

THE MASTER KEY

By JOHN FLEMING WILSON



COPYRIGHT, 1914, BY JOHN FLEMING WILSON

A Novelized Version of the Motion Picture Drama of the Same Name Produced by the Universal Film Manufacturing Company. Illustrated With Photographs From the Picture Production.

CHAPTER XI.

Sing Wah and His Wives

JOHN DORR stood stupidly staring at the papers which he had found in the locked drawer of the dresser. His brief inquiries at the desk had only served to make the matter darker, so he had come back to the room to puzzle things out.

Painfully he set the facts in order before him. The first was that Ruth had gone to New York to deal with Everett about money for improvements to the "Master Key." The second was that she had evidently not been able to find Everett and had started west again. The third was that she had been in this very room. There lay the papers that represented the mine and its value. But how—where—how could it be?

His businesslike senses returned, and he proceeded to wire Everett's office in New York, with the result that he was soon in possession of his address in San Francisco.

"So Everett's here, too," he muttered. "That is stranger yet. I guess it was time I dropped in. Now to find Ruth!"

He thrust the packet of papers in his pocket and then withdrew them and locked them again into the dresser drawer. He had a dim notion that Ruth might come back for them. Then he telephoned to the St. Francis hotel and left word for Everett, who was reported to be out.

Still following what his common sense told him was the logical method of unraveling the tangle he went down to the desk and entered into conversation with the clerk. Meanwhile his eye ran down the register. Opposite the number of the room he now occupied he saw a heavily scrawled "Mrs. J. Darnell and daughter."

He frowned, and the clerk said sympathetically, "You must have a nasty headache?"

"I have," John returned. "Met with an accident in an auto that rather upset me." He laid his finger on the register and, controlling his voice, went on as if casually, "I see Mrs. Darnell stays here."

To Dorr's secret amazement the clerk became mysterious, leaning across the desk to whisper, "Ah, you know her?"

"I wanted specially to see her," John equivocated. "Is she here?"

"She is not, and she left in a very strange way," the clerk explained quietly. "She came here last evening with her daughter. I gave them the room you have now. Along in the late hours she suddenly came down with the girl unconscious and told me that

house detective didn't like the looks of the whole affair, so he followed them. "Was the girl very fair haired and beautiful?" Dorr managed to ask in an indifferent tone.

"Precisely," responded the clerk, suddenly matching his guest's manner. "If you want to find Mrs. Darnell maybe the house detective got her address—or the address of the hospital they took the girl to."

Presently, in response to a summons, appeared the detective, who scanned John's somewhat bruised face thoughtfully, saying nothing until the clerk explained that Mr. Dorr wished, if possible, to get into communication with Mrs. Darnell.

"The best I can do is to find the taxi driver for you," he said slowly, still studying John's stalwart figure. "He may be out on the stand now. Let's see."

As they passed out the detective continued hesitatingly, "Do you know Mrs. Darnell very well?"

There was that in the man's tone that made John pause before answering. He glanced at the cool, impassive face and caught the glint of the steady eyes. He took a sudden resolution.

"I believe you're really interested in this matter," Dorr said briefly. "Suppose we talk this over before hunting the taxi chauffeur."

"I was merely curious, that's all," was the noncommittal murmur. "That girl is not her daughter," John continued. "I have reason to believe that it is Miss Ruth Gallon, the heiress to the 'Master Key' mine, whom she is abducting." His passion blazed forth in spite of his self-restraint. "I must find her and save her."

"Might I ask what relation you are to the young lady?" asked the detective mildly.

John stared at him and then realized the oddity of his actions and words. He briefly explained his position at the mine and his wardship of the heiress. He also went into detail as to what he suspected Wilkerson of, describing him carefully.

"He was one of them, sure enough," agreed the detective. "But young heiresses ain't being kidnaped days like these out of hotels like this."

"I may be mistaken," John assented wearily. "All I know of Mrs. Darnell is from occasional words dropped by Wilkerson. But I suppose we might get a clue as to where they went anyway."

After some search of the long line of taxis they came to one which the detective identified as the one Mrs. Darnell had taken the night before.

"Driver, take us where you did those fares who were in such a hurry last night," the detective ordered.

The chauffeur shook his head. "You can search me for the address," he returned. "There wasn't any."

The driver leaned out from his seat and went on earnestly: "You know how they jumped in and we rolled off. Well, it seemed it was a case of life and death, according to the woman, and I stepped on the machine and hastened some toward the North Pacific hospital. But when we got into Chinatown one of the men hailed me and told me to drive just as he said. He got out here in front with me, and when we reached a certain spot they all beat it."

"Can you take us to that spot?"

"I was just wondering to myself whether I could find it," was the response. "But I'll try."

He threw in his clutch and the car left the line and started up the hill toward California street. John Dorr leaned back against the cushions with a strange sense of at last being on his way toward his goal. He barely heard his companion's murmur, "Evidently they took her into the lower part of Chinatown."

We usually credit the oriental with little or no imagination, pointing to his art, his clothes and his language as evidences. As the fact runs, even the Chinese coolie uses the faculty of imagination more frequently than his white brother on an equal social plane. Sing Wah, or Wah Sing, as he was indifferently called, was outwardly a

stolid, dull-eyed Chinese of uncertain middle age. His picture—it was in the gallery of every secret service office from Singapore to Philadelphia—was not less changeless of expression, nor more tearful than he. Yet in spite of his somber clothes and general air of blank stupidity, Sing Wah was a man of mark, a man with a history replete with adventure and, not too seldom with crime.

If the ordinary criminal could have an office or a store he would quadruple his profits. But the common run of rascals must steal and fly. Their post-office address is a figment. They are not at home when opportunity knocks. Sing Wah knew this, and it was his boast that for thirty years any one who wanted him, either day or night, could find him.

So he sat at the back of his little store night after night, blinking through the wooden screen at the various customers who came in to trade or barter. And year after year they came to his door, the pirate and the thief, the smuggler and the robber, and he took his toll of them and passed them on. Whether Sing Wah never told. And because he did not tell they came back with greater loot and richer booty, and he again passed them through his store to vanish utterly from the haunts of men and the purview of the police.

Among the many hundreds who had availed themselves of Sing Wah's aid was Wilkerson, who, during dark periods of his career, had several times run athwart the barriers of the law and been compelled to seek refuge where he could.

Harry Wilkerson was not a fool. In some ways he was brilliantly endowed. He recognized Sing Wah's superiority to all others in the great game of outwitting the law. He perceived beneath the stolid mask the alert, active, studious mind which was ever vigilant, never forgetful, always intelligently watching the world that passed before his filmed eyes. The Chinese had, as well, acknowledged Wilkerson's adeptness and persistency. In several deals they had been partners to their mutual profit.

"You are a very good fellow, Harry," Sing Wah had told him once as they drank tea in a little room in the rear. "You are a smart man—almost as smart as I am. But you are too hungry. You cannot resist your appetites. Now, I—he made a slight gesture of distaste with his lean brown hand—"I have no appetites."

Wilkerson nodded. "I guess you're right, Sing Wah. You even haven't any pride. You talk pidgin English to the tourists and the rest, instead of speaking the perfect English you know."

"The dull eyes lit for a moment humorously. "I have always felt that I owed it to Oxford not to flout my education in a small tradesman's shop, don't you know?"

The imitation of the Oxonian drawl had been so natural that Wilkerson had snatched his thighs in delight. Thereafter he took a peculiar pleasure in watching Sing Wah's assumed silent stupidity and comparing it with what he knew to be the real person behind the dull features.

It was to Wilkerson that the Chinese had explained his reason for never changing his address, no matter how brisk the police might be. "And I have thought out a scheme which you will like," he went on. "Come with me."

It was then that he showed Wilkerson the cylindrical room which had a single door and revolved at a touch on a lever.

"Dangerous stuff," commented Wilkerson. "If the police find that they'll sure land you."

Sing Wah's pallid lips opened in faint smile. "I built it for them. And the Chinatown guides know about it and will charge \$10 extra for a trip through the horrors of the underground, as they call it." The Chinese sneered. "Let them play with such things while I use the brains heaven gave me. And yet, sometimes that trick room may serve a purpose."

Thus it came about that Harry Wilkerson, driven to his wits' end to accomplish his designs, bethought him of Sing Wah and fairly drove Jean Darnell and Drake before him.

To Mrs. Darnell's credit it must be said that she rebelled strongly. But



"You've got to do the trick."

the stake was too great to risk, and she bitterly consented to Wilkerson's hastily outlined plan of hiding Ruth away somewhere in Sing Wah's precincts until they could once more get their plans into working order.

Before she would leave the place she must indeed see Sing Wah himself. "Will the girl be safe here?" she demanded.

The Chinese looked at her flushed and passionate beauty in silence until she repeated her question. Then he said quietly and in his own exquisitely modulated English: "You need have little fear. The servants are honest and discreet. And"—he let his eyes meet hers fully—"I think it is possible that she is safer now than she has been for some time. Good night, madam!"

While Wilkerson and Mrs. Darnell had been hurriedly arranging matters with Sing Wah, Drake had gone in search of lodgings nearby. He found them in what had once been a noted hotel, which had fallen into sad decay. It was in the faded rooms he engaged here that the three met to consult on the future.

"The first thing to do is to get hold of those deeds and papers she has in her grip," said Wilkerson. "I wonder you didn't think to get them before, Jean."

The woman's eyes lit with dull hatred, but she made no answer. She watched him fuss with the locks of the hand satchel which she had indicated as the one in which Ruth carried her valuables. When it opened and Wilkerson thrust his clutching fingers downward into it Mrs. Darnell leaned forward as if in protest. He paid no attention to her, but continued his search with ever increasing haste. At last he straightened up with an oath so venomous and deadly that even Drake shrank back.

"The deeds aren't here," Wilkerson said thickly. "She's hidden them!"

"But where?"

This question seemed to break Wilkerson's almost steely intensity of purpose. The question put his whole problem before him in two words—but where? He shifted his eyes from the emptied satchel to the curtained window. Instantly there leaped before him the picture of the truck turning slowly over in the gulch, of the huge billow of smoke, of the little lances of fire that charged through the dry undergrowth as if to preserve to the flames their prey. Was it for this that he was a murderer? The curtain blew inward before some vagrant wind from the bay, and Wilkerson drew back in terror.

"What is it, Harry?" demanded Mrs. Darnell, instantly taking alarm.

"Nothing," he said sullenly. "I was just thinking of something." He turned on Drake. "You've got to do the trick," he went on.

"How's that?" demanded the younger man.

Wilkerson eagerly formulated his plan, ticking off the points on the tips of his quivering fingers.

"First you're Everett, turned up at last. You find her—"

"In Chinatown!" sneered Drake. "You can easily gain her confidence and get hold of the papers, and maybe—"

Drake laughed ugly. "I look like the kind of joker who would dress up as a banker and then proceed to renew my client's acquaintance in a Chinese joint. How am I supposed to know she's there? I tell you, Wilkerson, that you can't travel straight, even when it pays you. Why in God's name you ever took that girl to that place of Sing Wah's is beyond my comprehension. Any place would have been better. Now you have put the heads of all of us in a noose. You know what people will say when—"

"They'll say nothing," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"But I don't like the Chinese woman's business," he said. "I don't like to be mixed up in anything like that. I'll have nothing to do with it. I'll have nothing to do with it."

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

"You'll have nothing to do with it," said Wilkerson furiously, and he proceeded once more to argue that Drake could easily continue to impersonate Everett and in that guise enter their scheme to its profitable conclusion. In spite of his eagerness and simplicity he was unable to move either Drake or Mrs. Darnell from their attitude of frightened contempt. At last Drake asked him to do his best to make a girl trust him.

Professional Directory

FRATERNAL ORDERS.

A. F. & A. M.—La Grande Lodge No. 41, A. F. & A. M. holds regular meetings first and third Saturday at 7:30 p. m. Cordial welcome to all Masons.

J. J. BROUGHTON, W. M.
A. C. WILLIAMS, Sec.

B. P. O. E.—La Grande Lodge No. 433 Meets each Thursday evening at 8 o'clock in Elk's club, corner of Depot street and Washington avenue. Visiting brothers cordially invited to attend.

M. B. DONOHUE, E. R.
ADNA B. ROGERS, Sec.

KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS—Red Cross Lodge No. 27 meets every Monday night in Cattle hall (K. of P. hall). A Pythian welcome to all visiting Knights.

E. RIESLAND, C. C.
PERRY OLIVER, Sec.

K. of R. & S.

MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA—La Grande Camp No. 7703 meets on the first and third Thursday evenings of each month in the K. of P. hall. Visiting neighbors welcome.

H. J. VINACKE, V. C.
F. B. CURREY, Clerk.

WOODMEN OF THE WORLD—La Grande Camp No. 169 meets every first and third Friday at K. of P. Hall. All visiting neighbors welcomed.

JOHN A. REED, C. C.
D. M. CLARK, Clerk.

L. O. O. M.—La Grande Lodge No. 860, Loyal Order of Moose holds regular meeting every Tuesday night at 7:30 in Moose Home on Adams ave. Visitors always welcome.

ANGUS STEWART, Dic.
HARRY SWART, Sec.

F. O. E.—La Grande Aerie No. 259 on each and every Friday evening at 8 o'clock in top floor of New Foley building. Visiting members cordially welcomed.

J. R. RUSK, W. P.
L. F. BELLINGER, Sec.

O. E. S.—Hope Chapter No. 13, O. E. S., holds stated communications the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Visiting members cordially invited.

MRS. A. B. CHERRY, W. M.
MARY A. WARRICK, Sec.

ROYAL NEIGHBORS—Iris Camp meets every second and fourth Friday afternoons, every month in K. of P. Hall. All visiting members cordially invited.

EMMA LUND, Oracle.
LILY C. KIMMELL, Recorder.

REBEKAHS—Crystal Lodge No. 50 meets every Tuesday evening in the I. O. O. F. hall. All visiting members are invited to attend.

LOUISE DOUGLAS, N. G.
ZOE GOLDEN, Sec.

UNITED ARTISANS—La Grande Assembly No. 30, meet regularly every first and third Tuesday of each month in the K. of P. hall. All visiting members are invited to attend.

F. R. SUYDAM, M. A.
NORA M. SHORT, Sec.

K. OF L. OF SECURITY—Mt. Emily Council No. 2646. Meets second and fourth Wednesday evenings at 8 o'clock in the Fifth floor of the new Foley building. Visiting members are welcome.

ANGUS STEWART, Pres.
CLARENCE E. GRAVES, Fin. Sec.
ROY E. GREEN, Red. Sec.

WOMEN OF WOODCRAFT CIRCLE No. 47—Meet second and fourth Tuesday nights of each month at Eagle's hall in Foley Building. All visiting neighbors welcome.

LOUISE HILARY, G. N.
LILLIE ALLSTOTT, Clerk.

PYTHIAN SISTERS of Rowena Temple No. 9 meets every second and fourth Friday evening at K. P. Hall.

M. E. C. MRS. LIZZY HAYWORTH,
M. of R. C. LOUISE LANDRUM.

AUCTIONEERS. TOM JOHNSON—Auctioneer, makes a specialty of farmers' stock and machinery sales. "The man that gets you the money." Leave orders at Observer office.

PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS.

A. L. RICHARDSON, M. D.—Physician and Surgeon; over Hill's drug store. Phones: Office, Black 1362; residence, Main 55.

DR. R. E. L. HOLT—Physician and surgeon; successor to Dr. N. Moller; corner Adams avenue and Depot street. Phones—Office Main 69; Residence, Main 730.

DR. M. K. HALL—Physician and surgeon. Office West-Jacobson Bldg. Phone Main 53. Rooms 11-12-13.

C. H. UPTON, Ph. G. M. D.—Physician and Surgeon. Special attention to Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat. Office in La Grande National Bank Building. Phones: Office Main 2; Residence Main 32.

DR. H. L. UNDERWOOD—Physician and surgeon. Diseases of the eye a specialty.

DR. DORA J. UNDERWOOD—Diseases of women and children. Offices—Adams avenue, over Red Cross Drug Store.

EYE, EAR, NOSE, THROAT SPECIALIST.

DR. H. M. BOUVY—Practice limited exclusively to diseases and surgery of Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat. Also the Fitting of Glasses. Office West Jacobson Bldg. Office Phone Red 3431. Residence Red 2021.

DENTIST.

E. P. MOSSMAN—Dentist; rooms 6 and 7 new West Building. Phone Black 1521; Office Hours 8 to 12 a. m., and 1 to 5 p. m.

OSTEOPATHS.

DR. C. H. DAY—Osteopath—Physician. Over Lilly's Hardware Store. Phone Main 63. Residence Phone Red 2181. Successor to Dr. Zimmerman.

CHIROPRACTOR.

MYERS & KELLY—Graduates of Universal Chiropractic College of Davenport, Iowa. Offices in New Foley Building. Phone Black 1871.

VETERINARY.

DR. H. W. RILEY—Graduate Veterinary Hospital, 1409 Madison Ave. State Stallion Inspector. Stock Inspected for shipment. Home: Independent Phone. Black 41. Farmers Co-Operative Phone, Main 17.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW.

COCHRAN & EBERHARD—Geo. T. Cochran and Colon R. Eberhard Attorneys. La Grande National Bank Bldg., La Grande, Oregon.

T. H. CRAWFORD; ROBT. S. EAKIN—CRAWFORD & EAKIN—Attorneys at law. Practice in all the courts of the state and United States. Office West-Jacobson building, La Grande, Ore., rooms 9-10.

R. J. GREEN—Attorney at Law Rooms 9-10, Sommer Bldg., La Grande, Ore. Practices in all state and Federal courts.

UNDERTAKERS.

W. H. ROHNENKAMP CO., Undertaking and Embalming. Strictly modern. Day phone, Black 241. Night phone Red 3971 or Red 3412.

J. C. HENRY—Undertaker and Embalmer; 20 years in business. Day phone, Main 62; night phones, Red 3181, Red 562, Black 3811.

H. A. ACKERT

PLANING MILLS

Cor. Greenwood and Madison St. (Successor to Wenaha Lbr. Co.) ALL KINDS of custom planing done promptly. Our guarantee behind every job of work.

D. R. FONG MEDICINE CO.

CHINESE ROOT AND HERB REMEDIES

Cures Bodily Diseases With Root and Herb Treatment
Phone 762 Free Consultation La Grande Ore.
1412 Adams Ave.

MAKE A NOTE of the fact that an abstract is an absolute necessity when you purchase real estate. No matter how well posted you might be—you don't have a full history of the parcel, as you do when we make an abstract of it. Accuracy guaranteed.

THE ABSTRACT & TITLE CO.
Foley Hotel Building.



"Do you know Mrs. Darnell very well?" she had been taken very ill and she was hurrying her to a hospital. There were a couple of men with her, and the

(To be Continued.)

Important to Piano Owners. Sidney Lyle, the well known piano tuner, is at the Foley hotel. Reference furnished from J. J. McClelland of the Utah Conservatory, also Whitman Conservatory of Walla Walla.—Adv. 1 29 6t.