

# THE HUMAN SPHINX

By **Ellis Parker Fuller**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F.E. WATSON

Simon Judd, amateur detective, and William Dart, an undertaker, are visiting John Drane, eccentric man of wealth, at the Drane place. Suddenly the household is shocked to find that John Drane has been murdered. The dead man is first seen by Josie, the maid, then by Amy Drane and Simon Judd. The latter faints.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY—

When Simon Judd returned to consciousness it was largely because of the pain in his ear and when he tried to move his head he could not do so. For a moment or two he was unable to remember where he was or how he came there for, close to his eyes, was what seemed to be an enormous black pillar. It seemed to be, as his senses returned, a most unaccountable thing—a low black shoe out of which rose a phenomenally large ankle, and when he put his hand to his ear he was no longer in doubt, a foot was standing on his ear. Someone was standing with one heel against his nose and the toe of the other foot on his ear, and he tried to push the latter foot away.

"Lave he! Sthop it, you!" a hoarse voice whispered, but the foot removed itself from his ear and Simon Judd sat up. He found himself encompassed by skirts and he backed out from among them and got to his feet. He was in a group at the door of John Drane's room; evidently he had been unconscious for but a moment or two, for Amy Drane was still standing in horror on the threshold. The maid Josie still lay where she had fallen, but there were now others, peering into the room. Norbert, the colored houseman, was there, and the big foot that had been pressed against Simon Judd's nose was that of the cook, a woman almost as enormous as Simon Judd himself. Behind the cook was a second maid, Zella, with her hands pressed against her cheeks, and Drane's chauffeur was running up the stairs. To him Simon Judd turned.

"John Drane's been murdered," Simon Judd said to the chauffeur. "I can't look at him; I faint off at the sight of blood. Always did and dare say I always will. This here girl's fainted, too. Help me get her onto a bed somewhere and out of the way or she's like to be tromped. Here, you!"

He touched Zella on the shoulder. "You come and get this girl out of her faint," he said. "Where we goin' to put her?"

"Here—this way," Zella said, crossing the hall and opening a door. "Miss Amy's room. Let me help you, George. You and me take her shoulders and he can take her feet. Go easy, George—she's got heart trouble."

They carried Josie to the bed in Amy's room and Simon Judd followed the chauffeur into the hall.

"If you know who the family doctor is you better send for him," Judd said. "You better send for the police, too; this ain't my ballwick."

"Yes, I'll do that," the chauffeur said. He, at least, was efficiently businesslike. "You better not let them touch anything in there, unless he's alive yet."

"I know all that, young man," Judd said. "I'll take hold here; you get a move on."

"I'll telephone," the chauffeur said, and he turned for the stairs, but the cook took hold his arm.

"George. Ain't it awful? Ain't it just awful?" she cried.

"Mighty bad, Maggie," he said, "but don't you get excited about it. You keep calm; you don't want to fetch on another of those spells of yours. You better go down and take a—take a drink of water or something."

"Yes, I'll be doin' just that," she said. "It's terrible, George; a murder right in the house. Who done it, d'ye think?"

"We can't tell that yet," he said. "Come on, if you want me to help you down. I got to 'phone the doc and the police."

Simon Judd turned to the murdered man's room. He put his hand over his eyes to hide the dead man from his sight.

"Now, you see here, Miss Amy," he said. "You better go downstairs awhile until the doctor comes; that man of yours is sending for him—and for the police. There ain't nothin' to be done until they come."

"No, nothing to be done," she said and turned, and then, suddenly, she broke into sobs and threw herself against Simon Judd, weeping tempestuously on his shoulder.

"He was all I had!" she sobbed. "He was so good to me; he was so kind to me!"

"There, there!" Simon Judd com-

**CAST**  
of Principal Characters in this  
Amazing Mystery Story  
John Drane ..... The Human Sphinx  
Amy ..... The Girl  
Robert Carter ..... Her Sweetheart  
William Dart ..... The Undertaker  
Simon Judd ..... Friend of Drane  
Dr. Blessington ..... The Family Doctor  
Dick Brennan ..... A Detective  
Servants in the Drane Household

forted her. "I know just how you feel, girl. Cry all you want to, it won't do you a mite of harm. All of you keep out of that room!" he ordered, and then to the weeping girl again: "I don't feel right comfortable about that hired girl we put in your room; the other one said how she has heart trouble. I don't know but what you might help in there some, if you feel up to it."

"Josie?" Amy asked. "In my room? Yes, I'll go to her."

She wiped her eyes and hurried across the hall, and Simon Judd looked after her.

"There's a real kid," he said to himself. "If that's a flapper she ain't flapped none of the common sense out of her yet, anyhow."

He looked at those remaining at John Drane's door.

"Say, look here!" he said suddenly. "Where's that other feller; the man with the whiskers. What did John say his name was? Dart?"

The housekeeper turned.

"Mr. Dart? Yes, sir. Why, I don't know where Mr. Dart is. I make up the blue guest roof for him. Mr. Drane said he was going to stay the night."

"I left him down there in the parlor, or whatever you call it, when I come up to bed," Simon Judd said. "They had something to talk over, seemed like. I guess maybe they talked late; maybe he ain't up yet."

"See, Norbert, if he's in his room," Mrs. Vincent ordered and the negro went. He came back at once.

"No, ma'am," he said. "He ain't in his room; his bed ain't been step' in. I guess he got so mad—"

He stopped.

"You guess what?" Simon Judd demanded.

"I said mad," said Norbert. "I mean mad. What I mean is I've got this cough on my chest and I been takin' medicine for it. The doc give me a medicine for to alleviate the cough, and he says take a swaller whenever the cough come upon me, and last night I leaves the bottle down there. So when I starts to cough I go down to get my bottle. Yes, sir!"

"What time was it?" Simon Judd asked.

"Well, I don't rightly know. Maybe one o'clock maybe two o'clock. I ain't looked at no timepiece, I jus' starts down. And when I get on the steps here I hear Mist' Drane and Mist' Dart talkin' together, and Mist' Dart he surely it mighty mad about it. Yes sir! swearin' and cussin'; yes, sir! Mighty mad! So I don't go down. I comes up."

"What were they talking about?" Simon Judd asked.

"Now that I don't know," said Norbert. "I ain't listen; it ain' none of my business what gentlemen talk about. I jus' comes up."

The chauffeur George came up the stairs.

"I got Doctor Blessington," he told Simon Judd. "He'll be right out. And I got the police station; they're sending men."

In fact the police officers arrived almost immediately, the local headquarters having telephoned to the station nearby. They came, two of them, on popping motorcycles which they parked alongside the veranda, and entered the house together. From the top of the stairs Simon Judd bade them come up.

"No one been in the room," one of the officers asked as he saw the group at the door.

"No one," Simon Judd told them.

"Not that I know of, anyway," and he told of having heard the scream of the girl Josie and of coming at once from his room. The officers entered the room.

"Looks like murder, Joe," one said.

"Sure is murder," the other replied.

"Loks to me like a case for Brenny," "Yes; he ought to get on it right away, too. You better go down and 'phone headquarters; I'll stay her. This man's dead all right. Anybody send for a doctor?"

"One's coming," Simon Judd said.

"We're going to have Brennen on this case, most likely," the officer said. "They hand him most of these murders these days. He's a good one; he'll clear this up in no time if there's any clear up to it. He's the

best man we've got on Long Island. Who's that?"

It was Dr. Blessington entering the house. He came up the stairs, a small black case in his hand.

"In here?" he said and entered John Drane's room. Below, the second officer was telephoning headquarters. "Ah, good morning officer!" he said to the man in John Drane's room. "Murder, is it? Too bad! This sort of thing is getting altogether too common. You might ask these folks to go downstairs. We'll just close the door."

"And all of you hang around down there, see?" said the officer. "There'u be questions to be asked."

"Come! We'll go down," said Simon Judd and, as Amy Drane came from the room where the maid Josie lay, he stood back to make way for her. "She don't all right?" he asked. "That's good. The cop wants us to go down and wait; the doctor's in there."

They went down. The servants went into the dining room off the hall and waited there, and Simon Judd and Amy went onto the veranda. The girl sat twisting her hands, saying nothing, now and again wiping her eyes, and when the doctor came down the stairs did not arise. She held her handkerchief over her quivering mouth.

Dr. Blessington came out onto the veranda and set down his black case. His face was drawn into serious lines and he was frowning.

"You are Mr. Drane's niece—his grand niece, I believe?" he said, "And this gentleman?"

"Why, I'm just a feller that knew John when he was a boy," explained Simon Judd. "Him and me used to play together back in Riverbank, Iowa, long before he ever came East—sixty years ago, anyway. I'm east on a sort of business and I telephoned old John yesterday, just for old time's sake, and he says to come out and see him a day or so."

"How long is it since you saw him last, before yesterday?" Dr. Blessington asked.

"Thirty-five years," said Simon Judd. "That is a long time; he is greatly changed since then, isn't he?"

"Well, yes," Simon Judd admitted. "Yes, John had changed quite a bit. Just bony as ever and so on, but a lot older."

"Would you have known him if you had not known he was John Drane? Would you have recognized him, for example, if you had met him on the street by chance?"

Simon Judd rubbed the back of his head thoughtfully.

"Now, that's a hard-one, doc!" he said at length. "I might have and I might not have. Maybe not it's been so blame long since I saw John last. Why, what re yaou getting at anyway?"

Dr. Blessington turned to Amy.

"I wanted to tell you this myself."

Miss Drane," he said, "for I know it will be a shock to you. The 'man' up there in the bed, the murdered 'man' the 'man' we have known as John Drane, is not a man at all. 'He' is a woman."

Return From Portland—Mr. and Mrs. Harry Chase and children returned to their home at Gardenway Sunday after a trip to Portland. Mrs. Chase had been visiting her sister there and Mr. Chase joined her for the return trip on Saturday.

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