

**FIFTY THOUSAND
DOLLARS
RANSOM: A NOVEL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649582716

Fifty Thousand Dollars Ransom: A Novel by David Malcolm

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DAVID MALCOLM

**FIFTY THOUSAND
DOLLARS
RANSOM: A NOVEL**

Fifty Thousand . .
. . Dollars Ransom

... A NOVEL ...

By DAVID MALCOLM
Author of "A Fiend Incarnate."



NEW YORK
J. SELWIN TAIT & SONS
1896
Co



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CONTENTS.

PART I.	
CHAPTER	PAGE
I. In Sore Distress.....	5
II. "God's work or the Devil's?.....	16
III. Before the Police Inspector.....	30
IV. An Easter Offering.....	38
PART II.	
I. Bad News.....	46
II. A Stolen Valise.....	60
III. An Unexpected Reappearance....	69
IV. John Granger has some Doubts....	82
V. Checkmate!.....	88
VI. "To the Fairest Lady in Christen- dom!".....	104
VII. "She is Harder than Adamant."....	111
VIII. The Express Company is Suspicious.	117
IX. On the Plains.....	124
X. An Indian Duel.....	133
XI. "Hands Up!".....	146

PART III.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Mabel Wandel Discovers a Villain..	158
II. Juan's Confession.....	164
III. An Interesting Convalescence.....	175
IV. Keeping the Police Superintendent Busy	184
V. Mabel Wandel Takes up the Trail..	191
VI. An Attempted Rescue.....	202
VII. Gilbert Monaghan in his True Colors	209
VIII. A Desperate Rescue	219

"Fifty Thousand Dollars Ransom."

CHAPTER I.

IN SORE DISTRESS.

JOHN GRANGER was in sore trouble of mind—a trouble so deep that when he tried to speak of it to the wife of his bosom, the mere idea seemed to give added substance to his fears and so he was silent.

"No," he said to himself, "there are some things one cannot tell even to one's wife," and with this sad conclusion and with a heavy sigh he turned on his side in his bed, away from his soundly-sleeping and unsuspecting spouse, lest in his sleep her pretty shell-like ears nestling under great coils of glossy black hair should steal his terrible secret from him.

The French clock in the adjoining room struck three as he closed his dis-

mal soliloquy, and when it struck four he was still wide awake.

When the last sweet note of the time-piece had died on the air, John Granger wiped the cold perspiration from his forehead and stole out of bed, softly, so as not to awaken his still sleeping wife. "I shall go crazy if I lie here any longer," he said to himself, "with these worries growing worse every minute. Oh, I think these sleepless morning hours are the devil's own play-time." Then he raised the blind very softly—still mindful of the fair slumberer—and looked out, to find the world filled with a swirling, blinding, furious snow-storm, so innocent in the size of its flakes, and yet so deadly in its rage, that before it was half developed it was christened the blizzard of 1888, a name which it lived up to in a very marvelous way.

In front of his house No. — West Eleventh Street, New York City, the snow-drift was already piled to the depth of three or four feet, and the leafless tree which had been the house's joy in the summer-time, was laden with a mid-winter foliage of an incredible weight.



For a moment or two John Granger stood looking out at the snow, then he retraced his steps to bed. But he could not sleep, and after tossing from side to side and turning his pillow to cool the fever of his heated brain he finally abandoned the idea of sleep and proceeded to dress himself.

He felt that nothing but physical violence could mitigate his mental anguish, and, stepping into his dressing-room, he swung his heavy dumb-bells furiously for several minutes. This, however, availed him nothing, for the harder he worked the more clearly his thoughts began to concentrate upon his trouble.

At last he sat down on the edge of his bath-tub, wearied and despairing. "Fifty thousand dollars to pay before the banks close to-day, or stark ruin, and only ten thousand dollars to pay it with!" That had been the terrible refrain to which he had swung his dumb-bells.

As he recovered his breath, his mind travelled over the whole wretched story of his trouble. "How little did I dream," he said to himself, "that when