

THE HUMAN SPHINX

By Ellis Parker Cutler

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.

Police officers call and investigations begin. Dr. Blessington is called, and after seeing the murdered John Drane makes the astounding revelation to Amy Drane that her "uncle" is not a man but a woman.

Dr. Blessington discounts the theory of suicide, saying that Drane was definitely murdered. Dr. Blessington comments on the fact that all the servants in the household of Drane are sick, and that Drane has never discharged a servant for ill health. Dick Brennan, the detective, arrives to investigate the case.

Brennan questions the persons in the house, asking Amy if anyone had any reason to kill her "uncle."

Amy says no one has had any reason to kill her uncle. After further questioning she is asked about Dart.

Meanwhile Judd has told the story of his acquaintance with the actual John Drane in Riverbank.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY:

"No, nothing. He was uncle John's friend a long while—long before I came here," Amy said. "They have played cards together many evenings."

"Never quarreled?"

"No."

"You've not noticed anything queer about the servants?" Brennan asked after a moment.

"Do you mean that they were sickly?" Asked Amy.

"Are they?"

"Yes; I think they are all sickly. I don't know why uncle John had such sickly servants, unless he was so kind hearted. Dr. Blessington is here nearly every day for one or another of them, some one of them is always in bed. It makes it very hard for Mrs. Vincent, the housekeeper, but I'm afraid she's the sickest of any."

"But aside from that you've not noticed anything queer in them. Anything you might call craziness, any mania?"

"Oh, no, never anything like that."

"Oh no; never anything like that," Amy said.

"You don't know of any enemies your uncle had?"

"No; he never spoke of any."

"He had business in New York, hadn't he? Had an office there?"

"Yes," Amy said, and told him the address, which Brennan jotted down in his notebook. "He was a speculator, I think. He would wait and buy a great lot of some one kind of stocks and then they would go up and he would sell. I think he always made a great deal of money that way. I don't really know much about that. They can tell you more at his office. His manager there is Rufus Lodermann. He is quite an old man and he has been with uncle for a long while. I think."

Brennan jotted down this name in his notebook.

"Who else is there? You don't know? No matter—I can look that up," the detective said, putting his book in his pocket again. "And I think that is all I have to ask you now, Mrs. Drane, unless you can tell me something about the servants—who they are and where they came from."

"I think Mrs. Vincent, the housekeeper, can tell you more about that," Amy said. "I've not really paid much attention to that; I've always felt I wasn't wanted to interfere. Mrs. Vincent had been here quite a while when I came, and uncle was old and liked to have things as they were. He didn't seem to want to have me do anything but enjoy myself."

"But you were always ready to do your share if anything turned up," said Brennan, smiling. "I can see that, Miss Drane."

"Of course," Amy said. "It wasn't that I didn't want to."

"Mr. Drane just did not seem to want you to bother with the servants and the household affairs and so on; that was it, wasn't it?"

"Yes; he never said much, but that was what I felt," she replied.

"I'm trying not to be unpleasant, asking so many questions," Brennan said, "but this whole thing is queerish, as you understand—John Drane being a woman and being murdered this way—and I have to get into my head the best picture of the household as it was, best picture I can. How was your uncle about money?"

Amy wrinkled her brow trying to get the meaning of the question.

"Do you mean with me?" she asked.

"He paid me an allowance, always on the first of the month. It was fifty dollars while I was at school, but when I came here he gave me a hundred dollars a month. I haven't used nearly all of it. I asked him what I should do with the rest and he told me I could put it in a savings bank, and I did. The house expenses he settled with Mrs. Vincent—once a month, I think. I've heard them going over the bills. He seemed particular about them."

"He was a woman," suggested Brennan, "and household bills were in his line, possibly. Did he keep much money in the house? Had he a safe here? Did he bring securities home, do you know?"

"No, nothing like that. He used checks almost always."

"No jewelry to amount to anything?"

"He never wore jewelry at all; not even a ring."

"There was a scarf pin," Brennan reminded her.

"Yes 'that was all the jewelry he had," Amy said.

"I thought, perhaps, as he was a

woman," Brennan explained, "he might have a woman's usual liking for jewels. Suppose we see Mrs. Vincent."

Bob Carter volunteered to find Mrs. Vincent and while he was on his way Brennan lighted a cigarette. He leaned forward with his elbows on his knees and looked out over the lawn.

"You come pretty near being a first class detective, don't you?" Simon Judd asked, hitching forward in his chair he filled to overflowing.

"I'm not the worst in the world," Brennan said. "There are better, we're given credit for being. We York. Our men are a lot better than we're given credit for being. We have lots of crimes and we don't get every crook, but it's a bad mess over there. I do well enough. It's not as bad here as it is in Manhattan."

"That's so; that's likely," Simon Judd agreed. "And we ain't got it near as bad out to Riverbank. If you was out there you wouldn't have much trouble at all, I reckon."

"There are tough problems everywhere," Brennan said. "Any place may turn out a hard problem at any time."

"That's how I think about it," Simon Judd said. "That's why I kept pestering you out there until they said they'd make me chief of police. 'Black my cats!' I says to them; 'The ain't no tellin' when you're goin' to need just class detective ability.' I guess," he chuckled, "they don't think overly much of me at that! Think I'm some sort of fat old fool, mostly. And I don't know but what I am. The ain't no fool like an old fool, it the? What you think? Am I a fool to go takin' up detectin' as a life work when I'm along past seventy years old?"

"I'll reserve my opinion on that, Mr. Judd," Brennan smiled. "I can't remember any man who took up investigative work at that age, but I've known some men who took up crime as old as that and did uite well at it."

"A detective has to be slicker than a criminal, that's the pest of it," Simon Judd said. "And it's so blame hard for them folks to take a fat man serious out there to home. Especially a man that's mostly clung to jobs where he could sleep most of the time, like livery-stablin'. I clung to livery-stablin' as long as I could, and that's a fact, but these her automobiles has given the business a black eye, and if a man goes into the garage business he's got to be lively and wide awake all the time. Now, a detective—in a town like Riverbank, Iowa—"

"Can sleep most of the time," laughed Brennan.

"That's the ideal!" Simon Judd chuckled. "Particularly if he's not on the force. If he's just a policeman he's got to be out and around, but if he's chief of police and detective he's got to spend uite a lot of time in meditation—sittin' in his office in a chair tipped back against the wall with his eyes closed. Looked like a good job to me, so I got shut of my livery stable and pestered the life out of 'em until I got me this job, startin' January first next."

"Good job," smiled Brennan.

"Yes, or I wouldn't have wanted it," said Simon Judd. "But the main thing when a man hammers down a job like that is to be able to hang onto it, and that's why I fliggered I'd come East here and learn the detective business from A to Z. I says to myself 'If I can get them slick New York detectives to let me help hunt up some murderer or something, I'll learn a lot, and when I come back and catch a couple of crooks right here in Riverbank the folks ain't ever goin' to let anybody throw me out.'"

"Brennan looked up at he old man's face suddenly, but all he saw was good nature and smiling cheerfulness.

"This murder occurred very opportunely," Brennan said.

"That's what I was going to say," Simon Judd replied. "Just like it was made to order for me. It couldn't have been handier. So that fetches me to what I'm goin' to say—what'd you say if I was to go sort of partners with you and the two of us together hunt out who done this crime?"

"We're always glad to have any assistance we can get from any source whatever," Brennan told Judd.

"Yes, I reckon," said the fat man. "Only that ain't any idee. I want you should say we'll work at this case together, so's I can get the inside of how you fellers got at it. What say to it?"

Once more Brennan looked Simon Judd in the face. What he sought was the eye of an insane man—the eye of a man who might have come to this house and murdered John Drane to make a case worth solving. Or,

perhaps, the eye of a man who had held a grudge against John Drane and had come here to satisfy it. What he saw, if he could judge, was the keen eye of a man who was not such a fool as he looked, the keen laughing eye of a man who, possibly was laughing at the detective good naturedly while laughing to himself. "This," Brennan said to himself, "is a man who is laughing at me because he knows something I don't know!"

"I won't be no more trouble to you than need be," Simon Judd said. "Only thing is it would be quite an experience to me to work hand in arm, so to say, with a real detective like you are."

"I think we can manage it," Brennan said.

"Black my cats, that's fine!" Simon Judd exclaimed. "Amy, that fixes that fine! I'm goin' to pitch right in and work this thing until we get it all cleaned up and the murderous person put right where he ought to be. Fine! Now, first off, girl, you go up to my room and, if them officers has got through rummagin' in my baggage, fetch me down a note book I've got in my valise up there. It's a blank one, Amy, without anything wrote in it yet. I didn't know whether real detective used note books or not, but I see Brennan does, and I want to do this thing right. It's right down in the bottom of the valise, Amy."

The girl went into the house and Simon Judd looked after her. When he saw she was gone he drew closer to Brennan.

"Now that you and me are in cahoots on this business, partner," he said, "we want to start off clean and clear and on favors. What I know you want to know. If not nothin' no good. And there's somethin' wrong here right at the start."

"It being—?" Brennan asked.

"The girl, Amy, here," Simon Judd whispered. "She ain't what she says she is."

TO BE CONTINUED

COLIN V. DYMENT DIES IN HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA

Colin V. Dymont, former dean of the college of literature, science and the arts at the University of Oregon, and later managing editor of the Morning Register, died at his home in Hayward, California, last Saturday night. He was publisher of a newspaper in the bay city where he went two years ago.

During his lifetime he was active as a newspaper man before his connection with the Universities of Toronto, Washington and Oregon. During the war he was a colonel in the American Red Cross service and served overseas during hostilities. During the war he contracted amoebic infection from which he never thoroughly recovered. The immediate cause of his death was influenza. He is survived by his widow, Dr. Bertha Stuart Dymont and a son. The body was placed in the hope Abbey Mausoleum at Eugene Tuesday.

Church Night is Held

An audience of more than 200 people attended the regular monthly church night program at the Springfield Christian church last Friday evening. The high school class prepared the program of music and readings and the Friends class served light refreshments.

Three Plays Planned

Students of the high school will present three one-act plays at the auditorium of the school on November 9. "Surprises," "Red Carnations" and "Who's a Coward," are names of the plays. Tryouts were held Tuesday evening. Miss Maurine Lombard, Miss Clara Wagner and Miss May Hewes, faculty members are in charge of the plays.

RELIEF FROM CURSE OF CONSTIPATION

A Battle Creek physician says, "Constipation is responsible for more misery than any other cause."

But immediate relief has been found. A tablet called Rexall Orderlies attracts water from the system into the lazy, dry, evacuating bowel called the colon. The water loosens the dry food waste and causes a gentle, thorough movement without forming a habit or ever increasing the dose.

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CONSTRUCTION WORK ON HIGHWAY UNIT COMPLETE

Second unit of the Willamette highway above the Lowell bridge is now graded, according to reports at the state highway office in Eugene today. Vonderhellen and Pierson have completed their contract on this section.

Washburne and Hall, who have the first unit, are nearly through with their grading work, also, it was reported.

Kelly and Sullivan, who have the contract for the third unit, have sublet several sections of the job.

ANNUAL SCHOOL CENSUS CHECK STARTED TODAY

Annual school census of Springfield started today, when two census takers each took a section of the city to make a month's check of the children of school age here.

Mrs. W. P. Tyson will canvass the west side and Mrs. Vina McLean will take the east side of the town.

The annual census must be completed within a month, according to provisions.



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I wish to solicit the support of my Republican friends for the office of Coroner. At the primaries I was selected as the Republican candidate. My Democratic opponent seeks to masquerade as an Independent.

I feel that I am entitled to the support of all Republicans and that I am deserving of re-election. My record in office is my warrant and I ask the most careful scrutiny of my work both as to being well done, and as to saving the county money.

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