

THE HUMAN SPHINX

By Ellis Parker Butler

ILLUSTRATIONS BY R.E. WATSON

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

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 is 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.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

"Yes, Dr. Blessington made the examination; victim dead several hours, cause of death stab wound to heart. Suicide theory untenable, Dick, because the old lady couldn't have used so much strength. And there ain't no knife around, either, Dick. She's been murdered, all right. Well, the queer part is she's this old John Drane that's been living here, see? He was a she all the time; wouldn't it jar you?"

"Yes, hang around. I'll just take a look or two."

He went to the bed and looked down at the victim of the murder and, turning, surveyed the room. He walked across the floor and opened the door of the closet. Here hung many suits of men's garments, on proper hangers each on its own hook, while a dozen pairs of shoes stood in a neat row on the floor. He stood on a chair and examined the shelf, taking down several hats, looking into each and noting the makers' marks in them. He moved the hanging clothes and tapped on the inner wall of the closet.

His next act was to open the door leading into John Drane's private bath. Here the walls were tiled to the height of a man and the porcelain tub was built in, as was the shower. The whole was immaculately white, as was the wall above the tile and the ceiling. On a glass shelf stood the few toilet articles any man might use—a safety razor in its gold-plated case, talcum, bay rum, and so on. There was no opening out of the room except the door into the bedroom and a narrow window the lower part of which was in leaded glass.

"The door wasn't locked, huh?" Brennan asked.

"No. This maid Josie came up to call the old lady. And when nobody answered she opened the door and fainted. Door couldn't have been locked. It don't look like the old lady was expected to be killed, Dick, does it?"

"Nothing stolen out of here that you've heard of?"

"Not that I know of," the officer said. "We didn't ask. We waited for you."

"All right!" Brennan said, going to the door. "I'm through here, I guess. You better telephone the coroner, Henry, and Joe—you look around for a knife or something. You might keep your hands off anything smooth in case of fingerprints. Reach in under the mattress and around and anywhere you think a knife might be. Sometimes these killers shove things in under when they get a panic. I'm going down. What did you say the girl's name was that saw in here first?"

"Josie. But she ain't downstairs. She's in that room across the hall. She's got a weak heart and they took her in there to bring her up. There's an old dame with her—the housekeeper."

"I'll see them," Brennan said. His interview with Josie in Amy's room yielded him, however, nothing we do not already know.

"And you?" Brennan demanded of the maid Zella.

"I don't know anything," Zella said. "I was down in the kitchen, along with George—he's the chau-

her. 'If I didn't have you I wouldn't know what to do!'"

"Yes—well, you've got me all right, honey," he said. "Don't you take it so hard. It's bad enough, but you want to buck up. No good in letting it get you too hard. We'll stick it out together."

"It's so good to have you here," she said, wiping her eyes again. "I don't mean to break down. I'm trying to—to not."

"That's the idea!" Carter agreed. "And now, look here, honey—there's a detective fellow out there wants to talk to you. Just don't let it worry you, that's all. He won't be rough; he's a nice sort. And we needn't go out until you're ready; he says he's in no hurry."

"I'm ready now, Bob," she said.

"You'll come, Mr. Judd?"

"Sure!" cried Simon Judd widely.

"Surest thing you know. Detectives are the thing I want to see; I'm going to be one myself."

"You'll see a good one when you see this Brennan," Carter said.

"None better?"

"That's the kind I want to see," said Simon Judd, and they went out to the veranda. Brennan arose as they appeared.

"Miss Drane," he said. "And this would be Mr. Judd? My name's Brennan as Carter has probably told you. I've been put on this case. I've got to ask some questions of you, Miss Drane, but if there are any you don't care to answer in a crowd we'll leave them until later. No, you men need not go; I'd rather have you here—the young lady is less apt to be nervous. Let's sit down; we may as well be comfortable."

"I've had the officers make a search of three rooms up there," Brennan said. "Mr. Drane's room

we'll call him that, or call her that—and the room Mr. Dart was to occupy, and your room, Mr. Judd."

"Suits me all right," Simon Judd said heartily. "Anything you do suits me; I'm going to be a detective myself, and the way you do it is what I want to see."

"We'll talk that over later, then," said Brennan after a glance at the huge Westerner. "I don't suppose, Miss Drane, we'll find anything in those rooms that will mean anything, although a man can never tell. I've talked to Josie and got all she could tell me, and Zella has told me her story. You, they say, were the second person to reach Mr. Drane's door. Just tell me why you went there and what you saw."

Amy, folding and refolding her handkerchief, told what we already know.

"Yes! nothing in all that," said Brennan. "Now, have you personally any reason to think any particular person killed—" He pointed toward the house with his thumb.

(Continued Next Week)

NEW "DORM" READY SEPT. 24.

Oregon State Agricultural College, Corvallis, Sept. 12.—One hundred and fifty students have already made reservations for rooms in the new men's dormitory which will be ready for occupancy by September 24—the first day of Freshman week. With many additional inquiries coming in daily regarding accommodations in the new building, the remaining 188 places available are expected to be filled soon.

Finally all the candidates have been notified of their nominations. We think it was a shame to keep them in suspense so long.



four—and Maggie Maney, the cook, and he heard Josie screaming and heard her fall. So we came up as quick as we could. She was fainted on the floor, and Mr. Judd, too—"

"Mr. Judd? Fainted?" Brennan asked. "Who's Judd?"

"He's a visitor, a friend of Mr. Drane's, I guess. He came last night and stayed over. He saw the blood and fainted."

"He reached the room before you did?"

"Yes, but after Josie, didn't he, Josie? Josie was first, then Miss Amy came—"

"And who is Miss Amy?"

"The grand-niece like of Mr.

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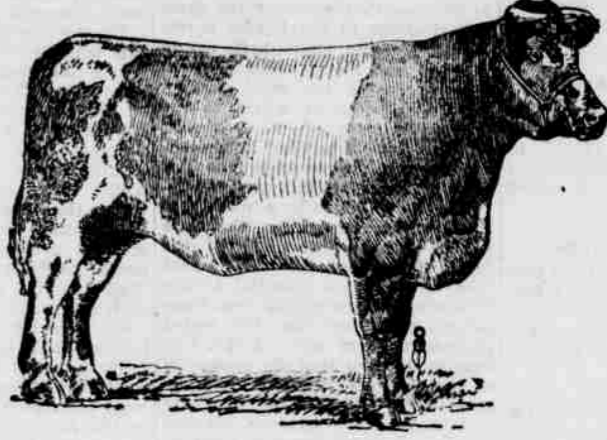
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The business machine properly adjusted, oiled, greased and polished is ready for the power of advertising.—New Orleans, La., Times-Picayune.