

ZUDORA

In the Twenty Million Dollar Mystery

By HAROLD MACGRATH

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SYNOPSIS.
Zudora is left an orphan at an early age. Her father is killed in a gold mine, and the fortune from the mine, which proves to be worth \$20,000,000, is left in the guardianship of Frank Storm, Zudora's mother's brother, who has set himself up as a Hindu deity, and is known as Hassam Ali. He decides that Zudora must be before she can have a chance to come into possession of her money, so that it may be left to him, the rest of his. Hassam Ali sees an obstacle to his scheme in the person of John Storm, a young lawyer, for whom Zudora has taken a fancy, and he commands the girl to put the man out of her mind. Zudora insists that if she cannot marry Storm she will marry no one.



"Why don't you marry your sweetheart?"

"Well, well," says Hassam Ali, "I have my best twenty cases and you can marry him, but in a single case and you must marry a man."

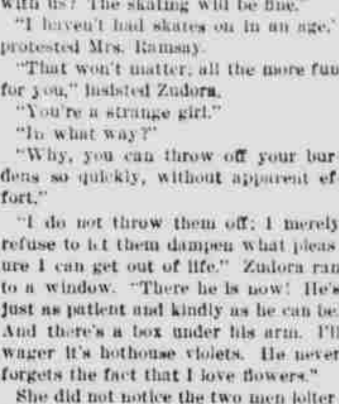
Zudora survives a mystery and wins her first case in which John Storm is saved from being convicted of a murder committed by Hassam Ali himself.



"I do not throw them off; I merely refuse to let them dampen what pleasure I can get out of life."

Zudora and Hassam Ali visit Nabok Khan's house, where they overcome every one whenever Nabok attempts to marry a princess. Storm, seeking Zudora, is made a prisoner. Zudora follows Nabok Khan, restores the princess to her original lover and saves Storm from death.

A maker of diamonds tells Hassam Ali his secret. Storm informs Zudora that his life is being attempted for money. Storm suspects Hassam Ali. Storm is arrested for stealing the diamond maker's gems, but Zudora discovers the real thieves—a pair of men.

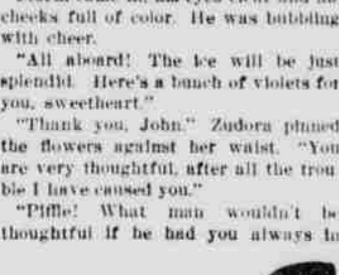


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The negro help employed on Storm's farm are fleeing because a great skeleton hand appears at night upon a hill near by. Storm is killed in the investigation, but Zudora learns that her uncle has employed Jimmy Bolton, a half-breed, to annoy Storm's parents.

Zudora finds Bolton operating a big muscle lantern and is attacked by him. Storm appears and saves her.

Hassam Ali asks Zudora to find a gem lost by two mysterious old men. Zudora gets a photograph of the gem and it turns in her hand. An old house is mined by Hassam Ali and the old men. Storm and Zudora are lured there and narrowly escape destruction when the house blows up.



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John McWinter, endeavoring to trap and kill George Smith, is killed himself, and Smith is charged with murder. Hassam Ali conspires to have John Storm meet the same fate as McWinter, and he and Storm are overcome by powerful forces. Zudora saves them, proves that McWinter's own dog trapped and killed him and saves Smith from a band of lynchers.

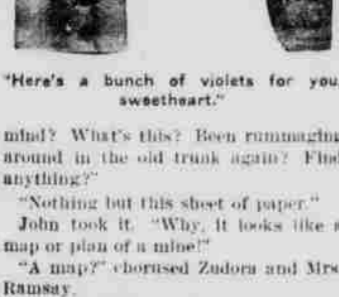
An inventor blows up a submarine with a powerful heat ray which he sends through water. Hassam Ali sends Zudora to a photographer directly beneath the inventor's laboratory and orders the inventor to kill her. Zudora gets a warning, and her life is saved. The heat ray machine is destroyed, and the photographer, after a quarrel with Hassam Ali, is found dead in the river.



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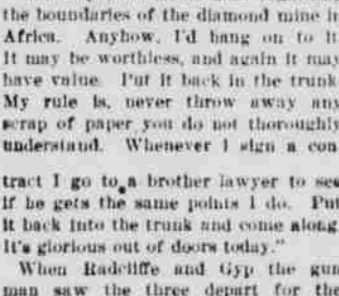
We Chang prevents Zudora's elopement with John Storm by hypnotizing her, and he and Hassam Ali attempt to smother her out of the country. This plot is frustrated by Storm.

Baird, Hassam Ali's double, falls in love with Zudora. Baird and Mme. Du Val kidnap Zudora and the Van Wick child. Storm rescues them, and Hassam Ali dies.



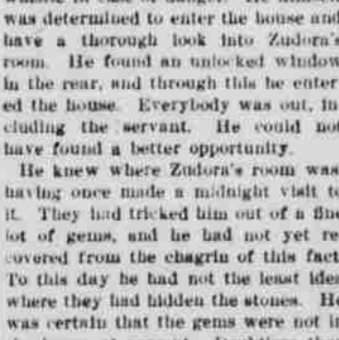
"I do not throw them off; I merely refuse to let them dampen what pleasure I can get out of life."

With Hassam Ali dead Zudora is released of her pledge to solve twenty cases. She confronts, however, 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 to her. This great photo serial is being shown in the leading moving picture theaters by the Theatrical Film Corporation. Among the stars participating are Marguerite Gwyn, May 1, Zabeth Forbes, James Gray, in the new role of reporter-hero, Sidney Bracey and Frank Farrington.



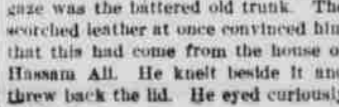
"I do not throw them off; I merely refuse to let them dampen what pleasure I can get out of life."

On looking through her uncle's papers Zudora finds that her father left her an interest in a diamond mine, and Storm and Baird both lead assistance in going to see for her possession of the estate. A job is being appropriated by rogues under the leadership of Mrs. Du Val. They plan to frighten Zudora so that she will run away. Failing, they kidnap Zudora and Howard, the mine superintendent, and put them in a private insane asylum. Howard dies, but Zudora, nearly furnished, is rescued by Storm and his friends. Detective Hunt and Baird find the Zudora gold mine.



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Mrs. Stoddard's jewels are stolen, but recovered through the cleverness of Hunt and Baird.



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the spangles and mutter of the old circus days. But the folded sheet of paper interested him far more. And when he spread it out and discovered that it was practically a complete survey of the mine in Africa he was delighted. He already knew the details of the Africa property. So far as he was concerned it was of no intrinsic value, but it would eventually be valuable to Zudora. So he stuffed it into his pocket and went on with his suit. Then he came upon the false bottom to the trunk, and here he found the documents which completed the case. He laughed. With these in his possession Zudora would lose her case in any court in America. What a find! Neither the girl nor her advisers had even thought to thoroughly investigate the battered old leather trunk!

He was in high feather when he stole out of the Ramsay house. He had made a great find. He was legally master of millions. It would be a simple case of manufacturing a will of prior date to Zudora's, upon old legal cap, with the notary's seal of some old chap who had died in Montana. It would be very easy now that he had all the documents in the case. Mme. Du Val would be pleased, so pleased that she might find a more willing ear to his plans. They had had this trunk all those weeks and had not thought to sound it for a false bottom. That was supreme luck. He felt more and more



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assured of his star as he rejoined Gyp. Millions, luxury, all his cravings to be gratified!

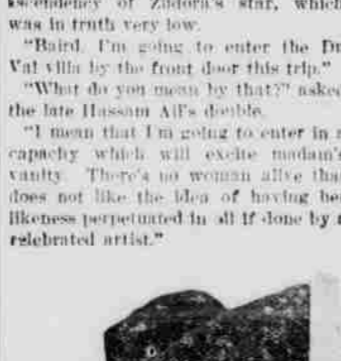
And Zudora, flying across the smooth, glistening surface of the pond, began to have hopes that her star had reached its zenith and was once more ascending toward the zenith. Well, perhaps it was. The sunshine, the exhilaration of the sport, the nearness of one he loved, these would have set cheer into any a heart braver than Zudora's.

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When the three of them returned to Mrs. Ramsay's the latter served tea, and for an hour it was a happy family. Then Storm remembered the survey map.

"You'd better let me have that and lock it up in my safe," he suggested. "You never can tell what will happen these days."

But Zudora searched the leather trunk from top to bottom in vain.



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"That's funny! You saw me put it on the top tray!"

"I did," said Storm gravely. He went about the room examining the windows. He left the two women and went downstairs. On the landing in the kitchen he saw muddy tracks. That was enough. "Some one has been here during our absence," he declared on returning to Zudora's room. "Whoever it was has got that paper. Evidently I was watched, and when we went to the pond the wretched came into the kitchen window. Well, perhaps I'm to blame. I should have put it into my pocket."



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Mentime in Detective Hunt's office things were being arranged for the ascendancy of Zudora's star, which was in truth very low.

"Baird, I'm going to enter the Du Val villa by the front door this trip."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the late Hassam Ali's double.

"I do not throw them off; I merely refuse to let them dampen what pleasure I can get out of life."

"Hot, Lord, man, can you paint?"

"Well enough to serve my purpose."

"You're a man of many surprises."

"That's high praise. You used to be that yourself."

"Give me all the points of the game."

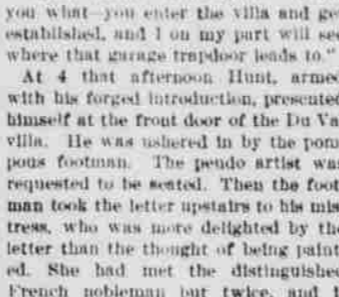
"You've heard of Jacques La Fontaine?"

"Yes. Just at present he's in the trenches in Alsace."

"So I learned. But Mme. Du Val will not dig deep so long as I can keep her vanity stirred. Now, then, watch your Uncle Dudley. In ten minutes I'll be the exact counterpart of the painter as he was during his last visit, six months ago. He came with splendid introductions, one of which I have. And I've based a neat little forgery on it. Here's La Fontaine's photograph. Keep your eye on me and take a lesson on how to get into the skin of another man. I want to get into that villa the worst kind of way. It keeps going through my head that there is some connection between it and that old junk lot or garage we've skylarked in once or twice."

"I revisited the place," observed Baird dryly. "They nearly had me there one day."

Hunt went to work rapidly and skillfully and within the stipulated time presented an appearance that was near enough to that of the real artist to fool the ordinary eye.



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"Great work!" cried Baird. "I tell you what—you enter the villa and get established, and I on my part will see where that garage trapdoor leads to."

At 4 that afternoon Hunt, armed with his forged introduction, presented himself at the front door of the Du Val villa. He was ushered in by the pompous footman. The pseudo artist was requested to be seated. Then the footman took the letter upstairs to his mistress, who was more delighted by the letter than the thought of being painted. She had met the distinguished old French nobleman but twice, and it flattered her greatly to believe that she had been remembered. And, more than this, the famous artist had once noted her singular beauty and never would be happy until he had put it upon canvas.



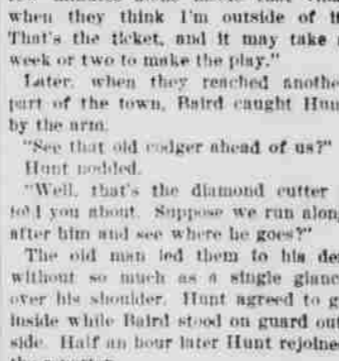
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Thus Hunt's initial reception was most cordial. Mme. Du Val would be delighted to give him as many sittings as he desired.

Baird met Hunt a short distance from the villa, and the two of them walked toward town.

"What luck?" asked the reporter.

"It was the easiest bit of work I ever did. When you tickle a woman's vanity you blind her. I'm going to put up one of the hotels. She might have it in her mind to call me up to change the hour of appointment. Tomorrow I'll begin to outline her features. You can take it from me, though, that she'll never hang this portrait anywhere for her friends to see. What I want is a few minutes alone in the villa, when they think I'm outside of it. That's the ticket, and it may take a week or two to make the play."



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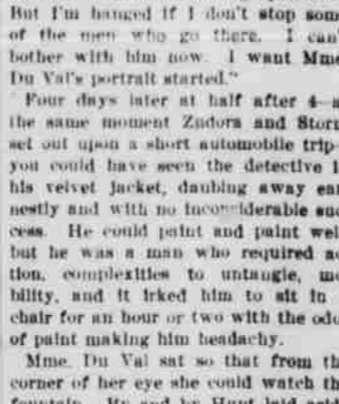
Later, when they reached another part of the town, Baird caught Hunt by the arm.

"See that old rodder ahead of us?"

Hunt nodded.

"Well, that's the diamond cutter I told you about. Suppose we run along after him and see where he goes?"

The old man led to his den without so much as a single glance over his shoulder. Hunt agreed to go inside while Baird stood on guard outside. Half an hour later Hunt rejoined the reporter.



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"I have seen Captain Radcliffe go in there," said Baird, "and I've just been thinking hard."

"No!" cried the detective jestingly.

"That bearded man in Montana and the captain shape up a good deal alike."

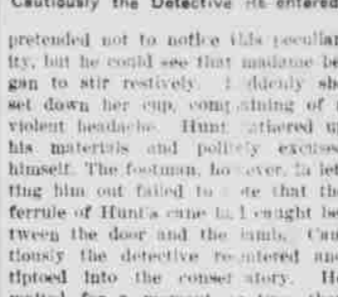
"So much alike that I'm certain they are one and the same. I've been thinking too. But when a fisherman casts his net he first makes sure that there are no holes in it. That old lapidary's face is known to me. Half the smuggled gems go to him, but we can't arrest the old boy. It's only logical that if some one brings him a stone to cut he cuts it without asking questions. But I'm hanged if I don't stop some of the men who go there. I can't bother with him now. I want Mme. Du Val's portrait started."

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Four days later at half after 4—at the same moment Zudora and Storm set out upon a short automobile trip—you could have seen the detective in his velvet jacket, daubing away earnestly and with no inconsiderable success. He could paint and paint well, but he was a man who required action, complexities to antagonize, mobility, and it irked him to sit in a chair for an hour or two with the odor of paint making him headachy.



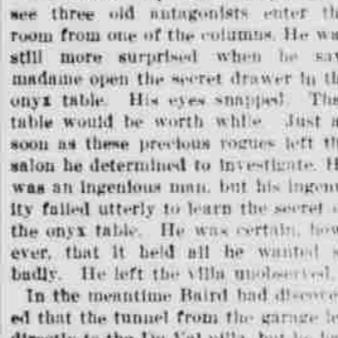
"I do not throw them off; I merely refuse to let them dampen what pleasure I can get out of life."

Mme. Du Val sat so that from the corner of her eye she could watch the fountain. By and by Hunt laid aside his palette.

"That will be all for today. I am quite sure you are tired."

"Join me with a cup of chocolate," she said amiably.

While they were sipping the chocolate the fountain jet reversed. Hunt



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pretended not to notice this peculiarity, but he could see that Madame began to stir restively. Evidently she set down her cup, complaining of a violent headache. Hunt hurried up his materials and politely excused himself. The footman, however, in letting Hunt out failed to note that the ferrule of Hunt's cane had caught between the door and the jamb. Carelessly the detective reentered and tipped into the conservatory. He waited for a moment or two, then stole into the salon. A spot on one of the columns attracted his attention. Upon close inspection he found it to be a sliding panel. He was lingering about for a method to open it when he heard footsteps. He slipped behind the portiere.

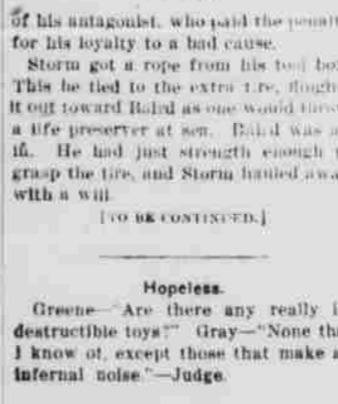


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It was Mme. Du Val, coming down to greet Captain Radcliffe, who had just come in. She at once showed him the portrait. He shrugged. He was not at all interested in this style of art.

"There goes the fountain," he warned.

"Merciful heaven, I had forgotten all about those fools! They struck the signal while La Fontaine was here, but luckily he did not notice it. Let them in."



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Hunt was very much surprised to see three old antagonists enter the room from one of the columns. He was still more surprised when he saw Madame open the secret drawer in the onyx table. His eyes snapped. That table would be worth while. Just as soon as these precious rogues left the salon he determined to investigate. He was an ingenious man, but his ingenuity failed utterly to learn the secret of the onyx table. He was certain, however, that it had all he wanted so badly. He left the villa undisturbed.

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