

# The Million Dollar Mystery

By HAROLD MacGRATH

## THE MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY

"The Million Dollar Mystery" will run for twenty-two consecutive weeks in this paper. By an arrangement with the Thanhouer 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 Thanhouer Film Corporation, either at Chicago or New York, any time up to midnight, Dec. 15. They must bear postoffice marks not later than that date. This allows four weeks after the first appearance of the last film releases 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 \$1,000,000?
  - 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 Hargreave, 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. Hargreave one night enters a Broadway restaurant and there comes face to face with the gang's leader, Braine.

After the meeting, during which neither man apparently recognizes the other, Hargreave 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 surround Hargreave'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 Hargreave 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 they are not in fact by Norton, a newspaper man.

By bribing the captain of the Orient Norton lays a trap for Braine and his gang. Princess Olga visits the Orient's captain and she easily falls into the reporter's snare. The man proves abortive through Braine's good luck and only struggles 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 hurries by Braine's men, rushed to the water front. A race in motor boats ensues. Jones drops the box into the sea and with his automobile sets free the pursuing boat.

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.

After failing in their first attempt, the Black Hundred trap Florence. They ask her for money, but she escapes again, falling them.

Countess Olga, scheming to break the connection now existing between Florence Hargreave and Norton, invites them both to her apartment and pretends to take in the reporter's name. Florence appears in the door, just as the planned moment, and as a result gives Norton back his ring.

rescued by a ship on which Norton has been shanghaied.  
Norton and Florence, safely ashore and with no longer any misunderstanding between them, take the train for home. The train is wrecked and waiting members of the Black Hundred carry the injured Florence to a deserted inn. Norton, who tries to rescue her, is tied to the railroad tracks. Florence saves him and finally Jones comes to the rescue of both.

The Black Hundred recover the box Jones dropped in the ocean. By a clever ruse Norton and Jones regain it.

Owing to the falling off of contributions to the parent organization in Russia, and agent arrives and assumes the leadership of the American branch of the Black Hundred. Through the connivance of the countess, the head is thoroughly humiliated. Braine's own plans pending restoration to power.

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### CHAPTER XIV.

#### NORTON MAKES A DISCOVERY.

Perhaps the most amusing phase of the secret agent's discomfiture was the fact that neither Jones nor Florence had the least idea what had happened during the evening of the countess, the head is thoroughly humiliated. Braine's own plans pending restoration to power.

"You received a letter of that sort and did not show it to me?" said Jones, astonished.  
"You wanted me never to pay any attention to them."  
"No; I warned you never to act upon them without first consulting me. And we might have made a capture! My child, always show me these things. I will advise you whether to tear them up or not."

"Jones, I believe you are going a little too far," said Florence haughtily. "It might have been from my father."

"Never in this wide world, Miss Florence. I beg your pardon for raising my voice. What I do and have done is only for your own sake. There are two things I wish to impress upon your mind before I go. This can be made a comedy or a terrible tragedy. You have already had a taste of the latter; and each time you escaped because God was good to us. But He is rarely kind to thoughtless people. They have to look out for themselves. I am setting under orders; always remember that."

"Forgive me; I acted wrongly. But I'm so weary and tired of this eternal suspicion of everybody and everything. Can't I go somewhere, some place where I can have peace?"

"If I thought for a single moment it was possible to take you thousands of miles from this spot, it would be done this very night. But this is our fortress. So far it has been impregnable. The police are watching it; and that prevents a general assault by the scoundrels, lowered; and they play that game exceedingly well. Now, good-night. Will you have you out of all this doubt and suspicion one of these days. There will not be any past; that will be lopped off as you'd lop a limb from a tree."

"Please let it be quick. I want to see my father."  
Jones's eyes sparkled. "And you have my word that he wants to see you. But more I dare not tell you."

"Do you think he would object to Mr. Norton?" she asked, studying the rug.  
"In what capacity?" he countered, forcing her hand.

"As—as a husband?" bravely.  
Jones in his turn studied the patterns in the rug. "It is only natural for a father to look high for his daughter's husband. But, after all, an honest man is worth as much as anything I know of. And Norton is honest and loyal and brave."

"Thank you, Jones. I intend to marry him when the time comes; so you may as well prepare father for this eventually."  
"There is an old adage—"  
But she interrupted him. "If you have a new adage, Jones, I shouldn't mind hearing it. But I'm only just out of school, where old adages are served from soup to pudding. Good-night."

And Jones went to the rear of the house, chuckling.  
In the pasting it might well be observed that the Hargreaves had a remarkable message. There was a gardener, a cook, and a maid; and the three of them reported to Jones each night before going to bed. They were all three detectives from one of the greatest organizations in America.

Finding themselves unable to lure Florence away from the environs of the Hargreave home, the Black Hundred did not seem new machinery in response. They proposed to rid the house of every one fit by a perfectly logical device. But the first step in this new move was going to be extremely delicate and risky. It was so small an adventure to enter the Hargreave house; and yet this was the goal of the plan.

Somebody, "Spider" Beggs was selected for the work. The man could practically walk over crockery without causing a sound; he could climb a house by the window ledges; and he could run the greatest line of those professional tank swimmers.

Three or four nights after the Paris fiasco, Jones started the rounds, putting out the lights. He left the man in the hall till the last, for it was his habit, after having turned

On the other hand, "Spider" Beggs never approached a house till an hour after the lights went out. Persons were likely to move about for some minutes later; they might want something to eat, a drink of water. So he remained hidden behind the summer house till long after midnight. When at last he felt assured that all in the Hargreave house were asleep, he moved out cautiously. Both his future and his pocketbook depended upon the success of this venture. It took him ten minutes to crawl from the summer house to the veranda, and to have detected this approach Jones, had he been watching, would have needed a searchlight to follow the lattice work for another ten minutes and then drew himself up and to one of the windows. Here was an operation that needed all his art and skill: to lift this window without sound. But he was an old hand and windows with ordinary locks were playthings under his deft touch. He raised the window, stepped over the sill into the library, and crouched down. He did not close the window; house thieves never do. They leave windows and doors open, because sooner or later they have got to make their escape that way.

Presently he stood up, flashed his torch, found the library shelves, and tiptoed toward them. He then selected three or four volumes, opened them at random and laid neat packets of money between the leaves. It was not real money, but only a bank clerk could have told you that. This done, he moved toward the window again.

"Stop!" said Jones quietly.  
"Spider" Beggs gasped, it was so unexpected; but at the same time almost instinctively he plunged headlong through the window, and the bullet which followed snipped a lock of his hair. He threw himself off the veranda and scurried across the lawn, zigzag fashion. But no more bullets followed.

Jones turned on the lights and investigated the room, but he could not find anything disturbed, and naturally came to the conclusion that the intruder had been interrupted before he had begun his work. He turned off the lights and sat up the major portion of the night. Nothing more happened. Florence came down, but he sent her back to bed, explaining that some one had attempted to enter the house and he had taken a shot at him.

"Spider" Beggs had a letter to write. He was in high feathers. He had tackled a difficult job and had come away without a scratch. Put so had the misfortune to write his letter to the secret service officials in a hotel often frequented by Norton. And so Jim, on finishing his own letter, blotted it and casually glanced at the blotter. A single word caught his eye. Being an alert newspaper man, always on the hunt for stories, he examined the blotter with care. It was an easy matter for him to read writing backward, having fooled away many an hour in the composing rooms. The word which had awakened the reporter's sense in him was "counterfeit." He held the blotter to satisfy himself that the Black Hundred had become active once more. And this was one of the best ideas they had yet conceived.

Hargreave had always been something of a mystery to his neighbors. Where he had lived in other days was unknown; neither had any one the remotest idea from what source his riches had been obtained. And nothing was known of Jones or the daughter. It was a very shrewd method of clearing every one out of the house and leaving it to be examined at leisure. And he had fallen upon this thing; he, Norton, all because his tailor had written him a sharp note about his bill and he had been provoked to reply in kind! Counterfeit money. There was quite a lot of it, only experts could detect it. There were two plates, one for ten and another for twenty.

while he was pulled between duty and love. Well, it would only add another story when he published it. He started out to Riverside to acquaint Jones with the discovery.

"Humph!" said Jones; "not a bad idea this. So that's what the sneak was doing—ere last night I've been wondering and wondering. Let's have a look."

He went through the books and at length came across the three volumes. These held a thousand in excellent counterfeit.

"Mighty good work that. What are you going to do?" asked the reporter.  
"Jones rubs his chin reflectively. "How long may a counterfeit be kept up?"

"Anywhere from ten to twenty years."  
"That will serve my boy, this time we'll go and take Mr. Black Hundred right in his cozy hole."

"You know where it is?"  
"Every nook and corner of it. Now you go at once to the chief of the local branch of the secret service and put the matter to him frankly. I, Florence, Susan, and the rest of us must be arrested. The wretches must believe that the house is empty. They'll have a stoutly and will return to their den to report the success of the coup. All the while you and some detectives will be in hiding upstairs, photograph and all that. When the time comes you will follow. This will not reach the heads, you see, but it will demoralize the crew. I'll help in such a way as I can. It helps for several days."

"Yes, Mr. Hargreave had it built several years ago. I don't know what his idea was; possibly he anticipated an event like this. You and your men will find entrance by this method. It can be done without exciting the suspicions of the watchers."

"Looks as if my yarn wasn't going to be delayed so long after all. Jones, you ought to have been in the secret service yourself," admiringly. Jones smiled and shrugged. "I am perfectly satisfied with my lot—or would be if the Black Hundred could be wiped out or existence."

"I'll see the secret service people at once. I stand in well with them all."  
"And good luck to you. We'll need good luck."

Norton was welcomed cordially by the chief. The secret service men trusted him and told him lots of tales that never saw light on the printed page. The reporter went directly to the point of his story without elaboration, and the chief, smiling and handed him the original letter.

"Norton, I've been after this gang of counterfeiters for months and they are clever beyond words. I've never been able to get anywhere near their presses. And for a moment I thought this note was from a sequester. I've a dozen men scouring the country. They find the bogus notes, but never the men who pass them. You see, it's new stuff. I know what all the old timers are at; but none of them has had a hand in this issue. Some forgers, I take it, under the leadership of a man I've very much like to know. Now, what's your scheme?"

"I'm outlined it briefly."  
"It all depends," said the chief. "Upon the fact that they will be impatient if they have the ability to wait. We lose. But we can afford to risk the chance. The man who wrote this letter is not a counterfeiter. He's an old yeggman. We haven't heard anything of him lately. We tried to corner him on a postoffice job, but he slipped by. He may be a stool. Anyhow, I'll draw him in some how."

"There'll be some excitement."  
"We've used to that; you too. All we've got to do is to locate this man Beggs. There are signs of spits in this letter. Very well played, if you want my opinion. What's this Black Hundred?"

"I'm not at liberty to tell just yet. It's a pretty strong organization. But if they're back of a counterfeit, tell him he shall have immunity on the word of the chief. But also ask that he must come to see me in person."  
"All right, sir."  
"I don't believe it would be wise for Beggs to see me here. I gave him a good send-off—Sing-Sing—two years ago. He may recollect," said Norton.  
"Suit yourself about that. Only, keep into communication with me by telephone and I'll tip you off as to when the raid shall take place. Lucky you came in. I should have foreseen you gone there and arrested innocent people, and they would have a devil of a time explaining. It would have taken them at least a week to clear themselves. That would leave the house empty all that time."  
Norton did not reply, but he put the matter away carefully. There was no getting away from the fact, but the god of luck was with him.



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