

# ZUDORA In the Twenty Million Dollar Mystery

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CRIED ZUDORA WITH WILD EXCITEMENT



STORM LOWERED ZUDORA DOWN TO BAIRD AND HUNT

### 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 appropriated by rogues.

### CHAPTER XVIII. THE CIPHER CODE.

LET Storm found no one at Craig Island, for the simple reason that his approach was seen and Zudora and all things belonging to her were nicely hidden out of sight. He returned to the city despondent. He let work go and haunted the office of Hunt for the greater part of each day; but Hunt was still in Africa, or was on high seas.

And when Baird and Hunt did return, as recounted in the preceding chapter, they carried that they had been nicely fooled. Radcliffe had not left Africa at all, but had decided to remain at the mines until he had fully recovered from his injuries in the wreck. And a fine idea came into his head, while conversing.

The idea was this: The man Hunt was sailing close to the wind, he was getting warmer and nearer. Why not gather all the stones possible as a move against Hunt's winning out in the last phase of the game? No half a dozen fine stones, but the last six months' total output, something princely, like that? He, Radcliffe, was not needed in New York. The banging up he had received at the hands of Baird and subsequent wreck had left him in a shaky way. The voyage to Africa and back would put him firmly upon his feet once more.

On the voyage Radcliffe took particularly good care of himself, drank nothing and meditated his smoking, forewore cards, and went to bed early. By the time he reached Cape Town he was something like himself again; that is to say, ready for any deviltry.

During these hours of loneliness he thought a good deal. Much as he loved Mme. Du Val, she had an iron hand, and the fact was beginning toirk him. Why couldn't she accept his idea, to quit now and go away while the going was good, to use the parlance of the day? Money? They had plenty. The game, the game; that was her eternal cry; the sport of it, the excitement. She went out of her way dozens of times to court dan-

ger; and there was danger, real and menacing. They had all kinds of documents to substantiate their claims to Zudora's fortune, but there was many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. She was like a gambler who had played for high stakes; she never again could find rest in a friendly game. Perhaps she was only playing with him, having need of him as a chessman in her dangerous game. If that was the case, she would indeed find it a dangerous game. No woman had ever yet made a fool of Capt. Radcliffe.

The next boat sailed in two weeks; so, instead of going down to Cape Town, he idled about the mine, picking up odd bits of information which he stored away for future use. There was no excess lumber in Capt. Radcliffe's brain. Where was that other find? Neither his side nor the other could as yet locate that mysterious bed of crystals. He started out to do some exploring on his own hook, but nothing important came of it.

But he was tired of the incessant war against Hunt and Baird. He wanted a fling, a month or two of princely gambling; ten or twenty thousand to do with as he pleased. For weeks he had crushed down the instinct; but this enforced inactivity had given it renewed life. He must have his fling.

When he stepped on board the ship which was to carry him back to America it was the happiest moment he had known in months. Back to little old New York, with its confusion, its noise, its lights, its excitement; no more Africa for him if he could prevent it.

When the ship stood off Nantucket Light he sought the wireless office and dispatched a code message to Bruce, which read as follows: J. W. Bruce, New York—Signal X. Y. Z. Suintop Aurenia Looslyde Tunner Ripsh Mecca Zib Lover. Radcliffe.

"Going to blow up the city hall?" asked the operator as he studied the message.

"No, just the Brooklyn bridge," Radcliffe laughed, paying for the message and giving a generous tip. Then he returned to the stateroom and played Canfield until dinner. He won two games out of twenty and felt quite satisfied with himself.

Bruce was busily engaged in work when the wireless arrived. He snuffed and spread it out on the blotter and with pen and ink began to decipher it. When he completed the translation he was highly elated. He would not have been, however, had he known that every move he made was being watched, that nearly every move he had made since his return from Africa had been watched either by Baird or by Hunt. It was Baird who was watching him at this particular moment from rather a perilous position outside the office window.

Bruce thrust the cipher between the two blotters of his writing pad, picked up his hat and coat, and hurried away. He must see Mme. Du Val at once.

No sooner was he gone than Baird entered quietly. He tiptoed to the desk, watching the door as he did so. Bruce might return unexpectedly. From out of the blotters he drew the wireless cipher and the translation. He rubbed his chin and smiled. He had begun to feel rather bored watching Mr. Bruce day in and day out, with no definite results. If Bruce knew anything regarding the whereabouts of Zudora he kept this knowledge most carefully to himself. Hunt would enjoy reading this dispatch. It was really the smashing proof he had been seeking for months. Here was his smuggler, all nicely done up in a package, ready for delivery.

"Arrive New York steamer Aurenia. Will throw rubber bag of diamonds overboard before landing. Radcliffe."

Both of them! All depended upon getting hold of that bag of diamonds. Uncle Sam

would do the rest with pleasure. Baird made a copy of the wireless and its translation. The Marconi company would back him up in case Radcliffe denied sending such a cipher. It was all as easy as falling off a log. He would have taken the originals but for the fact that Bruce would return and find them gone and warn Radcliffe. So he had to content himself with copies.

He immediately sought out Hunt, with whom he found Storm, pale and thin through worry and anxiety regarding his sweetheart.

"I've got them, Hunt!"

"Zudora?" cried Storm.

"No, my friend; but I've got two men red handed in the smuggling game. I have followed Bruce for days; but if he knows anything about Zudora's prison he's keeping it to himself. I've seen him with no suspicious

water front, in various degrees of excitement. In the meantime Zudora waited and watched the sea from her window. Time after time she saw motorboats headed for the island; time after time she saw them change their course and go clugging past, too far out of range for a call. She dared not call out unless she was absolutely assured that the motorboat contained rescuers. She was in truth greatly afraid of the terrible old hag who acted as her jailer. Several times, during drunken spells, she had pinched Zudora's arms cruelly and jeered at her. Money alone would win over such a beast; and she had nothing; even her clothes were falling in tatters.

One day she spoke to the old woman.

"Can you get me some warmer clothes?"

"O, it's warmer clothes, is it? Any kind

By and by Zudora heard the rumble of a motorboat. It landed at the dock. Later she heard a low murmur of voices and once the hag's raucous laughter. They had fooled her a dozen times. Maybe they would fool her again.

The visitor was Mme. Du Val. She read the note carefully and signified that there could be no danger in letting Zudora have some fresh clothes. She would have Gyp take the note; and Gyp was the hardest young man in New York to follow. Things had gone so smoothly for Mme. Du Val that she had begun to crave a little excitement.

There certainly was excitement when Mrs. Ramsey received that tattered note.

"It will take me about five minutes," she said, as calmly as she could. "Would a thousand dollars be of any use to you?"

Gyp smiled. "Nothing doing in that line, madam. Just get me the clothes. That's what I'm here for."

As Mrs. Ramsey went up to Zudora's room another idea occurred to her. She telephoned Hunt what was taking place; and that was the shrewdest thing she could have done.

"What's the chap look like?" asked Hunt over the telephone.

Mrs. Ramsey described Gyp accurately.

"Good work! That will be Gyp the Gunman. I'll keep watch. Don't worry and don't attempt anything on your own hook."

Mrs. Ramsey got together some of Zudora's winter clothing. From one of the skirts she ripped a hem and inside this she placed a little note of cheer and courage, sewing it up with white thread in order to attract Zudora's attention. She managed to stretch out the promised five minutes into nearly half an hour. After that she dared not wait any longer. The messenger might become suspicious and leave. She went downstairs and put the bundle in Gyp's arms.

"You took your time," he growled.

"I had trouble in getting into her trunk. You are not to be bribed, then?"

"If I was sure they wouldn't cut my throat. So long!" he jeered as he turned down the steps.

Hunt worked diligently the rest of that day, but when he saw Storm that night he kept silent. When the proper time came he would have a surprise for the young lawyer.

When the clothes came to Zudora she experienced the first bit of pleasure since her imprisonment. Clean clothes to a dainty woman such as she was meant pleasure under any circumstance. She came upon the white thread and eyed it wonderingly. There had been no tear in that skirt the last time she had worn it. And Mrs. Ramsey certainly would not have used white thread. . . . Her heart bounded! She felt the crinkle of paper under her fingers. In less than a moment she had the note in her trembling hands. She read it, then destroyed it and hid the bits of paper in the four corners of the room. Hunt would find her. The reaction caused her to break down and weep.

The old hag heard the sound, but accredited it to a bit of sentimentalism.

Hunt did not go directly to the ship dock. Instead he engaged a motorboat and a dinghy. Even Baird was curious to learn what was going to happen.

"I'm not saying a word; just wait. There may be trouble; but I want the biggest trouble out of the way first."

"You know where Zudora is, and we are going for her!" cried Storm.

Hunt shrugged and gave the engineer orders. They left the motor about a quarter of a mile

off the island and rowed toward shore in the dinghy.

Zudora was always looking out of the window, and when she espied the dinghy and a moment later recognized a familiar face she almost fainted with joy.

Storm laid his finger against his lips and tossed up a rope's end, still in sight. She drew it inside and made a dash for it. Storm went up the rope with him. At the bottom of the rope was a slip knot. She this Zudora put her foot and Storm lowered her down to Baird and Hunt, following her quickly. They pushed off and began to row.

"My girl, my girl!" gasped Storm.

Zudora laid her head against his shoulder. She wanted nothing else in the world.

Baird sighed. He wondered if there was in all the world a woman for him.

"Where now?" he asked of Hunt.

"Why, I thought that we'd run about the Aurenia. If there's a bag of diamonds going overboard I'd like to be on hand. Miss Zudora, it took a long time to get you, but we did it. Your wanting fresh clothing was a good idea. Now, Storm, you and Baird and I reach the motorboat, you go to the old dock. There'll be a taxi and you two get into it and hike for home."

"God bless you, Hunt!" said Storm.

"Don't let that worry you. Nothing pleases me better than to trip up a good crook when he thinks he's got the better of me. Go home, and good luck go with you. And, Storm, if you let any one steal her bag from you this trip, I'll take no hand in helping her back to you. There you go."

Hunt and Baird climbed into the motorboat and waved their hands. Storm took of the oars again.

"I'm so tired, John, so tired! I've traveled a thousand miles and followed two thousand clues. And I'd not have you in my boat, girl, but for a streak of luck and a bit of foresight on the part of Mrs. Ramsey, who called up Hunt on the telephone when the low came for your clothes. Thank God, I have you back. We'll get the color back into your cheeks again; and, by the way, Hunt talks, there'll be a roundup of the previous rogues before another month is gone."

It was a long row to the main shore, but Storm was so happy that he took no note of time. There was a good deal of conversation and kissing when at length Zudora thrust herself into the arms of the motherly Mrs. Ramsey.

As Baird and Hunt neared the landing Aurenia they saw another motorboat bobbing in the shadow of the pier. They had recognized the occupants of this launch and they behoved them to act quickly.

"Look!" exclaimed Hunt. "There's the man Radcliffe leaning over the side. He's got a hot water bottle filled with ice and air tight! It's sport to be on a boat like this, Baird. When he drops it I'll take for it. Only, catch good hold of the boat when I lean over. There it comes!"

The bag struck the water with a splash and after a moment bobbed up almost under Hunt's hand. He reached down and grabbed it. Baird shouted something which he could not hear. As he strove to right himself the boat took from the other boat's grasp. A door opened and the bag was in the boat Radcliffe had aimed at.

Then began a stern chase up the beach, shining Hudson. And more dramatic than this chase than any of the six dramas.

(To be continued.)



IN LESS THAN A MOMENT SHE HAD THE NOTE IN HER TREMBLING HANDS

characters. Here, Hunt, read these and cheer up."

"Fine work, Baird; fine work! You drop your newspaper business and hang your shingle up with mine. And the best comes in this afternoon. Let's get down to the fact. Will you go along, Storm?"

"Heaven knows, I haven't anything else to do. That note in the bottle took me nowhere. I couldn't find anything at the island. Well, there is this much to say: I'll kill with my own hands any man who has harmed or offered indignities to Zudora."

"And we'll help you, boy," agreed Hunt. "But let us first trap two previous rogues. Who knows? We may, by taking them into custody, find ourselves pretty near Zudora."

"What do you mean?"

"Keep your hair on and follow me."

"Have you found out something?" cried Baird.

"That remains to be seen," answered the detective, noncommittally.

So the three of them started off for the

of furs you'd prefer? Black fox is fashionable just now."

"But I am cold! I will give you a thousand dollars if you will free him!"

"All right. Fork over the thousand and I'll land yuh home tonight."

Zudora turned away so that the miserable old woman would not have the satisfaction of witnessing her tears.

"Write a note, dearie, and I'll see if I can't get yuh some fresh furs. But, mind, no tricks; plain English and no cipher stuff, or it don't git off th' island."

"You mean it?" cried Zudora with wild excitement.

"Yes. Hurry up. I'm goin' to have visitors inside of an hour."

Zudora found a magazine, ripped off a page, and scribbled on the margin: "Mrs. Ramsey, 16 Willow Grove avenue. I am not permitted to tell place of my imprisonment. But please give bearer a change of clothing for me. Zudora."

The bag carried out the note and locked the door.