasy cookhouse. In the boss' shack the telephone rang, and a sleepy assistant foreman took a message from John Powell, chief engineer at the workings on the other side, to which from the Lady Veronica mines a tunnel was driven four miles through the mountain. The message called for all hands to quit the job and come through to the new workings on the other side. The message is delivered to miners, outside men, the cookhouse help, even to the ore strippers who have just begun to load the ore-carrying cable cradle that carries the ore from the hillside outcrop across the gorge to the tippie on the other side of the ravine.

The whistle woke Esther and Quabba from where they had fallen exhausted in their flight on the rugged mountain side a mile or more away. It roused to their evil purposes in their waking hours Luke Lovell and Blair Stanley as well.

"That is the mine whistle!" exclaimed Quabba. "If we can reach the mine we will find Arthur Stanley, and we will be safe."

Neither Quabba nor Esther knew, as Blair and Luke did, that Arthur had left the Lady Veronica mines and had crossed the mountain to his new workings. But Arthur Stanley, or John Powell, as California knew him, had now ridden away from the new workings in company with one of his foremen and was well on his journey across the great mountain range to distant Santa Barbara, where he had arranged to take over the palatial steam yacht that was to be delivered to him there.

Vivian Marston, in Los Angeles, had kept herself posted as regards Arthur's comings and goings.

Experienced and world wise, Vivian Marston laid her plans well. She knew how telling and effectual a romantic or dramatic first meeting with the youthful and high spirited type of young man always is. She had met Arthur, it is true. Twice she had seen him. The meeting had been but a passing introduction at Mrs. Randolph's ball in Richmond. In the excitement that followed so swiftly when the diamond had been torn from her own fair neck by an unseen hand, an excitement heightened by the further climax of Arthur's arrest on the charge of having murdered Dr. Lee and his desperate fight and flight, the passing introduction had left no impression other than perhaps the slightest upon Arthur, Vivian was sure.

After this she had briefly seen him at the tournament at Fairfax. But these brief contacts, Vivian realized, were as nothing. She felt that to impress Arthur she must throw herself in his way in some impressive manner, at a time when there would be no distraction to mitigate against the dramatic intensity of the meeting as she planned it.

The reckless daring of Arthur had interested her, but as a bankrupt young Virginia gentleman or as a fugitive from justice she had not deemed him worth exercising her siren spells upon, even had opportunity presented itself. But here in California it was a far cry from the situation as it had been in that Virginia. The fugitive young prodigal of Virginia was John Powell, the multimillionaire, whose dazzling rise to riches through his oil investments had made him a marked man even in California, that wonder land where everything possible can happen.

Vivian had sedulously kept out of Arthur's way in Los Angeles, and now that she had brought on Blair to aid



Vivian Marston Plans to Ensnare Arthur.

her later, but had sent Blair away for the present that she might better work out her plan unhampered. Vivian Marston felt that the gods were kind, and she resolved she would not fail. Every time that bound Arthur Stanley to his old life in Virginia was broken, now that he was John Powell, California millionaire, flattered, sought after. Every tie was broken, save perhaps his affection for Esther. But youth and success and fatuity lead to forgetfulness, as Vivian knew. Once could she cross his path impressively, as she planned, she felt sure she could hold him, and Esther would be but a memory, a faint influence no longer to be feared. She had taken care to avoid John Powell when that courted young magnate had arrived at the great hotel at Santa Barbara, a hostelry for tourists of wealth, to take command of



She Donned a Fetching Sailor Costume.

the palatial steam yacht that she had read in the papers would be delivered to him in the beautiful bay of Santa Barbara.

Her prospective prey had come on horseback and had met the yacht broker shortly before she had arrived at the same hotel. He had donned the expensive yachting attire that had been sent here for him and was on his way to the wharf as Vivian watched from the window of her room in the hotel and mused upon her plan of campaign.

"That is the new yacht the young millionaire, John Powell, has just bought, is it not?" she asked of the attentive hotel maid. The maid was quick to assent. "Have you seen Mr. Powell, ma'am?" the maid asked eagerly. "He is so handsome all the young ladies at the hotel are dying to meet him!"

"He is an old friend of mine," said Vivian, smiling. "Too bad he went to his yacht before I saw him. I know he would have taken me aboard." Then, as though the idea had just occurred to her, she clasped her shapely and gem covered hands together and cried: "I know what I will do. I wired here before I came that a sailboat should be hired for me. The clerk told me the owner of the sailboat had it waiting for me anchored off the dock. If I hurry I can sail out to the yacht before Mr. Powell will be through looking it over and getting under way for the trial trip. Here, help me into these clothes." And with the hotel maid's assistance Vivian quickly attired herself in a fetching sailor costume, which helped to set off her rich beauty to ad-

vanture. Calling a taxi, she drove to the wharf to find the sailboat owner waiting for her. Declaring she was a good sailor of pleasure craft and could handle a small boat as well as any man—which was true enough—Vivian Marston refused the assistance of the bewildered sailboat owner. She had him run up the sail for her and left him at the wharf and headed the pretty craft in the direction of the graceful yacht anchored far out. Already, with steam up and anchor weighed, the yacht was ready to start off on its first voyage under the command of its new owner, John Powell.

Far away in the Sierras, in that wild region where lie the Lady Veronica mines, owned, like the great white yacht in Santa Barbara bay, by John Powell, another fair but younger woman seeks also this fortunate young man. Roused from the slumber of exhaustion, Esther and Quabba hastened along the mountain road toward the now deserted mine. By some unfortunate chance the evil pair who pursued and who had lost them in the flight, in the night now sighted them again. Quabba was first to sense the renewed pursuit. "There is Blair Stanley and Luke Lovell!" he cried. Esther gathered up her skirts and ran like a young frightened fawn beside her faithful protector.

"The mine is not far away. We heard the whistle at daybreak quite plainly," Esther panted. "Arthur is there. Arthur will save us."

But she little knew there was none to save her at the place of refuge. Arthur was far away, and a designing and unscrupulous, beautiful woman was summing a desperate plan to ensnare him.

Nearer and nearer came the specter of Luke and Blair. Quabba seized ESTER by the hand and turned sharply down the rocky hillside where the sheds at the mine mouth could be seen at the bottom of the wild gorge far below. Over rock and shrub, down the dizzy hillside, Quabba and Esther fled. But the more sturdy and agile Luke and Blair gained on them.

Suddenly Quabba held back himself and Esther with an effort. They had reached the upper anchorage of the cable carrier across the gorge. Here the empty ore cradle hung upon the pulleys just as the ore strippers at the outcrop left it when summoned, with the other workmen, to proceed through the tunnel in the mountains to the new workings on the other side, four miles straight through the very heart of the hills.

"Quick!" gasped Quabba, clambering nimbly into the ore carrier and helping the almost equally active Esther up beside him.

Just as the hand of Luke Lovell clutched at the carrier Quabba lifted the catch, and the ore carrier started across the cable and darted with increasing momentum over the deep, wild gorge and the rocky, turbulent stream that roared beneath them. The cable sways, the wheels to the ore cradle hum as they spin. Over the sickening height, borne by the thin line of the cable, go the frightened girl and the devoted Quabba, while the desperate Blair and his gypsy accomplice curse each other and the flying fugitives on their swift and perilous flight down the mountain.

At the lower anchorage at the other side of the canyon the aerial tram stops with a sudden shock that almost precipitates its occupants to the ground beneath. Recovering, Quabba and Esther climb out and hasten around from the tippie tracks and back to the other side of the gorge to the mine mouth. This time they cross by a trestle built to carry the mine cars from the tunnel to the tippie. Luke and Blair meanwhile have plunged down from the upper anchorage of the aerial tramway to the river and forded their way across as best they can and reach the other side only to see their quarry is doubling back over the high trestle to the tunnel mouth.

Teaching the mine opening at the trestle end, one glance shows to Quabba and Esther that the workings here are deserted. There is no help. Not even a watchman or mine guard has been left behind in the exodus to the other workings through the mine tunnel under the mountain. Now, while they halt and hesitate, Luke and Blair have seen the helplessness of the fugitives.

"There is no one at the mine. A strike or an accident in the tunnel has called away every man," pants Blair. "We will have them yet, and this time we will not take the girl's word that she has not the Stanley document on her person." And Luke Lovell echoed, "We will have them yet!"

They are half across the trestle when Quabba, inspired by despair, notices the little electric engine by the mine mouth. He has not to speak to Esther as he sends himself in the driver's seat, for Esther climbs up and sits beside him. A turn of the controller proves the power is on, and the little, low, heavy motor glides off like a thing of life, grinding and showering sparks from the overhead feed wires into the narrow, dark depth of the tunnel. In they go, into the darkened heart of the hills.

After them, floundering and cursing over the ties and through the mud and water of the mine, panting and swearing, come their relentless pursuers, following the trolley's blue sparks far off, with a determination that will not be denied.

In Santa Barbara bay John Powell's yacht moves swiftly from its anchorage. The owner is at the wheel receiving his first instructions from his sailing master. The owner's boyish face is lit with a smile, and his dark eyes dance with excitement. Sudden-