

The New Adventure of J. Rufus Wallingford.

Presented by The Oregonian in COLLABORATION With The FAMOUS PATHE PLAYERS.

WRITTEN BY
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Dramatized by
CHARLES W. GODDARD
"Builder of the World's Greatest Series."

Introducing
BURN MONTGOMERY..... J. Rufus Wallingford
MAX FISHMAN..... Blackie Daw
LOLITA ROBERTSON..... Violet

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The Missing Hat.

HOW strange are the vagaries of fortune! At the very instant when the ardent believers in Little Joe were sitting their heads for a final shot of triumph, a gay little red balloon darted out on the track, where the horses were pounding down the stretch, whirled swiftly in front of the favorite's nose, shot straight up in the air and sailed merrily across the infield toward the green hills and the blue sky. For only an infinitesimal space of time the nervous Little Joe had shied and checked his speed; but that space was enough to let a discolored stranger by the name of Tipsey flash under the wire at 15 to 1.

"The horse!" mumbled a small man at the rail, and his face was as blank in the first moment of disappointment that it brought a chuckle from the adjoining large gentleman with the round pink face.

"Chase up, neighbor," he consoled, "the walking's good."

The small man, thus addressed, cast on the field, big J. Rufus Wallingford a sidelong glance—a slow glance and a cautious one. Cordial of manner was the field one, and jovial of eye and broad of waistcoat, and in his rich cravat gleamed a \$2000 diamond. Quite reassuring—but, nevertheless, the small man glanced once more to the right and to the left before he answered.

"Had a hundred on that rabbit," he complained.

"Well, a hundred's a hundred," chuckled the big man.

"It's a thousand when you lose it on a red balloon," objected the lean and lank Blackie Daw, climbing down from the fence, where he had been perched on a jumping-jack on a stick. He set on his head the silk hat which he had been wearing in encouragement to little Joe and smoothed his pointed black mustache. At that moment Blackie's eye caught the glint and glint of something white in the crowd. It was the head of Onion Jones, so bald that it looked freshly polished, and Onion was whisking and making mysterious signs at the rate of about seven to the second. Giving Jim the "high sign," Blackie slipped away and, following Onion to the grandstand, found there Violet Warden and her sister, Fannie. Both their pretty faces flushed with excitement.

"There's the man!" exclaimed Violet, her blue eyes dancing as she caught Blackie's stare.

"Huh! You were standing right by him, Percy W. Hutch. We followed him out here."

"On, did you?" and Blackie grinned down at her appreciatively before he paralleled her gaze to the small man with the gay haircut. "And is that the shrimp who helped clean out the War estate after the death of your father? Well, it's just for Percy. How much did he get?"

"Forty thousand dollars," it was brown-eyed Fannie who answered this, and her cheeks turned a shade pinker as J. Rufus happened to look up and catch her smiling gaze. "He is number 13 on the list." She opened her little notebook and pointed to a list of names. "I've had been scratched out. The 13th was Percy W. Hutch. He is a lawyer, but he is never in his office. We don't know much more about him."

"Leave that to us," said Blackie. "We'll tell you all about him when we hand you that \$40,000. We back to the works on the jump, ladies. I kiss you chastely on the forehead."

His long legs were springing down the steps a second after and, nodding significantly towards the small man as he approached Wallingford, he came up to the rail on the other side of Mr. Hutch and asked:

"What do you think of the next race, Jim?"

"Lady Lou," J. Rufus promptly replied, waiting for his cue. "I know Lady Lou's sure money, because she was invited to me by a barber whose cousin was a stable boy 15 years ago."

"No chance," was the contemptuous answer as Blackie glared at the small man. "I'll tell you why. No Lady Lou has won a race this meet. Lady Lou was in last in the first race today. Lady Lou's fall down yesterday and broke her collar-bone. Lady Lou's drama was pulled off the track for staggering under too much hog. Nevertheless, Jim, my boy, I'll let you bet on her against the field—for a hundred even."

J. Rufus was about to reject this outrageous offer with proper indignation, but he caught something in Blackie's eye.

"You poor lollipop" he commented. "I hate to rob an imbecile, but you're on."

"Help yourself," gaily returned Blackie, and he winked at the small man. "Better get in, stranger."

"Any more at that price?" The stranger was moist-lipped at the thought of a bet so attractive.

Once more J. Rufus studied that flicker in Blackie's eye, then they both looked at Percy W. Hutch with studious interest. His hat and his cravat were 15 years too young for him; his pallid blue eyes were set too close together; his mouth was too close to his

nose and his chin too close to his mouth, and his ears too far from the front of his face. On general principles the field, big man frowned at him, but the black-mustached one laughed.

"Piker!" he taunted his friend Jim. "If it's a good bet, why don't you take it?"

"Certainly!" A slight flash of temper in the broad-shouldered Jim, for taunting was a common diversion between these two. He turned to the stranger. "You're an neighbor, for a hundred. The palid blue eyes almost sparkled. 'Make it two hundred.'

"Wouldn't you like to have my stick-pin?" Blackie jokingly rejoined the big man. "Can't I donate something to your pet charity?"

"Can't yourself, Jimmy; can't yourself," soothed the grinning Blackie. "The gent knows a hick when he sees one, and give him credit. Urge him, stranger, he'll bite."

The stranger hesitated; then, with an uncertain smile, he walked away. "The hundred goes, anyhow," he assured them over his shoulder. "I'll be back in time for the race."

"What kind of a party is Little Stranger?" inquired Blackie Daw, twirling his pointed mustache and studying J. Rufus quizzically.

"Can't sort him," returned J. Rufus Wallingford, equally puzzled. "Crook, though. Tell it by his irregularities, that walk, the set of his eyes, his ears—"

"Well, I didn't tell it that way," interrupted Blackie. "I know he's a crook, because he is. Little Stranger is the man we've been hunting."

"Not Percy?" Jim was stunned for a moment, then he chuckled. "What a pleasant meeting—for Little Stranger!"

Little Stranger was not there at the beginning of the next race; but as Lady Lou streaked past the judges, an easy winner over the field by three good lengths, there was a mumbled just back of the big, pink-faced Jim and the lean jumping-jack on the fence—the small man, implying to the very last for some bound out of the pack to overhaul the winner.

"Oh, I guess I'm a boob!" exclaimed J. Rufus, turning his round and radiantly beaming countenance on Mr. Daw and Little Stranger. "I guess I'm a hick! Gentlemen, produce! And smile!"

"That wasn't in the bet," objected Blackie, relinquishing his hunkered, and at that moment both Mr. Daw and Mr. Wallingford turned in response to a low gurgle from Little Stranger. His hand was in his hip pocket and there was a green pallor on his face, a green glaze in his eyes.

"I've been touched!" he harked. Somebody lifted his leather!

Blackie and Wallingford looked at each other speculatively; Blackie grinned.

"Well, such things will happen, Mr. Welsh," said Wallingford, with a suspicion of a snarl. "If you will leave your pocketbook exposed, just before you have to pay a bet. Mr. Welsh, we must all take the consequences, Mr. Welsh."

The small man, his green pallor turning to purple indignation, was struggling for speech.

"My name's Hutch," he hotly stated. "I got rolled for four hundred, and the only consolation I have is for a fresh fat man to call me a Welsher! Would I have come back here if I had intended to push on this bet? No living man can put a finger on a crooked act of mine."

"How about a dead one?" suggested Blackie, and keen Jim Wallingford lifted his eyebrows as he saw on the countenance of Mr. Hutch a fleeting something.

"I swallow my words," apologized J. Rufus, genially.

"Thanks," returned the insulted one, somewhat mollified. "If you gentlemen are going into the city after the next race, I'd like to have you stop at my office and get that hundred."

Blackie Daw, standing just beside Wallingford and studying the features of Little Stranger, poked J. Rufus in the ribs. Things were coming too easy for them.

"All right, sport!" agreed Wallingford, his big, round face pink with gratification.

It was a dim and musty office into which Mr. Hutch ushered his chance acquaintances of the racetrack, and on the floor lay five letters, the accumulation of three days, as J. Rufus noticed later from the postmarks. Apparently Mr. Hutch had but small business in his office. He dusted a space on his desk for the accommodation of a check-book, which he drew from a drawer; and while he was writing the visitors inspected and catalogued and sorted everything in the place—a rusty safe, a row of dusty letter files, a broken letter-press, a long-drawn typewriter, a desk, four chairs and an ancient horsehair couch—nothing else. On the safe, "Amos Lundy"; on several of the letter files "Lundy Estate"; on several more, "Richard Lundy"; on a few, P. W. Hutch, Personal; on the glass panel of the door, "P. W. Hutch, Attorney."

"Here's your check, Mr. Wallingford," announced the attorney, with the air of one who stands clear before the world. He looked at a bit of ink on his finger. "Excuse me a minute."

The heads of Mr. Daw and Mr. Wallingford came together instantly as Mr. Hutch stepped into the washroom. When Mr. Hutch came out his acquaintances of the racetrack had turned into close friends. They beamed with pleasure at the return of Mr. Hutch and the broad-chested Wallingford grasped Little Stranger warmly by the hand.

"We owe you a dinner, sport," he urged. "You should have that much of a reward on a rough day. Come out and we'll open a bottle of bubbles!"

Wonderful entertainers, Mr. Wallingford and Mr. Daw. A dinner for Mr. Hutch: an evening at the theater for



We Are Only Removing Temptation From Your Path. Admonished Blackie.

Mr. Hutch; a supper to Mr. Hutch; a forty thousand, and I'm whetted. Ring for a drink!"

"What'll you have?" asked Wallingford, going to the phone.

"Anything," grinned Blackie. "I want alcohol on my breath when Percy gets here."

When Mr. Hutch came blithely and eagerly to be entertained, at no expense to himself, he found Wallingford's clear-eyed and genial self; but the usually chipper Blackie Daw, redolent of whiskey, the fumes of which rose chiefly from the lapels of his coat, sat nodding in a chair, he roused himself instantly, however, and grabbed Mr. Hutch by the hand.

"Glad to see you, sport!" he greeted the visitor with thick cordiality. "Let's go out and get an appetizer!"

Mr. Daw was rather a nuisance that afternoon. He was usually the life of the party, but now he was a deadener, and moreover, a constant source of humiliation to his companions. He went to sleep in leather-padded nooks in several hotel bars and he constantly went to sleep in the limousine, though whenever the machine stopped he woke with a jerk. They couldn't lose him from the party. No, sir!

In the office of Mr. Hutch, where J. Rufus invariably left something to come after the next day, tired nature at last had its way. Mr. Daw stumbled to the old horsehair couch, pillowed his head on the hard wooden arm and had started to snore before he could cross his arms.

By George, it was nearly 3 o'clock! Wallingford had to get to the bank. Suppose they left Daw here for half an hour or so. Mr. Hutch looked to the right; he looked to the left; he looked at Mr. Daw. He shook Mr. Daw again—a lifeless lump, except for that even, unbroken snore. Perhaps it would be best to let Mr. Daw recuperate from his intense fatigue.

After the spring latch had clicked the slumberer snored on and on for a solid two minutes; then he suddenly opened his bright black eyes, grinned, jumped up and bolted the door. As swiftly and as silently as a cat he crossed to the safe, stooped down and took hold of the knob with his long, sensitive fingers. He turned the knob slowly, his head cocked sideways, his ears listening intently for the click of the tumblers; and when, at last, the door swung gently open, there came on his face a smiling beatitude which was almost angelic.

Blackie Daw was still snoring when his companions returned to the office, and since he was totally useless for the purposes of entertainment, they took him to Wallingford's hotel to lay him away; and Onion Jones came anxiously out of his concealment in Jim's dressing-room as Mr. Hutch departed from Jim's parlor.

"Rough stuff wins!" exclaimed Blackie, raising from the bed with one jerk and exhibiting an astounding case of quick recuperation. "I had the time of my life burgling. If I were younger, I'd go into the business."

"Aw, cheeze!" grunted Onion Jones. "Is this guy alive or dead?"

"He's pink meat!" reported Blackie. "It's a romance. 'Hollow Hutch' only business is the estate of the late Amos Lundy. Percy gets two thousand a year for that. And he's been spending ten thousand a year, which he is supposed to be sending the heir, one Richard Lundy."

"Where's Richard?" inquired Wallingford. "Dead?"

"Nobody knows; but it's a strong

chance. The first quarterly remittance was returned from South Africa five years ago. Hutch held back the check until three more were returned; then he cashed them, and he hasn't worked since. His steal from the Warden estate was a side bet."

"What a cinch!" Onion Jones groaned. Wallingford lit a fat, black cigar and sat down to smile.

"I knew this fellow was a crook the minute I laid eyes on him," he observed.

"You couldn't make a mistake out at that track," grumpy put in Onion Jones. "Get to it, fellows; talk about the money! I want to get used to the sound."

"It looks easy," J. Rufus puffed contentedly. "How much is there left of the estate, Blackie?"

"Only a little over fifty thousand. Hutch has been dipping in on the capital to pay himself that ten thousand a year."

"A little over fifty thousand, eh?" considered Wallingford. "Well, we can save that much of the Lundy estate from a crooked administrator. If Richard turns out to be dead, Hutch will have to hand over the fortune to the state and go to the pen for what he stole; and if Richard turns out to be alive, Hutch will have to hand over the fortune to Richard and go to the pen for what he stole."

"The second!" grinned Blackie. "Say!" Onion Jones suddenly sat up and mopped his head agitatedly. Onion was seldom afflicted with an idea, but when he got one he was a firm believer in it. "Did this squint-eyed runt ever see the missing heir?"

"Nix!" Blackie tossed over a faded letter. "I held this out, Jim, because the signature might be useful."

"No forgery," frowned J. Rufus. "What's the matter with you?" demanded Blackie impatiently. "I'm going to get you an electric coupe and a foot-warmer!" Wallingford was studying the letter with interest.

"Mr. Lundy looks forward with pleasure to a meeting with Mr. Hutch," he read. "So they never met."

"Then I'm the missing heir!" announced Onion Jones with eagerness. "No, Onion," said Blackie, "you don't get a speaking part in this. All you do is hop a train for Chicago and mail a letter from the missing heir, stating that he's on the way."

"Good dope!" Wallingford's approval was instant and hearty. "We only use the signature to throw a scare into Hutch. But I don't see how that rescues the balance of the Lundy fortune."

"You don't!" Blackie was sitting on a corner of the dresser, dangling a spider-like leg and grinning with sardonic joy. "Well, Jim, it's the good old, safe and sane and sanitary way. The chief ingredients are your winning personality and a brick."

"Look here," put in Onion Jones discontentedly. "What do I get out of this?"

"Onion," protested Blackie, "why don't you be nice? You get a pleasant little trip to Chicago and whatever we think the errand is worth. Or do we hire a Western Union messenger to mail that letter?"

Two mornings later they were sitting in Hutch's office, watching the door. It was about time for that Chicago letter and they were willing away the time with tales which had a point and a moral.

"Bob Simmons was so crooked he panned the door—a man with a wide-

brimmed hat. The hat came off, revealing the outline of a perfectly spherical head."

"You're a little run down, that's all, Percy," sympathized Wallingford, and, at the sound of that voice, the shadow of the wide-brimmed hat flapped on the shadow of the spherical head, and the outline moved hastily away. "An ocean voyage would put you just about right."

"Better come along, old man," urged Blackie.

"Be a sport!" laughed J. Rufus. "Let's all go to the bank and get a pocketful of money and hike."

Mr. Hutch was standing up. Slowly the green pallor left his face; slowly, the sparkle of resolve came into the pallid blue eyes.

"I—I guess I will," he blurted. "It might do me good to get away from New York."

"That's the talk!" exclaimed J. Rufus. "Blackie, you go over to the rooms and pack up and I'll go and draw some money. Can I drop you off at your place, Percy?"

"Just a minute!" Hutch was all nervous eagerness now. He opened his desk and drew from it a small packet of papers. He hurriedly threw open his safe and took another small packet of papers from a tin box. "How about a reservation for me?"

"I'll see to it," offered Blackie promptly. "Here's your hat, Hutch, I'll meet you here at 3 o'clock, boys. Can I pack some things for you, Percy? I know your room."

Percy stopped. It might be well not to go back to his rooms.

"Yes," he decided.

As the trio stepped into Wallingford's limousine a bald-headed man with a wide-brimmed hat scowled at them from the shelter of the deep cigar-store doorway at the side of the office-building entrance.

Just nearing 2 o'clock the shining limousine of J. Rufus Wallingford stopped in front of Hutch's office and from it there emerged, first, J. Rufus, an expression of great care and responsibility on his round pink countenance. Then there emerged Percy Hutch, with his hat pulled down over his eyes, and in his hand a battered leather bank bag with strong hasps and handles. This he carried as cautiously as if it were a basket of eggs. "Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi!"

Both Percy and Wallingford looked toward the cigar store door, but there was nothing to be seen. J. Rufus, eternally alert, walked over in that direction, and there, behind the angle, he beheld Onion Jones, most marvelously got up, wide felt hat, red handkerchief around his neck, stiff brown shooting coat, wrinkled top boots with the trousers stuffed in them.

"What the—"

"Sh!" And the fat palm of Onion came up with a warning gesture. "Get rid of your party, quick!"

"Huh!" Much perplexed, Wallingford joined the nervously waiting Hutch in the lobby. Go on up to the office. I'll be there in a minute."

"What, I—" Poked Hutch, fear suddenly filling him to the oozing point.

"Better lay low," whispered J. Rufus, studying Percy with a dawning smile. "Don't stir from the office till you hear from me."

"I won't," promised Hutch. And he hurried back to the elevator.

"Now what's up?" demanded Wallingford, joining Onion Jones.

"Blackie wants you over at your rooms right away," mumbled Onion agitatedly. "No; you're not to telephone. You're to slam straight over, and I'm to sneak upstairs and shadow the boob."

"Huh!" said Wallingford, and he ran his fingers through his hair in perplexity. "Why are you wearing that fool make-up?"

Ask Blackie, Hushie, Jim! And he fairly pushed Wallingford out to the waiting limousine. The instant the car started Onion Jones hurried into the elevator and a minute and a half later entered the office of P. W. Hutch, attorney.

"This is Mr. Hutch," he stated with pleasant assurance.

"What do you want?" asked Percy, standing behind the desk, the black bag between his feet.

"Well, Mr. Hutch, I'm the missing heir," announced Onion, removing the soft felt hat and resting it on his hip, while Percy gazed in stupefaction at that glistening cranio. "When I sent you that letter from Chicago I thought I wouldn't get here until tomorrow morning, but I beat it on the same train as the letter. Howdy?" And he extended a fat palm.

"I-yes," acknowledged Percy, looking at the fat palm, but he drew back his own hand; "of course, Mr. Lundy, you'll have to identify yourself."

"Oh, will I?" The missing heir's nails made four pink streaks on his gleaming scalp. "Well, Mr. Hutch, if you're going to run in any rankaboo on me, especially after holding out my \$10,000 a year for five years, I'll have you pinched right now and identify myself afterward!"

"There's no need to be hasty, Mr. Lundy," quavered Percy, struggling among a thousand depressing thoughts. "If you are Mr. Lundy—"

"If I am!" yelled the missing heir. "Look here, you Hutch; I'll Willie Hep to you! You've been putting a crimp in my rightful fortune, and if you hand me any of your lip I'll stripe your coat crossways. Settle quick, and you get off easy. Give me what's left, and I won't say a word about what you swiped. I'll give you 10 minutes. And the missing heir glanced apprehensively toward the door.

Percy Hutch paused. The language of the missing heir was not quite the language of his letters, and the offer of the missing heir was suspiciously

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