

# The MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY

By Harold MacGrath

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"The Million Dollar Mystery" will run for twenty-two consecutive weeks in this paper. By an arrangement with the Thanhouse 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 theatres. For the solution of this mystery story \$10,000 will be given.

**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 the motion picture drama will be made and the last two chapters of the story written by Harold MacGrath.

Solutions may be sent to the Thanhouse Film Corporation, either at Chicago or New York, any time up to midnight, Dec. 14. They must bear postoffice marks not later than that date. This allows four weeks after the first appearance of the last film release and three weeks after the last chapter is published in the paper in which to submit the solutions.

A board of three judges will determine which of the many solutions received is the most acceptable. 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 theatres 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 picture 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 \$10,000,000?
- No. 3—Whom does Florence marry?
- No. 4—What does become 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 one night enters a Broadway restaurant and there comes face to face with the gang's leader, Braine.

After the meeting, during which Braine apparently recognizes the officer, Hargrave hurries to his magnificent Riverside home and lays plans for making his escape from the country. He writes a letter to the girls' school in New Jersey where 18 years before he had mysteriously left on the doorstep his baby daughter, Florence Gray. He also pays a visit to the hangar of a daredevil aviator.

Braine and members of his band returned to Hargrave's home at night, but as they enter the house the watchers outside see a balloon leave the roof. The safe is found empty—the million which Hargrave was known to have drawn that day was gone. Then some one announced the balloon had been punctured and dropped into the sea.

Florence arrives from the girls' school, Princess 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. Princess 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 briefings fall into the hands of the police.

Later, Florence is lured from home by the band, but succeeds in freeing herself from their clutches. The next day Jones removes a box from his hiding place and, pursued by Braine's men, rushes to the water front. A race in motor boats ensues. Jones drops the box into the sea and with his automatic sets fire to the pursuing boat.

Braine lures the Olga and began his customary pacings. At long last he paused.

"Suppose we have a real old-fashioned coaching party out to the old mansion we know about?"

"And what shall we do there?"

"Make the mansion our summer castle where some fine people enter can't get out. Do you think you could get her to go?"

"I can try."

"Olga, I must have that girl; and I must have her room. Sometimes I find myself mightily puzzled over the whole thing. If Hargrave is alive, why doesn't he turn up now that it's practically known that his daughter presides over his household? I might understand it if I didn't know that Hargrave is really afraid of nothing. Where is the man with the five thousand, picked up at sea? What was the reason for Jones' carrying that box out in the broad daylight? Who is the chap watching across the street? Sometimes I believe in my soul—if I have one!—that Hargrave is playing with us, playing! Well, I'm going to the hall consumed with indignation. The black hundred always goes forward, win or lose, and never forgets."

"We are a fine pair!" said the woman bitterly.

"We are exactly what fate intended us to be. They wrote you down in the book as a beautiful body with a crooked mind. They wrote me over as the devil, doomed to roam cart top till I'm killed."

"Killed?"

"Why, yes. I'm not the kind of chap who dies in bed, surrounded by the weeping members of the family, doctor, nurse, and priest. I'm a scoundrel; but it has this saying grace, I enjoy being a scoundrel. Now, I'm going up to the club. There's nothing like a game of billiards or chess to smooth that wrinkle which seems to worry you."

In the great newspaper office there was mighty racket. Midnight already means pandemonium in the city room of a metropolitan daily. Copy boys are rushing to and fro, messengers and printers with sticky galley in their hands; reporters were banging away at their typewriters, and interminglingly, you could hear the ceaseless clatter of the telegraph.

The managing editor came out of his office and approached the desk of the night city editor.

"Editorial page gone down?"

"Twenty minutes ago," said the night city editor.

"I wanted a stick on that Panama rumpus."

"Too late."

"Where's Jim Norton?"

"At the chamber of commerce banquet. The major is going to throw a bomb into the enemy's camp."

"Nothing on the Hargrave stuff?"

"No. Guess I'd better put that in the cubby-hole. He's dead."

"No will found yet?"

"Not a piece as big as a postage stamp."

"That will leave the girl in a tough place. No will, no birth certificate, and worst of all, no photograph of the old man himself. I don't see why Jim sidestepped this affair. He is the only man in town who knew anything about Hargrave."

"He hasn't given it up; but he wants to cover it on his own, turn the yarn when he's got it, no false alarm."

"Ah! So that's the game?"

"Yes; and Jim is the sort every paper needs. When the time comes the story turns up. If there is one. Here he is now. Looks like an actor in the fourth act of a drama. Good looking chap, though."

Norton came in through the outer gates. He was in evening clothes, top hat. A dead cigarette dangling between his lips.

"How much do you want?" asked the night city editor.

"Column and a half."

"Off with your glad rags!"

"Anything good?" asked the managing editor.

"The lid has been jammed on tight. No wine in any restaurant after 1 o'clock. They'll be a roundup of every gunman in town."

"Good work! Go to it."

It was 1 o'clock when Norton turned in his last sheet of copy and started home. Just outside the entrance to the building a man with a slouch hat drawn down over him eyes stepped forward.

"Mr. Norton?"

"Yes," Norton stepped back suspiciously. The other chuckled, raised and lowered his hat swiftly.

"Good Lord!" murmured the reporter.

"Will you take a ride with me in a taxi?"

"All the way to Syracuse, if you say so. Well, I'll tinker damned!"

"No names please!"

What took place in that taxicab was never generally known. But at 10 o'clock the next morning Norton surprised the elevator boy by going down. Norton proceeded down to the National bank, where he deposited \$5,000 in bills of large denominations. The teller had some difficulty in counting them. They stuck together and retained the sudden appearance of money recently submerged in water.

Florence was delighted at the idea of a coaching party. Often during her school girl days she had seen the fashionable coaches go careening along the road, with the sharp, clear notes of a bugle rising above the thunder of hoofs and the clatter of wheels. Jones was not enthusiastic; neither was he a killjoy.

"But you are to go along, too," said Florence.

"I, Miss Florence?"

"The countess invited you especially. You will go with a hamper."

"Ah, in my capacity as butler; very good, Miss Florence. To her he gave no sign of his secret satisfaction."

The hour arrived, and the gay party bowled away. They wound in and out of the streets toward the country to the crack of the whip and the blare of the horn. Florence's enjoyment would have been perfect had it not been for the absence of Norton.

Why hadn't he been invited? She did not ask because she did not care to disclose to the countess her interest in the reporter. They were nearing the limits of the city, when the coach was forced to take a sharp turn to avoid an automobile in trouble. The man putting up at the engine raised his head. It was Norton, and Florence waved her hand vigorously.

"A coaching party," he murmured.

"And your niece, James, was not invited? O, very well," he laughed, and suddenly grow serious. It would not hurt to find out where the coach was going.

He set to work bravely, located the trouble, righted it, and set off for the Hargrave home. He found Susan and bombarded her with questions which to Susan came with the rapidity of rain upon the roof.

"So James went along?"

"In his capacity of butler only."

Norton smiled. "Well, I'll take a jaunt out there myself. You are sure of the location?"

"Yes."

"Well, good by. I'll go as a waiter, since they wouldn't invite me. I'm one of the best little waiters you ever heard of; and all things come to him who waits."

What a pleasant affable young man he was! thought Susan as she watched him jump into the car and go flying up the street.

Jones was a good deal surprised when Norton turned up at the old manor.

"What made you come here dressed like this?" the butler demanded.

"I'm a suspicious duffer; maybe that's the reason."



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"Something told me to follow you. And something in me was going to tell me to follow you, Florence."

She pressed his hand. "It was to her as if one of those black heroes had stepped out of a book; only book heroes always had tremendous fortunes and did not have to work for a living. Oddly enough, she was not afraid."

When the Countess Olga saw the three horses it was an effort not to fly into a rage. But secretly she warned her people who presently gave chase in the limousine, while she practiced and teased and laughed with her company, who were quite unaware that a drama was being enacted right under their very noses. The countess, with the aid of a superbly, tore her handkerchief into shreds. There was something sinister in the way all their plans fell through at the very moment of consummation; and that night she determined to ask Braine to withdraw from the warfare, which gradually decimated their numbers without getting them anywhere toward the goal. Jones shouted that the limousine