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# PERFECTION SMOKELESS OIL HEATERS

## The Diamond From the Sky

By ROY L. McCARDELL

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(Concluded from last week.)

only home that sweet Esther seemed fated to know, the boots of Hagar's horse, that bore them both, splashed water on the face of what seemed the corpse of a man in the sedge.

And the face of the seeming corpse was the face of Arthur Stanley, son of Hagar!

At Hagar's wild call the gypsies came running from their camp not far



Hagar Tells Arthur of His Parentage.

from the river bank. The unconscious form of Arthur was tenderly borne to Hagar's luxurious van. But ere they bore him there Hagar's hand, feeling for his faint heart beats in the dusk, had closed about the diamond from the sky.

He looked back once and saw her leaning against a great tree and weeping. But neither he nor the weeping Esther beheld the dark face of Luke Lovell peering at them through the shrubbery.

It was not until next morning that Hagar sought for the diamond and found it missing. Again her rage at Arthur burned high. Hagar hated the Stanley name and despised every Stanley possession, but she was resolved since all the Stanley line was near at hand that Esther, defrauded of every other birthright, should have the diamond from the sky.

Hagar had not wholly believed Arthur guilty of Dr. Lee's murder, even when she had first learned of his being suspected from Esther's lips when she had come for Esther to Fairfax the day before. Hagar resolved to go to Richmond, the nearest big city, feeling sure Arthur would be there in hiding, in the hope of finding him and securing the diamond from the sky for Esther, even if it were necessary to give Arthur, her own son, up to the law.

She telegraphed from the nearest railroad station, from which they took train to Richmond. This telegram was to the Blake agency, and it was sent to recall Tom Blake, the head of the concern, from Fairfax to Richmond.

No suspicion in the slightest had been directed at Blair in connection with the doctor's murder, nor did any living soul in Fairfax, save Blair and his mother, know of the encounter Blair had had with Arthur in the doctor's dooryard nor of the gruesome duel across the open grave at midnight that had followed Blair's wild rise to defame Esther's good name that Arthur might not suspect him of murder and robbery, the real guilt Blair felt the burden of.

But in order to be safe, and at his mother's suggestion, Blair Stanley had gone to Richmond, his mother giving the excuse that he went to attend to urgent matters brought about by the doctor's sudden and tragic death.

Esther, too, was gone from Fairfax now, and this, with the flight of Arthur and the presence of the Richmond detective, made the countryside of old aristocratic Fairfax county ring with rumors and the revival of old, long forgotten tragic and mysterious happenings among the Stanleys.

In Richmond Arthur Stanley, giving himself the name of John Powell, found humble lodgings awaiting opportunity to slip from Richmond when the hue and cry after him had died down. It was necessary for him to have funds. To obtain these he resolved to pawn the diamond from the sky, believing that no living person save Hagar knew of its existence.

In eighteen years the diamond from the sky had almost come to be regarded as a myth in Fairfax county. Some were who claimed it had never existed at all and others who believed it had been a bit of old trumpery that Colonel Stanley had found valueless and destroyed.

It was only when he came out of his hiding place after several days that Arthur dared buy and read a Richmond paper. There were no further accounts from Fairfax of the death of Dr. Lee and the flight of his supposed murderer.

He realized that ever since he was an impostor and stood in Blair's way, and yet he could not bring himself to be despised of Blair should he tell him the Stanley secret.

The spirits of Blair rose correspondingly. With Arthur gone, suspicion would forever rest upon the hidden fugitive! Blair heaved a sigh of relief and then said to Arthur, "You do not know my mother's cousin, Mrs. Burton Randolph, who gives the grand ball in Richmond tonight. Come, let us

have one fling, one good time together, in memory of the old days at Stanley hall before you go to the west. I will introduce you under any name you choose. There is a stunning young New York widow—lots of money and style about her—I want you to meet. She's just my style and I want your approval of her."

Arthur hesitated a moment and then realized that if the pursuit were still hot on his trail the last place he would be sought for would be at a high society function. So he shook hands with Blair and exclaimed heartily:

"I'll go you, Blair! One good fling before I go west to make my fortune. And if I make it, Blair, I promise you that you shall share it."

For Arthur all his generous impulses were now founded on the desire to recompense Blair for the heritage he had, unknowingly till now, deprived him of. And Arthur was young. For him the strong, brotherly affection he bore for Esther and the desire in his heart to do justice to Blair were now the main motives of his life. And he would have this farewell joyance with Blair.

Blair took him first to Abraham Bloom's private "club," and here, despite Arthur's wiser counsels, counsels the wisdom of which he now wondered at himself, Blair plunged again at roulette and lost the money he had got on his watch at the pawnbroker's and half of what Arthur had got from the same source on the diamond from the sky, of which, of course, Blair knew nothing.

Up to Richmond this night of Mrs. Randolph's ball came Hagar. She brought with her Esther, from whom she was resolved never again to be parted. Hagar brought also as half servant, half bodyguard her lieutenant in her gypsy queenship, Luke Lovell.

Tom Blake, the detective, returned to Richmond at her summons and met her. It took but few inquiries with the means at Blake's command to locate Blair Stanley, cutting a swath in Richmond's gayest circles. It was with surprise Hagar learned, and a happy surprise, too, that Blair Stanley was alive and seemingly uninjured the while Arthur had believed he had killed him.

Later in the evening Blake brought her word that Arthur was with Blair under an assumed name and it was evident was going to the Randolph ball with Blair that night.

was the diamond from the sky, in a fatal moment he displayed it to the opulent looking lady friend of his brother, Miss Marston of New York, and that dazzled young person had eyes for nothing else.

"That for me!" she cried, "and nothing else! It would be a sacrilege to wear anything else with that!"

"Be very careful of it," warned the cautious Bloom reluctantly. "I don't know where it came from, but when you wear that I know you are wearing one of the finest diamonds in the world!"

"They can't come too good for me, Mr. Bloom," said Vivian, as she gazed enraptured at the great jewel in its antique setting.

That night Vivian Marston, in all her luxuriant beauty, set off as it was by the diamond of the sky blazing on her fair bosom, was the cynosure of all eyes at Mrs. Randolph's ball as she stood with her hostess in the receiving line.

A Strong Hand Clutched at Her Throat.

was the sensation of the evening, she and the great blazing gem upon her breast. Then she saw Hagar, leaving Esther to be gently patronized by Mrs. Randolph, coming toward her to tell her fortune.

She settled herself back in the low gilt chair against the parted velvet hangings of the window, and then she felt a strong hand clutch at her throat, throttling her through the curtains so she could not shriek aloud. Then a brawny forearm drew back her shapely neck, and the strangling hand loosened its hold on her neck and snatched away boldly the diamond from the sky.

(To be Continued.)

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