

The DESTROYING ANGEL

By Louis Joseph Vance

Can you imagine yourself dead for five years? Suppose at the end of that time you turned up suddenly among old friends in New York city, asked for an accounting of your estate and announced your intention of finding the girl you had married under pressure before you disappeared—much to their shocked surprise! That's the position in which we find Hugh Whitaker in this installment. How his plans ruin the important plans of others about him, how he creates a furore at a big theatrical performance and how he finds his wife, is told with dramatic effect.

CHAPTER V—Continued.

Whitaker laughed quietly and turned the conversation, accepting the manager's pseudo-confidences at their face value—that is, as pure bluff, quite consistent with the managerial pose.

They rose presently and made their way out into the crowded, blatant night of Broadway.

"We'll walk, if you don't mind," Max suggested. "It isn't far, and I'd like to get a line on the house as it goes in." He sighed affectedly. "Heaven knows when I'll see another swell audience mobbing one of my attractions!"

They pushed forward slowly through the eddying tides, elbowed by a matchless motley of humanity, deafened by its thousand tongues, dazzled by blindness by walls of living light. Whitaker experienced a sensation of participating in a royal progress; Max was plainly a man of mark; he left a wake of rippling interest. At every third step somebody hailed him, as a rule by his first name; generally he responded by a curt nod and a tightening of his teeth upon his cigar.

They turned east through Forty-sixth street, shouldered by a denser rabble whose faces, all turned in one direction, shone livid with the glare of a gigantic electric sign, midway down the block:

THEATER MAX SARA LAW'S FAREWELL.

It was nearly half-past eight; the house had been open since seven; and still a queue ran from the gallery doors to Broadway. The lobby itself was crowded to suffocation with an occidental durbar of barbaric magnificence, the city's supreme manifestation of its religion, the ultimate rite in the worship of the pomps of the flesh.

"Look at that," Max grumbled through his cigar. "Ain't it a shame?" "What?" Whitaker had to lift his voice to make it carry above the buzzing of the throng.

"The money I'm losing," returned the manager, vividly disgusted. "I could've filled the Metropolitan opera house three times over!"

He swung on his heel and began to push his way out of the lobby. "Come along—no use trying to get in this way."

Whitaker followed, to be led down a blind alley between the theater and the adjoining hotel. An illuminated sign advertised the stage door, through which, via a brief hallway, they entered the postscenium and—Max dragging him by the arm—passed through a small door into the gangway behind the boxes.

"Curtain's just up," Max told him; "Sara doesn't come on till near the middle of the act. Make yourself comfortable; I'll be back before long."

He drew aside a curtain and ushered his guest into the right-hand stage-box, then vanished. The few empty stalls were rapidly filling up. There was a fluent movement through the aisles. A subdued hum and rustle rose from that portion of the audience which was already seated. The business going on upon the stage was receiving little attention—from Whitaker as little as from anyone. The opening scene in the development of the drama interested the gathering little or not at all; it was hanging in suspense upon the unfolding of some extraordinary development, something unprecedented and extraneous, foreign to the play.

Max slipped quietly into the box and handed his guest a program. "Better get over here," he suggested in a hoarse whisper, indicating a chair near the rail. "You may never have another chance to see the greatest living actress. Wonderful house," he whispered, sitting down behind Whitaker. "Drummond hasn't shown up yet, though."

"That so?" Whitaker returned over his shoulder.

"Yes; it's funny; never knew him to be so late. He always has the aisle seat, fourth row, center. But he'll be along presently."

He glanced idly at his program, indifferently absorbing the information that "Miss Sara Law in her first and greatest success entitled Joan Thursday—a play in three acts—"

The audience stirred expectantly; a movement ran through it like the movement of waters, murmurous, upon a shore. Whitaker's gaze was drawn to the stage as if by an implacable force. Max shifted on the chair behind him and said something indistinguishable, in an unnatural tone.

A woman had come upon the stage, suddenly and tempestuously, banging a door behind her. The audience got

the barest glimpse of her profile as, pausing momentarily, she eyed the other actors. Then, without speaking, she turned and walked up-stage, her back to the footlights.

Applause broke out like a thunder-clap, pealing heavily through the big auditorium, but the actress showed no consciousness of it. She was standing before a cheap mirror, removing her hat, arranging her hair with the typical, unconscious gestures of a weary shopgirl; she was acting—living the scene, with no time to waste in pandering to her popularity by bows and set smiles; she remained before the glass, prolonging the business, until the applause subsided.

Whitaker received an impression as of a tremendous force at work across the footlights. The woman diffused an effect as of a terrible and boundless energy under positive control. She was not merely an actress, not even merely a great actress; she was the very soul of the drama of today.

Beyond this he knew in his heart that she was his wife. Sara Law was the woman he had married in that sleepy Connecticut town, six years before that night. He had not yet seen her face clearly, but he knew. To find himself mistaken would have shaken the foundations of his understanding.

Under cover of the applause, he turned to Max.

"Who is that? What is her name?" "The divine Sara," Max answered, his eyes shining.

"I mean, what is her name off the stage, in private life?"

"The same," Max nodded with conviction; "Sara Law's the only name she's ever worn in my acquaintance with her."

At that moment, the applause having subsided to such an extent that it was possible for her to make herself heard, the actress swam, round from the mirror and addressed one of the other players. Her voice was clear, strong and vibrant, yet sweet; but Whitaker paid no heed to the lines she spoke. He was staring, fascinated, at her face.

Sight of it set the seal of certainty upon conviction: She was one with Mary Ladislav. He had forgotten her so completely in the lapse of years as to have been unable to recall her features and coloring, yet he had needed only to see to recognize her beyond any possibility of doubt. Those big, intensely burning eyes, that drawn and pallid face, the quick, nervous movements of her thin white hands, the slenderness of her tall, awkward, immature figure—in every line and contour, in every gesture and inflection, she reproduced the Mary Ladislav whom he had married.

And yet . . . Max was whispering over his shoulder:

"Wonderful make-up—what?" "Make-up!" Whitaker retorted. "She's not made up—she's herself to the last detail."

Amusement glimmered in the manager's round little eyes: "You don't know her. Wait till you get a pipe at her off the stage." Then he checked the reply that was shaping on Whitaker's lips, with a warning lift of his hand and brows: "Ssh! Catch this, now. She's a wonder in this scene."

The superb actress behind the counterfeit of the hunted and hungry shopgirl was holding spellbound with her inevitable witchery the most sophisticated audience in the world; like wheat in a windstorm it swayed to the modulations of her marvelous voice as it ran through a passage-at-arms with the termagant. Suddenly ceasing to speak, she turned down to a chair near the footlights, followed by a torrent of shrill vituperation under the lash of which she quivered like a whipped thoroughbred.

Abruptly, pausing with her hands on the back of the chair, there came a change. The actress had glanced across the footlights; Whitaker could not but follow the direction of her gaze; the eyes of both focussed for a brief instant on the empty aisle-seat in the fourth row. A shade of additional pallor showed on the woman's face. She looked quickly, questioningly, toward the box of her manager.

Seated as he was so near the stage, Whitaker's face stood out in rugged relief, illumined by the glow reflected from the footlights. It was inevitable that she should see him. Her eyes fastened, dilating, upon his. The scene faltered perceptibly. She stood transfixed. . . .

In the hush Max cried impatiently: "What the devil!" The words broke the spell of amazement upon the actress. In a twinkling the pitiful counterfeit of the shopgirl was ren-

der, a pathetic frenzy in his habitually mild and lustrous eyes. Advancing halfway to the middle of the apron, he paused, begging attention with a pudgy hand. It was a full minute before the gallery would let him be heard.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he announced plaintively. "I much regret to inform you that Miss Law has suffered a severe nervous shock"—his gaze wandered in perplexed inquiry toward the right-hand stagebox, then was hastily averted—"and will not be able to continue."

Wave upon wave of sound swept through the auditorium to break, roaring, against the obdurate curtain. Max with difficulty contrived to make himself disconnectedly audible.

"Ladies and . . ." he shouted, sweat bending his perturbed forehead. . . . "regret . . . impossible to continue . . . money . . . box office . . ."

An angry howl drowned him out. He retreated at accelerated discretion.

Whitaker, slipping through the stage sides of it.

CHAPTER VI.

The Late Extra.

Impulsively Whitaker got up to follow Max, then hesitated and sank back in doubt, his head awhirl. He was for the time being shocked out of all capacity for clear reasoning or right thinking. Uppermost in his consciousness he had a half-formed notion that it wouldn't help matters if he were to force himself in upon the crisis behind the scenes.

Beyond all question his wife had recognized in him the man whom she had been given every reason to believe dead; a discovery so unnerving as to render her temporarily unable to continue.

This, then, explained Drummond's reluctance to have him bidden to the supper party; whatever ultimate course of action he planned to pursue, Drummond had been unwilling, perhaps pardonably so, to have his romance overthrown and altogether shattered in a single day. He had lied, lied desperately, doubtless meaning to encompass a marriage before Whitaker could find his wife, and so furnish him with every reason that could influence an honorable man to disappear a second time.

On the other hand, Max to a certainty was ignorant of the relationship between his star and his old time friend, just as he must have been ignorant of her identity with the one time Mary Ladislav. For that matter, Whitaker had to admit that, damning as was the evidence to controvert the theory, Drummond might be just as much in the dark as Max was. It was only fair to suspend judgment. In the meantime . . .

The audience was getting beyond control. In the gallery the gods were beginning to testify to their normal intolerance with shrill whistles, cat-calls, sporadic bursts of hand-clapping and a steady, sinister rumble of stamping feet. In the orchestra and dress circle people were moving about restlessly and talking at the top of their voices in order to make themselves heard above the growing din.

Abruptly Max himself appeared at one side of the proscenium arch. It was plain to those nearest the stage that he was seriously disturbed. There was a noticeable hesitancy in his man-

ODD PLACES TO HIDE CASH

Woman Concealed Savings on Her Mother's Grave—Safety Deposit in Cannon.

The woman who, as just revealed in the law courts, hid her savings on her mother's grave in Forest Hill cemetery probably hit upon a unique cache. But there is no saving. The person who mistrusts savings banks generally looks around for the most unlikely spot in which to deposit wealth, and more than one may hit on the same idea.

Old cannon, for instance, seem to form favorable depositories. Quite a quantity of jewelry was found some while ago in a solitary gun which stands in the fort at Shoreham, and about the same time a bag containing 70 sovereigns was discovered in an old cannon in Peel park, Bradford.

From one of the old Crimean cannon at Liverpool also some inquisitive youngsters once brought forth a soldier's discharge papers and notes to the value of £100.—London Chronicle.

Couldn't Give Up the Movies.

Said one charming young creature while sipping her tea: "Did you hear that Eteka and Olaf have broken their engagement?"

"Heavens, no!" exclaimed the other charming creature, almost choking over her cake. "I thought they were the original turtle-doves."

"Well, they were; but Olaf is short-sighted and has to sit in the very first row at the moving picture theaters, and Eteka can only see from the very back, and she said she would be awfully unhappy if they had to spend half their lives apart and that the best thing to do was not to marry. And there you are."

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He Knew in His Heart That She Was His Wife.

door behind the boxes, ran into the stage manager standing beside the first entrance, heatedly explaining to anyone who would listen the utter futility of offering box-office prices in return for seat checks which in the majority of instances had cost their holders top-notch speculator prices.

"They'll wreck the theater," he shouted excitedly, mopping his brow with his coat sleeve, "what t'ell'd she wanna pull a raw one like this for?"

Whitaker caught his arm in a grasp compelling attention.

Well, what's your guess? Will Whitaker's wife receive him with gratitude and open arms—because he saved her honor long ago—or will she look him over calmly and chase him off the place?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Matter of Height. We are informed by an otherwise voracious friend that he was standing in front of a department store, gazing raptly into one of the display windows, when he heard this conversation:

"Tell me, Grace," said a man whose wife—or maybe she wasn't—had made him stop while she rubbered at the dresses, "when you're getting a dress, which costs more—the waist or the skirt?"

"Why, that depends," said the woman.

"On the season, I suppose."

"How could it depend on the season, silly?"

"Well, this season the skirts come high, but the waists don't—ain't I right?"

Expert, Indeed.

A strange man had been sent to polish the floors. His manner was anything but energetic, and the lady feared that he would not polish them properly.

"Are you quite sure that you understand the work?" she inquired. His indignation was tremendous.

"You know Colonel B.'s folks, next door but one?" he said. "Well, I refer you to them. On the polished floor of their dining room five persons broke their legs last winter and a lady slipped clear down the grand staircase. I polished all their floors!"—Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph.

Sportive Fish.

The gambling of whales is often witnessed by sailors, and Paley says that any observer of fish must acknowledge that "they are so happy they know not what to do with themselves. Their attitudes and frolics are simply the effect of an excess of spirits."

COMB SAGE TEA IN HAIR TO DARKEN IT

It's Grandmother's Recipe to keep her Locks Dark, Glossy, Beautiful.

The old-time mixture of Sage Tea and Sulphur for darkening gray, streaked and faded hair is grandmother's recipe, and folks are again using it to keep their hair a good, even color, which is quite sensible, as we are living in an age when a youthful appearance is of the greatest advantage.

Nowadays, though, we don't have the troublesome task of gathering the sage and the mussy mixing at home. All drug stores sell the ready-to-use product, improved by the addition of other ingredients, called "Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Compound" for about 50 cents a bottle. It is very popular because nobody can discover it has been applied. Simply moisten your comb or a soft brush with it and draw this through your hair, taking one small strand at a time; by morning the gray hair disappears, but what delights the ladies with Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Compound, is that, besides beautifully darkening the hair after a few applications, it also produces that soft lustre and appearance of abundance which is so attractive. This ready-to-use preparation is a delightful toilet requisite for those who desire a more youthful appearance. It is not intended for the cure, mitigation or prevention of disease.—Adv.

Room, or Company? With all proper respect to members of congress, we wish they'd quit coming home so much and give the railroads a chance to haul a little coal. Kansas City Star.

Dr. Pierce's Pellets are best for liver, bowels and stomach. One little Pellet for a laxative—three for a cathartic.

A Grave Situation. "So Marie is engaged?" "Yes, to an undertaker." "An undertaker? She must be dead in love."—Exchange.

Swinging Round the Circle. Mrs. A.—Our cook has lived in one of the best families. Mrs. B.—Ours has lived in all of them and is now on circuit for the second time.—Exchange.

Chronic Constipation is as dangerous as disagreeable. Garfield Tea cures it.—Adv.

Locating the Action. "And Fizzlepatte ran through a fortune?" "No; he never did anything so energetic. He stood still and let the fortune show the speed."—Exchange.

Soothe Itching Scals. On retiring gently rub spots of dandruff and itching with Cuticura Ointment. Next morning shampoo with Cuticura Soap and hot water. For free samples address, "Cuticura, Dept. X, Boston." At druggists and by mail. Soap 25, Ointment 25 and 50.—Adv.

A Rapid Firer. Mrs. Peck—I always think twice before I speak once. Peck—Exactly, my dear—but then you are such a quick thinker.—Exchange.

DRUGS EXCITE YOUR KIDNEYS, USE SALTS

If your Back hurts or Bladder bothers, drink lots of water.

When your kidneys hurt and your back feels sore, don't get scared and proceed to load your stomach with a lot of drugs that excite the kidneys and irritate the entire urinary tract. Keep your kidneys clean like you keep your bowels clean, by flushing them with a mild, harmless salts which removes the body's urinous waste and stimulates them to their normal activity. The function of the kidneys is to filter the blood. In 24 hours they strain from it 500 grains of acid and waste, so we can readily understand the vital importance of keeping the kidneys active.

Drink lots of water—you can't drink too much; also get from any pharmacist about four ounces of Jad Salts; take a tablespoonful in a glass of water before breakfast each morning for a few days and your kidneys will act fine. This famous salt is made from the acid of grapes and lemon juice, combined with lithia, and has been used for generations to clean and stimulate clogged kidneys; also to neutralize the acids in urine so it no longer is a source of irritation, thus ending bladder weakness.

Jad Salts is inexpensive; cannot injure; makes a delightful effervescent lithia-water drink which everyone should take now and then to keep their kidneys clean and active. Try this, also keep up the water drinking, and no doubt you will wonder what became of your kidney trouble and backache.—Adv.