



ZUDORA

A Great Mystic Story by Harold McGrath

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CHAPTER I

The Mystery of the Spotted Collar.

ON the side of a rugged mountain a black velvet hole yawned. Rubble lay strewn all about the ledges. To a layman this rubble would have explained nothing; to a miner it would instantly have explained the nature of the hole. Presently a burly man emerged from the hole, squinting. He eyed the lump of quartz in his hand—always a little, but never quite enough gold to make it worth while. The prospector flung the quartz savagely upon the accumulating rubble and leaned disheartenedly against the log support to the entrance of the mine. His grubstake was fast dwindling, and in another four days he would have to hike some thirty-two miles to the nearest town for supplies. Donet! He had paid \$500, every one of them earned at the risk of his neck, for this damnable hole in the ground.

He filled and lit his pipe and fell to dreaming what he would do when he struck it rich. By and by the dreams faded and the bitter realities returned. He rose lamely and carefully picked his way down to the Irishman's shanty. The two of them shared their noon meal on pleasant days.

"How's she comin'?" "Same old story," answered Trainor, erstwhile strong man of the Eclipse circus.

"Well, well; it's peggin' away that don't look so bad. I should say that she'll run fifteen 'th' ton. I guess them wildcaters are th' chaps that make th' real spondulix—widders—clerks an' children."

In Trainor's life there had been but trifling monotones. He had been a sailor in the south seas, a lumberjack in the north, a cowpuncher, a fireman on a north Atlantic liner. He had come from a poor but respectable Ohio family. His father nor his grandfather had ever stepped over the state boundary lines. But in him there was a reversion to the type of pioneer who had established the Trainor family when Ohio was a wilderness. He could not settle down; he must be on the move continually, and when at length he joined the circus he found that roaming, uncertain life much to his fancy. There he had met Mimi Keene, known on the handbills (or lithographs were far beyond the reach of this circus) as Mimi La France, world renowned tight rope walker. Remarkable as it might seem, these two loved each other fondly, and one day the lust to wander died in the man's heart, and he wanted a roof over his head, children about his knee and money in his purse. When the opportunity to go hunting for gold came he hesitated not an instant.

He had been hammering away at the grins, unyielding rocks for eight months, making only such trips to town as were necessary for food. Perhaps the rubble extracted represented a thousand dollars, perhaps less. He was discouraged.

One day he staggered out into the brilliant sunshine. A lump of quartz was clutched tightly in his hand. When he grew accustomed to the dazzling light he turned the stone over and over, his heart beating as it had never beaten before. There were veins in it—broad flakes of it—gold, gold!

"Donovan! Donovan!" he cried. The old Irish prospector came out of his hole, blinking.

"I've got it! I've got it!" Donovan snatched the quartz from the hand of his friend.

"Holy Virgin! Ye've struck it! If it's all like that ye're a rich man. Man, man, there's a hundred dollars in that lump alone!"

Trainor collapsed on a pile of worthless rubble and laid his head on his arms. He had done it all in these few months. He was rich, rich! And all his dreams were going to come true! The Irishman gazed down at him ruefully, but philosophically.

"An' me that's been prospectin' twenty years an' ain't hit my pile yet! Well, God bless ye, man. I'm glad ye got it. An' now let's go take a look."

twist to the corner of his lips laid his hand on Donovan's shoulder. "How'd you get in here?" "Why, I walked in," said Donovan amiably.

"Suppose you walk out again?" "Keep yer hair on, bub. I'm here on business. I'm lookin' for Mimi La France, 's they call her outside. She walks tight rope."

"Well, I'm her brother. What do you want with her?" "So ye'er Trainor's brother-in-law?" "Trainor?" said the young man, a fire lighting his eyes. "Do you come from him?"

"Yes. An' my message is to his wife." "Oh! That's his kid there." "Y' don't say so! Well, kind o' looks like him."

"Here's my sister now." Donovan saw a slight woman of pretty figure and comely features. She grew. The checks from the Zudora were now applied wholly to the welfare of his niece.

The child grew. Her education began. She gave promise of great beauty, even in the lank and gawky age.

Hassam All had begun to love gold, the bright, shining metal—not in the abstract, but in the concrete. To touch it with his fingers was transport. No symphony of Bach's was half so fine as the chink-chink of the coins, the eagle and the double eagle as they fell upon each other, slipping from his hands.

From her fifteenth birthday up to her eighteenth Zudora noted a subtle change in the manner of her uncle. He became coldly aloof, rarely touched her affectionately, was moody and taciturn. Familiar as she was with all the paraphernalia of the mystic, she still retained unbounded faith in her uncle's powers. Indeed, he was a hypnotist of unusual power and was roughly skilled in the science of medicines. Zudora had practiced the former art until she was almost as proficient as her master. It never occurred to her that her uncle's means of existence were unethical and generally those of a cheat. Famous actresses and society women visited him, and not a few notable bankers and financiers came to him for advice. But the general public held Hassam All in tolerant contempt and the police with no little suspicion.

The inner shrine of this equivocal temple was draped with black velvet, and there were secret doors about which even Zudora knew nothing. There was the inevitable dais and before this a huge crystal globe in which Hassam All saw the past and the future as revealed by his victim. It was easy to draw the past, and it was not difficult to draw the future. The future in this globe was nearly always what the victim wished; hence the popularity of Hassam All, late of the Eclipse circus, faker and card sharp, chief of a band of most clever and ingenious criminals. And Zudora wandered in and out of this iniquitous maze as a wild dove might have flown over pestilential swamps, untouched and unknown.

As the miser grew stronger in Hassam All the evil thought previously referred to became more and more insistent. Zudora must die. When he faced this inevitability for the first time he was genuinely horrified. He was her uncle; her mother had been his sister; the girl was his flesh and blood. But the constant recurrence of an evil desire gradually lessens the abhorrence of it. Today in Hassam All's mind there remained no shreds of compunction, only a desire to accomplish the deed without in any manner directing suspicion toward him. So to this one object he now turned the brilliant powers of his abnormally evil mind. Zudora must die. But how?

In a few days she would be eighteen. On that day she would become enormously rich. He must rid himself of her before she had time to appreciate what the power of money meant. But how? In what subtle, cunning manner that would make it impossible for the law to trace the deed to him? And there was another obstacle rising slowly, but surely and formidably, over the horizon—love. Youth and the necessity of love, these menaced the plans of Hassam All. He had tolerated this keen eyed, clean lived young lawyer, John Storm, because he had found in a way relieved him of the trial of finding entertainment for Zudora. The time had come for Storm to be sent about his business.

One night while he was dreaming over the past, marveling over the strange crust of cynicism which over his sense of moral obligation, Hassam saw his way. Zudora was interested in detective work and had often

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beared to be allowed to use her powers of logical deduction. Zudora should play the detective to her heart's content, and if she met with some terrible accident who would be the wiser? Twenty millions in gold!

His hands opened and shut spasmodically. Indistinctly he heard a rustle of petticoats. He opened his eyes to find his niece at his feet.

"Uncle, don't you know what day this is?" she asked.

"Why, it is Wednesday."

"Have you forgotten that this is my eighteenth birthday?"

"Eighteenth birthday! Good heavens, so it is, so it is!"

He laid his hand upon her dark head, but he did not look down at the youthful and beautiful face raised toward his own. His fingers unconsciously crept into the girl's hair, a trifle too strongly for an affectionate gesture.

"What is it?" she asked, drawing her head away quickly.

"A touch of rheumatism in my arm," he said intuitively. "You know it gives me a twinge once in so often. So you are eighteen years old?"

"And you said that on this day I was to come into a fortune."

"That is true. How much do you think it is?"

"Oh, perhaps \$50,000."

"Is it—lost?" she asked.

"No, my child. It is the terrible responsibility which is about to rest upon your young shoulders that makes me sad. Tomorrow morning your lawyers will inform you that you are one of the richest heiresses in America."

"Uncle, don't make fun of me!"

"I am telling you the truth. To date Zudora has turned out something like \$20,000,000. It was the express will of your father to have this kept quiet, so that you would not be bothered with fortune hunters. Girl, you will marry a duke or a prince. You will become a famous beauty. But my advice is this: That until my guardianship ceases—you will be twenty-one then—you will say nothing to any one about this fortune. It would make life unbearable for us both."

out the faculty of sustained reasoning. There was little love lost between Storm and Bienreith. They had clashed a dozen times during the past year, and once or twice they had almost come to blows. On the last day they came together in the courtroom just before the noon recess. Bienreith threw discretion to the winds and hurled a low epithet at his rival, who swiftly retaliated by striking the German across the face with the brief he held in his hand.

A tremendous confusion ensued, and from her seat in the gallery Zudora viewed the scene with alarm. This man Bienreith was an athletic bully. He had been in America but a few years, and he still held to the German view regarding a blow in the face. He hastily scribbled a note, which he

showed toward Storm. The latter read it, shrugged and nodded affirmatively. All might have gone well but for the fact that an enterprising reporter found the discarded note and made a great scoop for his paper. Bienreith had challenged Storm to a duel, and the latter had hotly agreed, despite the fact that he knew nothing of swords and was a very indifferent pistol shot.

And Hassam All found a way to dispose of John Storm.

And Zudora thought she had found a way to save him. She found him in the cellar, bravely trying to hit a bulls-eye target. It would have been laughable under any other circumstance. He was not to be swerved, however. And when she threatened him with the police he laughed. He knew the police of old. They would refuse to take the affair seriously. Storm laid down his revolver and took a drink of water. Then he picked up the revolver and began peering away. Unobserved, she drugged the drinking water. There would be no duel that night.

The next morning Bienreith was found dead in his library, strangled, and John Storm, in a dazed condition, disheveled, was arrested on the street, charged with murder.

Hassam All, in his capacity of criminal investigator, accompanied by Zudora, entered with the police the scene of the crime.

"Well, my child," said he, "here is your first case. Let us see if you can handle it." Zudora, having a double incentive, ran over to the dead man. On the floor she found a scarfpin, some small change, and she noticed that his collar hung by the rear button. She hurriedly wrapped these three articles in her handkerchief. The peculiar green spots on this collar had aroused her curiosity.

She was very unhappy. The drug she had given her lover had not put him to sleep. It had merely sent him wandering about the streets throughout the night in a bank state of mind. He would not be able to account for his time, and she might plead in vain that she had given him a sleeping potion to keep him in his house until all chance to fight Bienreith was gone.

Several days passed. Storm moped in his cell. Truth to tell, he wasn't sure that he hadn't killed his enemy. From the moment Zudora left him until he found himself in jail he could remember nothing. When she told him what she had done he smiled and forgave her.

"But you got me into a pretty pickle, little girl, and you'll have to get me out of it."

"I will."

The marks on the collar were pencil marks, and they bothered her. Often she flung the collar vehemently from her, but she always went back to it. One day she found something on the floor in the library. At that moment she attached no significance to the find.

Zigzag pencil lines on the collar—how had they come there? Before the crime? That was not quite possible. The German had been scrupulously neat in his attire. She invariably sought what was known as the mystic room when confronted by any serious problem. No sound ever reached there. A green parrot swung on a perch. He was very old and was doubtless the repository of many a strange secret. Once he muttered, "Let's get him!" Zudora thought this rather odd and began quizzing the old bird. But he refused to speak further.

Near the dais stood a mechanical affair constructed something after the manner of a pin wheel. It consisted of two tubes of glass, which revolved in opposite directions, filled with a brilliant, diffusing violet light. This little invention was Hassam All's own.

Today Zudora tried it on the green parrot, but the whirling lights simply tumbled the bird off his perch. She picked him up and revived him and soon forgot all about him in the renewed interest in the spotted collar. Idly she imitated the marks with the stub of pencil. * * * And then, as if the whole world had suddenly lighted up, Zudora at last understood how Bienreith had come to his death.



Zudora Ran Over to the Dead Man.



A Huge Crystal Globe in Which Hassam All Saw the Past and the Future.



Striking the German Across the Face.

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When the trial began it looked very bad for John Storm. The altercation with the decedent in court was reviewed, the dueling challenge, their previous enmity, the twelve unaccountable hours. In the balcony Hassam All and the man Burns watched the proceedings with something more than normal interest. When the jury finally received the judge's instructions every one conceded that John Storm was a lost man; nothing could save him from the chair.

Suddenly up the aisle toward the judge's desk came a veiled woman.

"Stop!" she cried. "It was I!"

Then she faintly. The judge, the attorneys, the reporters, the spectators, all rose in their amazement. A woman! After the tableau came confusion and chaos. The judge signed to the jury to return to their chairs.

Storm, despite the deputy sheriff's push his way to the woman's side and swiftly raised the veil.

"Zudora?" He turned resolutely to the judge. "Your honor, there is some mistake. This young woman has had nothing to do with the death of Bienreith. It is utterly impossible."

"That remains to be seen, Mr. Storm. Return to the docket if you please!"

"But she is innocent!"

"Deputies!" called the judge sternly. He was sorry for Storm, but duty was duty none the less.

The court was eventually cleared. Storm was taken back to his cell. Hassam All and Burns went away together. Immediately Zudora sought the office of the district attorney, whom she found haranguing with the counsel for the defense.

"If I can convince you two gentlemen, will that be sufficient?" she asked.

"It will," affirmed the district attorney. "But why can't you give us the man's name now?" he asked.

"To tell his name now would spoil everything," declared Zudora. "I have no evidence at this moment that would hold in law, but I'll guarantee to place it in your hands before midnight. You two will come secretly to my house, and I will secrete you behind some curtains, and there you will hear the evidence from the man's own lips."

"Very well," said the district attorney. "But I warn you that any kind of oriental mummery will not pass as evidence."

"Do you see this pencil?" she asked, exhibiting a stub.

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It doesn't matter whether you suffer from a bad cold, or cough, neuralgia or pneumonia, there is a way of applying Nixon's Menthol Balm so that it gives relief to your pain AT ONCE. Don't confuse THIS remedy with ordinary Menthol. For Nixon's Menthol Balm is a physician's prescription compounded of several penetrating, antiseptic and healing medicines—it's not a "patent medicine." You would be surprised if we published the name of the noted high priced specialist whose prescription this remedy is prepared after. The Nixon Laboratory paid a high price to get the right to sell it for so little at 25 cents a bottle. It is splendid also for Sore Throat, Headache, Earache, Pleurisy, Bronchitis, Rheumatism, Swellings, Stiffness, and Soreness. Used externally only—pleasant, too. In Kinston, N. C., sold only at J. E. Hood's—25 cents a bottle. adv

By virtue of the assessment of Moseley Creek Drainage District, of Craven county, in my hands for collection for the year of 1914, and in default in the payment, according to the provisions of the existing law, I have levied on the lands of the following named persons, in said Moseley Creek Drainage District, and will sell the same at the Courthouse door in Kinston, N. C., at 12 o'clock M., Monday, the 1st day of February, 1915, to satisfy said assessment and costs on same.

R. B. LANE, Sheriff Craven County. This 1st day of January, 1915. J. H. Barwick, 29 acres, \$22.79. Stephen Cobb, 58-acres, \$79.97. Lesa Dunn, 4 acres, \$5.34. Daniel Frazier, 30 acres, \$33.22. Joe Hargett, 8 acres, \$8.13. Joe King, 2 acres, \$3.94. Joe Lovick, 90 acres, \$128.10. P. T. Nobles, 48 acres, \$84.86. W. H. Smith, 50 acres, \$68.72. Moses Spivey, 305 acres, \$445.48. Joe Tilghman, 70 acres, \$128.10. Alex. Tilghman, 15 acres, \$13.01. Seth West, Estate, 2,624 acres \$3,537.32. Timber holders of Seth West, Estate, \$1,992.52. 1-1-30t-Dly

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Premier Carrier of the South Train No. 21. Leaves Goldsboro 6:45 a. m., for Raleigh, Durham, Greensboro, Asheville and Waynesville. Through train to Asheville, handles chair car to Waynesville. Makes connections at Greensboro for all points north and east, and at Asheville with Carolina Special for Cincinnati, Chicago and all western points.

Train No. 139. Leaves Goldsboro 2:05 p. m., for Raleigh and Durham, and Greensboro. Handles through Pullman sleeping car from Raleigh to Atlanta, arrives Atlanta 5:25 a. m., making connection for New Orleans, Texas, California and all western points, also connects at Greensboro with through trains for all northern and eastern points.

Train No. 111. Leaves Goldsboro 10:45 p. m., for Raleigh, Durham and Greensboro. Handles Pullman sleeping car Raleigh to Winston-Salem. Makes connection at Greensboro with through train for Atlanta and New Orleans, also makes connection for Asheville, Chattanooga, St. Louis, Memphis, Birmingham and all western points.

H. F. CARY, Gen. Pas'g. Agt., Washington, D. C. S. H. HARDWICK, P. T. Mgr., Washington, D. C. O. F. YORK, T. P. A. Raleigh, N. C.

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This Installment Will Be Shown at The GRAND THEATRE Next Thursday Evening