

# THE HUMAN SPHINX

By Ellis Parker Butler

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 Dr. Blessington. She has told the story of his acquaintance with the actual John Drane in Riverbank.

Judd proposes to Brennan that he "go partners" with Brennan in the solution of the crime. Brennan accepts, then Judd declares that Amy is not John Drane's niece or any relative of Drane. Mrs. Vincent, housekeeper, tells Brennan that Drane picked his servants from among the chronic patients at the hospital. Dr. Blessington is asked if he had ever noticed any special change in Drane. NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY:

"Change?" the doctor queried.

"As if, up to some time, he was the real John Drane and from then on was this woman playin' she was him," explained Simon Judd.

"Why, since it is brought to my attention with this mystery in mind," Dr. Blessington said, "there was a time when I noticed a change in John Drane, a shocking change as I thought it. The time is pretty well fixed in my mind, too. As a matter of fact there have been two very distinct changes in John Drane. One was when he returned from California; I hardly knew him. The other—the most shocking one—was some five months later. As a physician, I noticed it particularly. Just before he went to California this John Drane—man or woman—was decidedly run down in health; in bad shape, I thought, although I was not asked to advise him. Then he went to California and when he returned he was like, as we say, another man. He was brisker, more cheerful, and he had put on quite a little flesh for such a thin man. He walked better and stood better. At that time his hair was dark, but he probably used a dye. The man who went to California may not have been the woman who returned. On the other hand the change may have been wrought by the rest and the warm climate."

"And the other time, five months later, said Brennan.

"A more striking change," the physician said. From the time Drane returned from California looking so well he began to run down again. I did make so bold as to speak to him about it and he said he knew he must do something; he said he thought he would go south, to Hot Springs, and take a long rest. A week later he went and he was gone three months. He came back with his hair absolutely, gray, as it is now, his face emaciated, his body nothing but bones. It was a shocking change. Except for one thing I might be willing to swear that, in my opinion, the person who came back from Hot Springs was not the man who went there. That thing is a scar on this woman's abdomen—the scar of an appendicitis operation. My opinion now is that she probably went there for the operation—if that was indeed where she went—in order that her sex might not be discovered by any one who knew her."

"That's a possibility," Brennan admitted.

She could have changed into women's clothes at some stop-over en route," the doctor said, "changing back into male garments on her return. If that is the answer she must have had a bad time of the operation to wear down so tremendously. But it is possible that the man who left here that time was not the woman-man who returned here a little later."

Brennan said nothing for a full minute.

"I'm afraid I don't see much in that

idea, doctor," he said finally. "There's too much of the impossible in it. The person who returned from Hot Springs—if that was where the person went—was certainly very much like the person who left here as John Drane, is it not so? Enough so that you were not particularly suspicious? Then how could a substitution have been made? Who was this woman who was so much like John Drane that she could come back here and take his place in the house and at his office in Wall Street, going on with his speculations without creating comment? The thing is rather absurd. Such a woman must have planned taking John Drane's place for years; she must have learned all about his business to the minutest details, and all about his home affairs here. She must have planned to murder him or make away with him somehow. It is too improbable, doctor."

"You asked me, you know," said Dr. Blessington, a little offended.

"And your answer was perfectly good," said Brennan. "Now let me ask you another: did you ever notice anything to make you think this woman was insane? I mean the victim of a mania. What do you think of her idea of having sick servants and no others? What about her friendship with this undertaker?"

Dr. Blessington turned these questions in his mind before he answered.

"You understand that I am not an

alienist," he said then, choosing his words with some care. "I am only what is called a general practitioner. As one of the hospital staff I have sometimes recommended to Drane, at his request, chronic patients still able to do easy work, and it never occurred to me that there was insanity in his desire to aid the unfortunates. To tell the truth, Brennan, I thought it was fine of him to give these people jobs in his house. Even when they fell ill he saw that they had the best attention, medical and otherwise. When they died—"

"A good many did die, did they?" asked Brennan, and Dr. Blessington colored.

"You will remember that they were mostly people doomed to die," he said stiffly. "They had, many of them—most of them—incurable diseases."

"But they did die," Brennan insisted. "What I mean is this, doctor: this woman, known as John Drane had great wealth, if she wanted to help these incurables she could have sent them to sanitariums and she could never have missed a penny. She seems to have liked to have the sickly, the dying, and the undertaker clustered about her. I'd call that morbid, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, I might call it morbid," Dr. Blessington admitted. "I wouldn't say it meant she was crazy."

"Well, I don't know that it makes such a difference whether she was

when he called you in that he began to gather these sickly hired helps around him, huh?"

"Yes, I think that is so," Dr. Blessington said. "That is so."

"And when, doc," Simon Judd asked cheerfully, "was the time when he murdered the first of these sickly hired hands of his?"

TO BE CONTINUED

**Class Parties Held**

High school classes last week held their first semi-annual class parties. Thursday the seniors gathered for a social time in the chamber of commerce rooms. Friday the sophomores met at the high school and Saturday the juniors assembled in the school building. Freshmen will hold their party some time this week.

## BOUNTIES FROM OREGON RIVERS

Oregon rivers offer unsurpassed scenic beauty, the zest of sport and the challenge of adventure.

For our practical well-being, Oregon rivers give us food and game fish. But in modern civilization fish are the least of the rivers' gifts.

### From Rivers Come

WATER FOR MINING    WATER FOR MANUFACTURE  
WATER FOR LUMBERING    WATER FOR COMMUNITIES  
WATER FOR IRRIGATION    HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER

### Shall We tie up Four Great Rivers?

The aim of the water and fish bills is to prohibit the use of water from the Deschutes, McKenzie, Umpqua and Rogue rivers and their tributaries for "any purpose whatsoever," except fish propagation, covering one fourth of the state and one half of the undeveloped water power.

**THESE BILLS STOP DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS.**  
VOTE NO  
League in Opposition to Water and fish Bills.  
J. E. Shelton, Pres., Eugene, Oregon.

<b>Vote NO</b>
X 309
X 311
X 313
X 315

(Pd-Adv.)

EUGENE'S GARMENT SHOP

## JOHNSON'S

Popular Price Store

EUGENE      957 Willamette      OREGON

---

### DON'T FORGET

## Johnson's Underselling Event

on

# Coats

## Every Coat In The House At Underselling Prices!

**Johnson's for Coats**

## McKENZIE AND COAST HIGHWAY LEVY

(Federal Road No. 28)

### For \$200,000 Lane County Gets \$600,000 Worth of Good Roads

An authorization to the Lane County Court to exceed the Constitutional six percent limitation, and levy \$200,000.00 to complete the McKenzie and Willamette Valley-Florence Highways.

### BALLOT TITLE

For the purpose of securing rights of way and contributing Lane County's share to meet State and Federal appropriations of \$400,000.00 making a total of \$600,000.00 for the permanent improvement of Federal Road No. 28, known as the McKenzie River Highway and the Willamette Valley-Florence Highway. It is necessary that the County Court be especially authorized to levy a tax in excess of the Constitutional 6% limitation upon its tax levy for the year 1928, on all taxable property of Lane County, to produce not to exceed \$200,000.00, one-half to be applied upon each of the foregoing named highways.

### VOTE 314 X YES

This measure was submitted to the voters of Lane County two years ago, and received a favorable majority but, was invalid because of being submitted at the primary election in May instead of the general election in November as provided by law.

As stated in the ballot title, providing this levy is authorized the Federal Bureau of Roads, and the State Highway Commission, have agreed to Co-operate with the Lane County Court in the completion of these highways to the amount of \$400,000.00, thus giving Lane County \$600,000.00 worth of highway construction for \$200,000.00.

It would seem that good business judgment would not permit Lane County to miss this splendid opportunity.

The Lane County money to be applied in equal amounts to each highway. The State to match the County money on the McKenzie on a 50-50 basis, or, \$100,000.00 State money to match a like amount of County money. On the Willamette Valley-Florence Highway the co-operation by the Federal Bureau of Roads and the State is \$300,000.00, or a total of \$400,000.00 to be expended by these two bodies in connection with the \$200,000.00 of Lane County money.

Other reasons why this levy should be authorized are: By existing agreement, as soon as the McKenzie Highway is completed to comply with standard construction prescribed by the State Highway Commission the State will take over and maintain that highway, and relieve Lane County of that expense, which cost is from \$300.00 to \$500.00 per mile, not taking account the cost of oiling.

On the Florence Highway there has already been expended \$1,037,256.70, of which Lane County has provided \$384,295.15. It is necessary for this levy to be authorized to provide the Lane County Court with the necessary funds to complete this construction and take advantage of this splendid co-operation on a basis of three to one.

Parts of this highway are almost impassable and a large part of the money already spent on it will be practically lost if this opportunity is not approved.

If for no other reason, and there are many why this highway should be completed, the people between Junction City and Florence have contributed through the County Bond issue, and otherwise, their full share of the cost of those highways to the County already completed, and it is only just and right that those who are enjoying these improved highways should provide now for the completion of the Florence road, especially when there is opportunity for such co-operation.

The funds of the State Highway Commission are limited and the people of Lane County are striving for State co-operation on the Santiam road. Should we fail to take advantage of our opportunity, and the funds of the State Highway Commission now available be applied to the Santiam, that Highway would divert a large amount of money from the McKenzie and take those who wanted to go to the coast direct to Newport.

Why not complete Federal Road No. 28, known as the McKenzie River Highway and the Willamette Valley-Florence Highway and have the shortest road connection the Lincoln Highway with the Coast, and have a "New Route to Florence."

This measure has been endorsed by the Lane County Chamber of Commerce, composed of the Chamber of Commerce of Eugene, Springfield, Cottage Grove, Junction City, The Pomona Grange and the Lane County Farmers Union.

This statement issued by a special committee of the Lane County Chamber of Commerce.

J. S. MAGLADRY  
H. E. MAXEY  
GEORGE O. KNIGHT