

A Secret OF THE HEART

By HOWARD FIELDING.

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SYNOPSIS. Mr. Willard Davis is the head of the surface lines of New York, and his office is in the third floor of the Ann Street bank building. Associated with him in various schemes for the acquisition of small street car lines is George Stalbridge, a man much disliked by Willard Davis, nephew of young Davis, who believes that Stalbridge is leading his uncle into dangerous and corrupt schemes with the view of securing control of the street property himself, and of gaining the hand of Willard Davis's daughter, who is engaged to Walter Norman. The morning after a transaction, by which a small line in which Norman's name was swallowed up by the large company, young Davis goes down to retrace the steps of his uncle, who has not returned from the bank building, and rebukes him. As he mentions Norman's name young Davis notes that Stalbridge always appears in a startled way toward the elevated railroad. Young Davis goes to his uncle's office, followed by Stalbridge. The door is locked. There is a key inside the lock. A moan is heard and then a crash. Young Davis opens the door and finds Stalbridge's body on the floor. He sees his uncle on his knees, the latter tries to speak and falls on the floor. As young Davis enters the room, a door opposite closed with a snap. He looks in, but finds the room beyond vacant, with an open window looking on the stone court.

bitterly. "For years, under your direction, Willard Davis has made enemies—bitter enemies—for there is no strife more desperate than this battle for money. How many men have you ruined with your schemes? Run them over in your mind, and tell me, if you can, which one of your victims struck this blow. Then blame yourself for it!"

"This is hardly fair," whispered Rodney, laying his hand upon my shoulder. I turned toward him, and saw that there were tears in his eyes. He was a hard-fisted man of business, seasoned by thirty years of struggling in New York. His emotion affected me. My unreasonable anger abated; it gave way to grief. I had felt sincere affection for my uncle, though his course of late years had excited my strenuous opposition. We were of an old and honored family, and I held our name to be of more consequence than mere money-betting. Though he was much older than myself, I had ventured to remonstrate with him at times when Stalbridge's schemes secured unenviable note; but there had been no open quarrel and had always been at home in his house.

With this thought came the recollection of my duty to my uncle's family. They should be informed at once, and my painful task was surely mine. I spoke of this to Rodney, and he said that I should go at once. I shuddered.

"I PICKED THEM UP," HE SAID, POINTING TO THE FLOOR.

When I pictured the grief of my aunt and my cousin Emily, who had been already mentioned as the betrothed of Walter Norman. There was a son, too, who must be summoned from college by this terrible news. I was not to be alive when we entered. Therefore the murder must have been committed within a very few seconds. I could have said that scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since the commission of the crime. In reality the interval had been much longer. Also, as subsequently appeared, one of the tenants in this building had noticed the detective in appearance the most absolutely commonplace man that I had ever seen. Perhaps I was expecting the detective with the romantic, the ordinary of this man, Johnson. He was about the medium height, and his face was of so conventional a type that I began to wonder, earnestly whether I had seen him before. His expression was somewhat vacant, but not with the vacance of stupidity, rather with the listlessness of a man who has nothing to do and very little to think about. He was dressed in the sort of clothes that one will see the most of, if he walks about the city all day.

"Excuse me," he said, politely. "If you're not really in a hurry, I'd like to ask a few questions before you go." He asked me very few, and seemed almost indifferent to my answers. Indeed, his indifference piqued me, and I was more careful to tell my story accurately and to bring out all the points I succeeded in arousing a certain amount of interest when I told him of the closing door, and of my pursuit of the murderer; but he ceased to say anything to me when I said that I had failed to get a glimpse of the escaping criminal.

"Where are these?" he asked, languidly, displaying a large number of keys on a ring. "My uncle's," I exclaimed. "Where did you get them?" "I picked them up," he said, pointing to the floor near the door, which led to the hall.

"The murderer must have taken them from my uncle's pocket and hidden them in the room immediately after the commission of the crime," I said. "We found it locked."

"That was the way of it, of course," said Johnson. "There are bloodstains on the door, and as you have doubtless observed, I had not seen them, but when Johnson pointed them out they were obvious."

"He washed his hands afterwards," Johnson continued. "There is the towel on which he wiped them." He pointed to the towel in question, which was thrown over the corner of a looking-glass that hung upon the wall.

"Why did he throw it up there?" I muttered, half to myself. "It was not thrown," said Johnson. "You can see that. It was hung up there."

**Sickly**  
\* Babies  
can be made to thrive and live by finding for them a proper food, one easily digested, quickly assimilated, and composed of that which goes to enrich the blood, build new flesh tissue, and impart strength to all the principle life maintaining centres, thus putting them in a condition to perform their functions normally and ward off disease. But one such food exists, it is

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had suffered deeply by my uncle's death, and he would never rest. I felt assured, until he had seen the author of that injury in the hands of the executioner.

"Have you formed any theory of the crime?" I asked Stalbridge. "He did not answer."

"What do you think about it?" the detective asked me. "I am puzzled by one circumstance," said I. "The surgeon tells me that my uncle was struck on the head, yet he was alive when we entered. Therefore the murder must have been committed within a very few seconds. I could have said that scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since the commission of the crime. In reality the interval had been much longer. Also, as subsequently appeared, one of the tenants in this building had noticed the detective in appearance the most absolutely commonplace man that I had ever seen. Perhaps I was expecting the detective with the romantic, the ordinary of this man, Johnson. He was about the medium height, and his face was of so conventional a type that I began to wonder, earnestly whether I had seen him before. His expression was somewhat vacant, but not with the vacance of stupidity, rather with the listlessness of a man who has nothing to do and very little to think about. He was dressed in the sort of clothes that one will see the most of, if he walks about the city all day."

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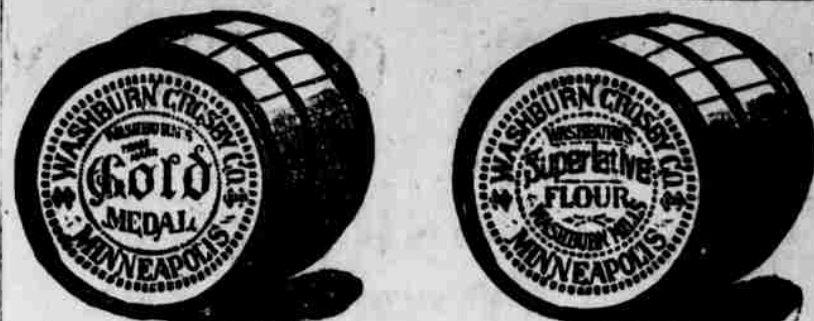
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