

THE MASTER KEY

BY JOHN FLEMING WILSON

By special arrangement for this paper a photo-drama corresponding to the installments of "The Master Key" may now be seen at the leading moving picture theaters. By arrangement made with the Universal Film Manufacturing Company it is not only possible to read "The Master Key" in this paper, but also afterward to see moving pictures of our story.

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"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Reynolds severely. "You even let her discharge her maid. And of all the awful things—it's a wonder you haven't got her killed before now!"

John tried to explain that Ruth was a western girl used to looking after herself and that she had insisted on coming along.

The consul's wife sniffed. "But you didn't have to come," she responded promptly. "I understand that you are merely going on idle gossip anyway. You shan't stir the girl out of my sight, I tell you! Go and find your plans and risk your own life. Miss Gallon stays here."

"And I'm sure there is no place I'd rather leave her," Dorr said gratefully. To the consul he confided briefly that he was still determined to find the idol and get the hidden plans.

"You may be too late," was the quiet response. "A man named Wilkerson and another man and a lady have already gone up country, and I am informed that they are on the same quest."

"All the more reason why I should hasten," Dorr answered. Every hour may be precious. I must see Sir Donald immediately.

To his surprise, Faversham was very cold about the second excursion.

"So long as it was a case of getting Miss Gallon and yourself out of a bad scrape, I did my best," he told Dorr. "But I agree with your consul—an excellent fellow—that what you propose is ridiculous. The priests have ample warning, and I am informed that they took measures to secrete the idol. You can gain nothing by further search."

John argued with some temper, but Sir Donald was immovable.

And, as he most evidently had sound common sense on his side, Dorr could not afford to lose his temper.

"I suppose you'll help me out by letting me have that old servant of yours?" he said finally.

"Anything!" said Faversham cordially. "But I must certainly warn you once more that I shall feel guilty in even letting you go."

John's jaw stiffened. "I guess it would be beyond your power to stop me."

Faversham shook his head.

"A word from me to the authorities and you would find yourself not only debarred from such a foolhardy expedition, but politely yet firmly made to leave the country."

John grinned. "I suppose that's right," he agreed. "But you won't be a spoil sport, will you?"

The baronet shook his head. "No, I won't. But I can't go myself. I'll stop here and have an eye out for Miss Gallon. Then if a rescue expedition is in order I can be here to head it."

For the moment John was blinded by a blaze of jealousy.

While he was risking his life for Ruth's sake Faversham would sit comfortably within the protection of his club and plot ways of winning Ruth.

He curtly accepted the offer of the servant and went off to make his preparations. These made, he sought Ruth.

He found her in a strange state of excitement. Evidently the consul and his wife had not spared pains to impress upon her the dangers of the proposed expedition.

"They're old grannies," was John's disrespectful comment. "Ruth, you know that without those plans we're helpless to make 'The Master Key' into what your father wanted it to be. I set out to get those plans, and I've not come this far to turn back."

"I know," she said miserably. "But everybody says it is all foolishness. Sir Donald—"

"Oh, that quitter!" he interrupted. "I know he prefers sitting around making love to you to doing something really worth while."

There was the glimmer of a smile on Ruth's lips as she answered meekly. "Then you don't think that—sitting around—and making love to me—is worth while?"

For a moment John stood and stared at her. The blood rushed into his face.

Then the full meaning of her light evasion of his real meaning struck him like a blow between the eyes.

His heart was filled with love for her, a love that had grown and increased since the hour when he had first seen her at old Tom Gallon's door.

He had thought that his devoted service to her interests, his constant attention to the slightest detail that could insure her future happiness, would have published that love to her.

He was minded to tell her now, to forego all else in order to woo her for himself.

"Ruth"—he began. But some subtle change in her manner froze the hot words on his lips.

"Well," he went on, controlling himself by a tremendous effort and trying to speak lightly, "I'll be off. Thank heaven you'll be safe here."

There was a struggle in Ruth's breast too. Yet the memory of her promise to Faversham stilled her.

In that long and terrible moment she realized that John Dorr was all in all to her. Yet she was bound to another who had risked his life on the strength of her promises to marry him, and she

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could not speak what was in her heart. She tried to look John bravely in the eyes, and the tears would come in spite of her.

She bowed her head, and so he left her, with bitterness in his soul, but the firm resolve to carry out his self-appointed task no matter what the outcome.

Faversham was as good as his word, and the old native agreed once more to risk the hills and guard this stranger who, he was convinced, had lost his mind.

But his duty was plain and Sir Donald's injunctions not to be trifled with. That evening the two of them set forth, following in the track of Wilkerson and his party.

That John should have departed without further farewell hurt Ruth sorely.

It seemed to mark a definite break in their frank relations, and she felt that when he returned with the plans she would have to receive him on an entirely new footing—the footing of a business man with his employer.

And while the hurt was fresh she turned to Sir Donald gratefully. He had acted most delicately in all their experiences together. He had proved his devotion by coming with them to India and during the horrible night-mare when their hotel had been the center of assault by fanatical natives.

He had accepted her promise without undue exactions. He had seemed to be waiting till he and she could speak

more definitely. Faversham was by no means dull, and he played the part of a kind friend during the first days of John's absence.

He knew that Dorr was in love with Ruth, and he strongly suspected that her feeling for him had once bordered on love.

He would tear open no old wounds. He was devoted, cheerful, always at her call, but never insistent on his privileges.

The American consul liked him from the first and told his wife that Ruth would be a fool if she preferred a hare-brained idiot to a solid gentleman with no nonsense about him and assured position in society.

Mrs. Reynolds, having been rebuffed

when she sought Ruth's confidences, merely stated it as her opinion that all girls were alike, a dogma the consul was too wise to argue.

But he gave Sir Donald the freedom of the consulate and saw to it that he had every chance to visit with Ruth.

Now, the baronet was not only no dullard, but he had been bred in a school that forbade him to linger too long before claiming Ruth openly as his fiancée.

At exactly the right moment he offered her a gorgeous ring and pressed his suit ardently. He said nothing of the promise he had exacted, and Ruth for very shame's sake accepted the ring and the ensuing congratulations of Mr. Reynolds, his wife and their friends.

[To Be Continued.]

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NEW TELEPHONE OFFICE

Special to The Telegraph. Waynesboro, Pa., Feb. 17.—District Manager W. J. C. Jacobs, of the Bell Telephone Company, has leased the room in the Wolfberger property in West Main street, formerly occupied by the art store, which will be used as the business office of the telephone company, at present being located in the Citizens' National Bank property on the southwest corner of the public square.

COLLEGE SOCIETY DANCE

Special to The Telegraph. Annville, Pa., Feb. 17.—The Kalo-

zetean Literary Society of Lebanon Valley College held its sixteenth annual masquerade party in the Kramer building. Guests were present from all parts of the State, many alumni being here for a few days. Many gorgeous and beautiful costumes were worn by the merry-makers, some of them being very grotesque.

IN PHILADELPHIA HOSPITAL

Dillsburg, Pa., Feb. 17.—Mrs. W. L. Ruffenburger was taken to the University Hospital, Philadelphia, where she underwent an operation for the removal of a tumor. The operation was entirely successful and her condition is improving.

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