

# ZUDORA In the Twenty Million Dollar Mystery

HAROLD MAC GRATH



MADAME DU VAL WAS GIVING AN INFORMAL DINNER TO DECEIVE VILLIERS



BUT FOR THE TIMELY ARRIVAL OF HUNT AND BAIRD, MADAME DU VAL WOULD HAVE WON ANOTHER TRICK

The remarkable adventures of the charming Zudora will be portrayed by Harold MacGrath in the succeeding chapters. This photo serial is being shown in the leading moving picture theaters by the Thinkhouse Film corporation. Among those participating are Marguerite Snow, Mary Elizabeth Forbes, James Cruze, in the new role of reporter hero; Sidney Bracey, and Frank Farrington.

### SYNOPSIS

Zudora, heiress to \$20,000,000, is placed in the guardianship of her uncle, Hassam Ali, a mystic. Hassam Ali is determined to secure the girl's fortune for himself, and when she becomes of age he makes every effort to bring about her death. Zudora is in love with a young lawyer, John Storm, and she seeks permission of her miserly uncle to marry him. Hassam Ali promises to grant her wish provided she shall solve twenty of his cases. Zudora solves nine of the cases when her uncle dies, and she is released of her pledge.

At the death of her uncle, Zudora has another suitor for her hand—Jim Baird, a man who has been playing as double to Hassam Ali, but who, through sincere love of the girl, gives up the false life and goes back to his work as a newspaper reporter.

No longer obliged to solve Hassam Ali's cases Zudora now confronts the greatest mystery of all, which is the mystery of her own life and the ambition to secure the vast fortune of \$20,000,000 left her. On looking through her uncle's papers she also finds that her father left her an interest in a diamond mine, and Storm and Baird both lend assistance in trying to regain for her possession of this estate, which is being appreciated by rogues.

Intent on getting Zudora out of the way, the rogues, under the leadership of Mme. Du Val, have the girl spirited away to a private insane asylum. In the same institution they force as an inmate Howard, the mine superintendent, who wishes to be loyal to Zudora's interests. Howard dies from hunger, but Zudora is rescued by her friends.

(Copyright, 1937, by Harold MacGrath.)  
CHAPTER XIV  
THE MISSING MILLIONS

It took a fortnight for Zudora to become herself again. The treatment she had received in the sanitarium would have driven insane any woman with less mental balance and physical stamina. She had been ill fed, ill clothed, roughly handled, threatened. She had shot her teeth together and endured.

The death of the mine superintendent did not clear away any clouds. The diamond mine was as far away from Zudora as ever. Storm and Hunt agreed that some one had got into Hassam Ali's papers, and those papers made the ownership of the diamond mines unassailable.

Hunt questioned Baird in private, but the latter swore on his oath that he had never been able to put his hand on Hassam Ali's money or on his private papers. The Hindu servant had known where these things were, and there was no doubt in Baird's mind that the brown man had taken both gold and papers, the latter being turned over to those who now possessed them.

"There's one thing I'm curious about," said Baird.

"And what's that?"

"That gold mine. Zudora had quite a few thousands at the start. I know she received it. I know that she was legally entitled to it. Field mines do not vanish off the earth in the fashion this one is said to have vanished. Has it occurred to you that the report might have been faked by those most interested in cheating Zudora?"

"We can soon find out. Your idea is a good one. And more than that, it's my opinion that those who are milking the diamond

mine are digging into the gold. They've got all the documents in the case. All right. For a while we'll chuck the diamond end of it and see what can be done with the gold. Zudora can turn over her interests to Storm, and he can start the bombardment. Suppose I telephone him to meet us up there at her home at once? We can't lose anything by going to it at the drop of the hat."

Baird called at once on Storm and explained his idea.

"So you think these crooks are trying to put that deal over us also? The information came to Zudora unaltered. Some clerk sent the information."

"A frameup, no doubt. Mr. Storm, we've all got to move mighty smoothly to beat the crowd we're up against. Up to date we have no legal hold. If we go to court with half rights, it is quite likely the litigation will run on for years. I don't think you could enjoin an African diamond mine from producing. We might be able to hold up the gold mine for a time. But these people have money, barrels of it; and they'll use it to fight. Now, we want to get the upper hand in this game without having to go to the courts. Suppose you write a letter to the Zudora mine, to see where we stand. Ask for information about Tractor, Zudora's father; ask if there are any papers relating to the will, and so forth and so on. Feel them out. If they are crooks out there it's better to know it as soon as possible. Here's Miss Tractor now," wound up Baird, as Zudora entered.

She approved of the letter. But it was always money, money, money. She was beginning to hate the sound of it. Why not let the scoundrels have it?

"That isn't the idea, my girl," said Storm. "It isn't the money so much; it's the principle. I know; you've just gone through a terrible ordeal and it has put fear into you. But we can't let those people go scot free. Do you think I'll ever let up hunting them when I think what they did to you? No, thanks! This bunch of rogues is going to pay the piper for their fox trot."

They all laughed; and then Storm made out his letter to Marcus Villiers, chairman of the board of trustees.

And Mme. du Val made up her mind to have a little masquerade for the benefit of this same Marcus Villiers. The chairman was coming east to see the real Zudora, supposing, of course, that the fortune was still under her control. There had been an unusually fine veil struck, and he was going east to suggest that she sell outright her holdings.

Baird's idea that there might be an unfaithful clerk at the mine was a keen one. The superintendent of the mine was of a different caliber from the man who had taken charge of the diamond mine. Brown of the Zudora gold mine was not above doubling his income, and he was not particular how that doubling was brought about. The moment the new deal was made he promptly wired Capt. Radcliffe that Villiers was arranging to come east and that Detective Hunt, whom Radcliffe had warned him about, would be lured west and put out of business.

When Storm's letter arrived Brown was first to read it. It is needless to say that it did not reach Villiers.

Upon receipt of the wire from Brown, Capt. Radcliffe at once sought Mme. du Val.

"This Brown can be trusted?"

"So long as we pay him well. My dear woman, with a little chafe sailing we'll have riches beyond our wildest dreams. Millions, and not a soul to stop in between! Edwards is out of the way, and that diamond mine is practically ours, to do with as we please. With this man Villiers sent along after Edwards, good-night to Zudora and company. Brown will make an effort to get to Villiers' safe, where doubtless some good documents

are in existence relative to the mine. Once we can destroy these—Europe, Monte Carlo, or the inner palace at Peking if you say so."

"It's not the money with me, Radcliffe; it's the sport of the game. I like to beat the law, to confuse it, to make it impotent. It twisted me once. But for an old man's folly they would have me still. I was pretty, Du Val had influence; and here I am, mistress of his fortune. It's the game with me."

"And it's the cold lucra, if you want my side of it. I like good things to wear, to eat; I like to spend money for the mere sake of spending it. I'd like to sit in a game of poker without feeling the necessity of slipping an ace from my sleeve," Radcliffe laughed.

"And because I fumbled an ace once upon a

you mind letting me have a couple of hundred dollars?"

"Cards?"

"Surely! I've got to have a little recreation for the risks I'm taking and about to take. But I'm going to give you some fine news for the money. It is worth ten thousand instead of two hundred."

"What is it?"

"Mum committed suicide in the Tombs this morning, and the Edwards case goes off the calendar with him. Sooner or later he'd have blown the game and we'd have had to hike."

"Mum dead! What a weight off my shoulders! I've been waiting for the police every day since he went to the Tombs. He overdid

"Where now?"

Hunt showed him the wire.

"Do you put any faith in it?"

Hunt shrugged. "I want to find where that mine is. I don't care a hang whether this wire is a plant or not."

"Would you like company?" suggested Baird.

"I should say yes! Will you go?"

"What kind of a yarn will I tell the office?"

"Tell them you've got the mate to the South African story. Add your expenses will be taken care of by the Tractor estate."

Baird sat down to the telephone. Two minutes later he jumped up with a whoop.

"All O. K.! I'll meet you at the Grand Central in one hour. I'm aching for a shindy."

"You'll get it, I'm thinking, if you come with me," said Hunt, grimly.

Marcus Villiers was the son of John Villiers, the banker to whom Tractor had entrusted his mine originally. He was a lively individual, a shrewd business man, but something of a fop. He possessed the only valet in that part of the country, and he kept that valet, not because he needed help, but because it took courage to do so in face of the old timers who held all men servants in contempt.

Brown, the superintendent, after having read Stann's letter, doctored it so as to lure Villiers east, then remained it. And Villiers was glad to get a good excuse to go east and show the effete metropolitans that he knew how to handle valets with the best of them.

The day previous to Hunt and Baird's departure it was agreed that Capt. Radcliffe himself should go west to see that Hunt was properly taken care of. He was three days later met at the little mining town station by two trusted men of Brown's. The trio went directly to the mine, and in the office, together with Brown, they mapped out the campaign against Detective Hunt, who was due to arrive on the morrow.

When Hunt and Baird arrived it was natural that they should select the one automobile in sight. The chauffeur, who was the same man who had driven Radcliffe to the mine office the day before, asked the new arrivals where they wanted to go.

"To the Zudora mine," said Hunt, studying the man closely.

But the chauffeur knew that he would have to stand sharp scrutiny. So his bland countenance partly reassured the detective.

"To the Zudora mine it is, sir. It's a bit rough going and about half an hour's ride."

"Hit her up," said Baird, jovially, "and see how near you can come to dumping us over the cliff without losing the car."

The chauffeur bent suddenly to his magnet to hide the surprise on his face. One of those men was Hunt, all right; but this other chap might force them to rearrange plans. However, he was under orders to take Hunt past a certain break in the mountain road, and so he forged ahead at a good clip.

"What do you think?" whispered Baird.

"In a game like this you've got to wait for the other man to move," returned Hunt, with his eye on the chauffeur's neck.

The chauffeur turned. "See that ledge around the bend there? That's the mine."

In their interest, Hunt and Baird forgot the chauffeur, as he trusted they would. Instantly he stopped the car and whirled in his seat. When Hunt and Baird looked at him again they found themselves also looking into the barrels of two ugly, serviceable automatics. "At the same time Radcliffe and Brown, both made up for the occasion, dashed around the break in the road.

Quick as light, Hunt's case flashed through

the air, striking the chauffeur on the wing and sending one of the guns whirling down the ravine. Before the chauffeur recovered, Hunt was upon him for the possession of the remaining weapon. But things did not go very well with Baird. Radcliffe and Brown got him fool, and he had his hands full.

Hunt fought furiously and succeeded in getting the chauffeur at a disadvantage. He snapped the gun from his grasp and cradled him over the head with the butt; and, like the miner in Bret Harte's poem, "the subsequent proceedings interested him no more."

The detective threw on the power and sent the car whizzing ahead without realizing what had happened to Baird. They had succeeded in pulling him out of the car without knocking him senseless. The moment the car started Radcliffe jumped and caught hold of the side, managing with no small difficulty to crawl into the tonneau. And this Hunt's brave dash came to an abrupt end.

Baird saved half the day by keeping still until he had recovered his breath. That he reached for Brown's leg and threw his body. And that was the end of Brown's rest for the present.

Meantime, Radcliffe got Hunt to a deserted wayside inn. The detective was not in an amiable frame of mind. Here he was, shot, caught, and Baird no one knew where. But all this while the reporter was forcing Brown ahead of him along the tire tracks. Within a quarter of an hour he came within sight of the inn. Radcliffe and the chauffeur were taking things easy, doubtless waiting for the arrival of Brown. He arrived, but at the point of Villiers' gun.

There was another set-to, in which Hunt and Baird succeeded in getting free and to the open.

"They evidently don't care to see us out here," said Hunt, drily, as he worked his hands out of the handkerchiefs which Radcliffe had snapped on his wrists.

"No; our room is better than our company; and just now the more room the better. I'm not dead sure, but I've seen some of those chaps back in New York."

"I've the same idea. Suppose we had around for a bite to eat and for some habitation where they won't take pot shots at us? Baird, this is going to be interesting."

"Uhuh."

When Villiers arrived in New York, he went straight to a hotel instead of looking Storm of his arrival. He had received a train wire from Zudora Tractor telling him where to come for dinner that night. She was giving an informal dinner and it would not be complete without the son of her father's old friend. Villiers stuffed his pocket documents into his pocket and sallied forth.

Mme. du Val as Zudora proved amenable to the westerner; but when, eventually, he missed his documents, he smiled a little. It seems that Mme. du Val had received two ends of the game. At the moment she received Villiers, Zudora was the recipient of a message purporting to come from Villiers in which he declared that he had the documents she required, but that he was a year on at 121 Riggs street. A street which had brought the message.

So Zudora and Storm set out for 121 Riggs street, and they were followed by two old friends, Hunt and Baird, who had returned from the heels of Villiers. No. 121 Riggs street appeared rather familiar to Zudora's eyes. Storm remarked that he had seen the place before. The door was locked. As they turned a corner to seek a window, two men sprang out upon them. And but for the timely arrival of Hunt and Baird, Mme. du Val would have won at least one trick. It was a case of stalemate all around.

(To be continued.)

HUNT AND BAIRD FOUGHT FURIOUSLY AND SUCCEEDED IN GETTING THE CHAUFFEUR AT A DISADVANTAGE



HUNT AND BAIRD FOUGHT FURIOUSLY AND SUCCEEDED IN GETTING THE CHAUFFEUR AT A DISADVANTAGE

time . . . O, well; the past is the past, and a hand once played can't be played again. I suppose we'll have to put Villiers out of the way. Storm has written him, but Brown intercepted the letter. On my side, as Storm, I've requested him to bring east all his documents. And there's the real game; to get our hands upon those. But I would like to know where our pretty Zudora hid those diamonds. The lot was worth at least fifty thousand."

"Who is this man Baird?"

"Why, I thought you knew all about him?"

"I thought I did. Either he has turned over for keeps, or he is playing a deeper game than we are." Madame mused for a moment.

"I never could tell when it was Baird or the real Hassam. He was the cleverest makeup man I ever saw."

"And you were just a little bit smitten with him, eh?"

"Well, maybe I was. But I've got over it."

"There's one thing we may be sure; he didn't get into Hassam Ali's trunks. That Hindu was a godsend to us. I suppose by this time he is back in India, with trained elephants to fight for him and slave girls to wait upon him. He got Hassam's hoarded gold, all right. The old boy was the shrewdest miser in the business. By the way, would

the Edwards business. Of course, he had only verbal evidence against us. But if he had broken down under the third degree it would have put us into hot water. More, it would have started the hawks looking me up. And then, by-by. We must play a finer hand. No rough stuff from our side except in the case of Hunt. We'll ship Villiers to a spot he can't get back from. If we give him no chance to see the real Zudora it will be plain sailing. Once we have his papers in our possession we can laugh at him."

"You're a wonder! Are you ever going to marry me?"

"Marry you? Not the best man that ever lived! We'd tire of each other in a week. You know it and I know it. Let us keep to the platonic scheme, if you please, captain."

Now, when Detective Hunt received the wire which was to lure him west, he had an idea that it was a lure; but if he pretended to play into the hands of the enemy he would be likely at least to locate the exact spot the mine lay in. He had found the diamond mine under circumstances far more difficult. With the exact locations of the two properties, he would have gained half the fight. He was all ready to leave his office when Baird came in.

"Where now?"

Hunt showed him the wire.

"Do you put any faith in it?"

Hunt shrugged. "I want to find where that mine is. I don't care a hang whether this wire is a plant or not."

"Would you like company?" suggested Baird.

"I should say yes! Will you go?"

"What kind of a yarn will I tell the office?"

"Tell them you've got the mate to the South African story. Add your expenses will be taken care of by the Tractor estate."

Baird sat down to the telephone. Two minutes later he jumped up with a whoop.

"All O. K.! I'll meet you at the Grand Central in one hour. I'm aching for a shindy."

"You'll get it, I'm thinking, if you come with me," said Hunt, grimly.

Marcus Villiers was the son of John Villiers, the banker to whom Tractor had entrusted his mine originally. He was a lively individual, a shrewd business man, but something of a fop. He possessed the only valet in that part of the country, and he kept that valet, not because he needed help, but because it took courage to do so in face of the old timers who held all men servants in contempt.

Brown, the superintendent, after having read Stann's letter, doctored it so as to lure Villiers east, then remained it. And Villiers was glad to get a good excuse to go east and show the effete metropolitans that he knew how to handle valets with the best of them.

The day previous to Hunt and Baird's departure it was agreed that Capt. Radcliffe himself should go west to see that Hunt was properly taken care of. He was three days later met at the little mining town station by two trusted men of Brown's. The trio went directly to the mine, and in the office, together with Brown, they mapped out the campaign against Detective Hunt, who was due to arrive on the morrow.

When Hunt and Baird arrived it was natural that they should select the one automobile in sight. The chauffeur, who was the same man who had driven Radcliffe to the mine office the day before, asked the new arrivals where they wanted to go.

See "Zudora" Every Thursday at the Bligh Theatre