

The Root of Evil

By THOMAS DIXON

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SYNOPSIS

Stuart, southern lawyer in New York, is in love with Nan Primrose. His friend, Dr. Woodman, who has a young daughter, is threatened with the loss of his drug business by Bivens, whom he befriended years before. Stuart visits the Primroses.

Nan wants Stuart to accept a place with Bivens' chemical trust. He dislikes Bivens' methods and refuses. Bivens cautions him.

Bivens is in love with Nan. Stuart refuses the offer, and Nan breaks her engagement with the lawyer. Bivens asks Woodman to enter the trust.

Woodman will not yield and sues Bivens' company. The promoter tells the doctor he and Nan are engaged. Harriet Woodman is studying music. Stuart takes Nan for a day in the country.

Stuart pleads with Nan to give up Bivens, but the spell of millions is on her and she yields to it.

Nan becomes Mrs. Bivens. Harriet loves Stuart, but he does not know it. Nine years pass. Stuart becomes district attorney. He investigates criminal trusts. Nan asks him to call.

Stuart wants Woodman to end his suit against Bivens, but the doctor stands firm. Bivens aids Stuart in his investigation of crooked financiers.

Stuart's revelations aid in bringing on a crisis. Bivens promises to aid the Van Dam Trust company, which is in trouble. Woodman needs money badly.

In the stock market slump engineered by Bivens, Woodman and many others lose all. The trust company fails because Bivens, at command of the money king, breaks his word. Stuart faces his critics in front of Bivens' bank.

The mob attacks Stuart and injures him slightly. Nan sees it and reveals her love. Bivens piles \$50,000,000 on a table and calls Stuart to see the money to refute rumors of his financial weakness.

Stuart is tempted to join Bivens as his confidential man. He accepts an invitation to visit the Bivens house and is received by Nan.

At a meeting of the disinterested, at which Bivens is denounced, a bomb thrower is killed by his own missile. Woodman decides to continue his fight against Bivens.

Stuart's plea with Bivens for Woodman is in vain, and the lawyer refuses to join in the millionaire's plans. Woodman pleads guilty and Stuart, who has resigned as district attorney, defends him.

Sentence is suspended. Bivens is ill. At his insistence, Stuart accompanies him and Nan on a duck hunting trip to Virginia, although Stuart fears Nan's presence may tempt him beyond his strength.

Stuart and Bivens venture too far from the yacht in the marsh, with a storm coming, and they are imperiled by the icy sea.

Bivens' life is saved by Stuart, although the thought of Nan tempts the lawyer to leave the millionaire to die. They return to New York, where Harriet Woodman sings successfully in grand opera.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The White Messenger.

IN spite of Bivens' protest Stuart returned to New York on the first train the morning after the coaching party reached the house.

"Stay a week longer," the little man urged, "and I'll go with you. We'll go together, all of us, in my car. I'm getting worse here every day. I've got to get back to my doctors in New York."

"I'm sorry, Cal," he answered quickly, "but I must leave at once."

Nan allowed him to go without an effort to change his decision. A strange calm had come over her. She drove to the station with him in silence. He began to wonder what it meant.

As he stepped from the machine she extended her hand, with a tender smile, and said in low tones:

"Until we meet again."

He pressed it gently and was gone.

He reached New York thoroughly exhausted and blue, but the sight of Harriet seated on the stoop of the old home by the square watching a crowd of children play brought a smile back to his haggard face.

"They've come to honor me with their good wishes on my voyage," she said.

"What voyage?" he asked in surprise.

"Oh, you didn't know. I've an engagement to sing on the continent this summer. The news came the day you left. Isn't that fine? I sail next week."

A sudden idea struck him.

"Let me go with you, girlie?"

"Oh, Jim, if you only would, I'd be in heaven!"

"I will!" he said with decision.

"You've booked your passage?"

"Yes, but I'll change it to suit you."

He found business which required a week and booked his passage with Harriet on a Cunarder which sailed in ten days. A week later Nan and Bivens returned to their New York house. The papers were full of stories of his falling health.

Two days after her arrival Nan telephoned to Stuart.

"You must come up to see Cal tonight," she said earnestly. "He is asking for you."

"Is he really dangerously ill?" Stuart interrupted.

"It's far more serious than the papers suspect. You'll come?"

"Yes, early tomorrow morning. I've an important engagement tonight that will keep me until 12 o'clock. I'm sailing for Europe day after tomorrow."

A sudden click at the other end and he was cut off. His experienced ear told him it was not an accident.

It was just dawn when Stuart's telephone rang and he leaped from bed, startled at the unusual call.

"Well, well," he cried in quick, impatient tones, "who is it? What is the matter?"

"For heaven's sake come at once, Cal was taken dangerously ill at 2 o'clock. The doctors have been with him every moment. He doesn't get any better. He keeps calling for you."

"I'll be there in half an hour—three-quarters at the most."

"Thank you," she gasped, and hung up her receiver.

Stuart's cab whirled uptown through the rivers of humanity pouring down to begin again the round of another day. In all the hurrying thousands not one knew or cared a straw whether the man of millions in his silent palace on the drive lived or died.

The house was evidently in hopeless confusion. Servants wandered in every direction without order. Doctor after doctor passed in and out, and the sickening odor of medicines filled the air.

A group of newspaper reporters stood at the foot of the grand stairway. Nan stood shivering at the head of the stairs, pale, disheveled, her dark eyes wide and staring with a new expression of terror in their depths.

"How is he, Nan?"

"Worse," she stammered through chattering teeth. "The doctors say he can't possibly live. He has been calling for me for the last hour. I—can't—go!"

"Why?"

"I'm afraid!"

He took her hand. It was cold and he felt a tremor run through her body at his touch.

"Come, come, Nan, you're not a silly child, I'm ashamed of you. If Cal is calling, go to him at once. You must see him."

Slivering in silence she led Stuart to the door of Bivens' room and fled to her own.

On a magnificent bed of gleaming ebony inlaid with rows of opals, thousands of opals, Stuart found the little shriveled form. The swarthy face was white and drawn, the hard thin lips fallen back from two rows of smooth teeth in pitiful, fevered weakness. The shifting eyes caught sight of Stuart.

"It's awfully good of you to come up here so soon," he began feebly.

"I've some plans I want you to carry out for me right away. You see I never thought before of the world as a place where there were so many men and women sick and suffering—thousands and tens and hundreds of thousands. These doctors say that every night in New York alone there are half a million people sick or bending over the beds of loved ones who are suffering, and two hundred die every day."

He paused for breath, and the black eyes stared at his friend.

"Jim, I can't die! I haven't lived! I've got to get up from here and do some things I've meant to do—all those



"I'll make good. Do you understand? Ten millions each!"

sick people—I've got to do something for them. I'm going to build palaces for the lame, the halt, the sick, the blind. I'm going to gather the great men of science from the ends of the earth and set them to work to lift this shadow from the world."

A sudden pain seized and convulsed his frail body and Stuart called the doctors from the next room.

They stood by in helpless sympathy. "Can't you stop this pain?" the financier gasped in anger. "What are you here for? Am I not able to buy enough morphine to stop this hellish agony?"

His family doctor bent and said: "Your heart action is too low just now, Mr. Bivens, you can't stand it."

"Well, I can't stand this! Give it to me, I tell you!"

The doctor took a hypodermic syringe, filled it with water and injected it into his arm.

While Stuart watched the pitiful trick, his eye wandered over the magnificent trappings of the room.

"What irony of fate!" he exclaimed, under his breath.

The sufferer stared and beckoned to Stuart.

Handing him a key which he drew from beneath his pillow he cried:

"Unlock the right hand top drawer of that safe, Jim—the door is open. Hand me those bundles of stocks and bonds and call those doctors."

Stuart complied with his request and Bivens spread the brilliantly colored papers on the white covering of his bed, while the doctors drew near.

"Listen now, gentlemen," he began, still gasping with pain. "You're our greatest living doctors, I'm told. Well, I'm not willing to die. I won't die—do you hear? I'm only forty-nine years old. You see here thirty millions in gilt edged stocks and bonds. Well, there are three of you. I'll give you ten millions each to take this stone off my breast that's smothering me and give me five years more of life."

The three men of science stood with folded, helpless arms and made no effort to keep back the tears. They had seen many men die. It was nothing new—and yet the pity and pathos of this strange appeal found their way to the soul of each. They never envied a millionaire again.

They retired for another consultation. Stuart replaced the papers and gave the key to Bivens.

"Ask Nan to come here a minute," he said feebly.

Stuart walked to the door and whispered to a servant. When he returned to the bedside the dying man looked up into his face gratefully.

"You don't know how it helps me to have you near, Jim, old boy. I'm lonely. Nan I guess is ill and broken down. I've lavished millions on her. I've given her all I possess in my will, but somehow we never found happiness. If I could only have been sure of the deep, sweet, unselfish love of one human soul on this earth! If I could only have won a girl's heart when I was poor. But I was rich, and I've always wondered whether she really loved me for my own sake. At least I've always thanked God for you. You've been a real friend. Our hearts were young together and you stood by me when—I was—poor!"

An hour later when the covering was turned back from the dead body Stuart saw that the smooth little cold hand had gripped the key to his treasures in a last instinctive grasp.

He looked again at the lump of cold clay and wondered what was passing in the soul of the woman who was now the heir of all his millions.

Why had she shown such strange and abject terror over his death—an event she had foreseen and desired?

A horrible suspicion suddenly flashed through his mind. He determined to know at once.

As he had feared, Nan refused point blank to enter the death chamber and asked him to come to her boudoir.

He found her standing by a window, apparently calm. Stuart looked at her a moment with a curious detached interest. Suddenly aware of his presence she turned.

"At last, at last!" she cried in low broken accents. "Oh, dear God, how long I've waited and despaired! At last we may belong to each other forever—body and soul! Nothing else matters now, does it? We shall forget all the blank hideous years; you'll forget it, won't you, dearest? You'll forgive me—now—say that you will!"

"I've long ago forgiven, Nan, but tell me about this sudden attack. You were with him when he was stricken?"

"Yes, I took the nurse's place at midnight; I couldn't sleep."

"How long did you stay with him?"

"Until I called you."

"And you gave him the medicine in the absence of the nurse?"

"Only one," she answered, hesitatingly, "a particular kind the doctor had not prescribed, but which he asked for to relieve his pain."

"He asked you for medicine, Nan?" he went on remorselessly. "A poisonous powder—and you gave him one?"

"Yes."

"And you're sure you gave him but one?"

"He was begging for two—I might have given them both—it's possible, of course."

He gazed at her with a look of pity. "I know that you did, Nan, know it as certainly as if I stood by your side and saw you press it to his lips."

"You know, Jim?" she cried feebly, her head drooping low.

"And you feel no remorse?"

"Why should I? His death seemed only a question of days."

"From the bottom of my heart I pity you!" Stuart broke in softly. "The state will never reach your act with the law. But the big thing is you have no consciousness of guilt and feel no remorse because you have no soul. You have only desires and impulses. That's why you couldn't wait for me to earn my fortune honestly and so betrayed me for gold. I can see it all now. Your beauty has blinded me."

"For God's sake, Jim," she cried fiercely, "don't—don't talk like that! I can't endure it! You don't mean, you can't mean that you are going to turn from me now, just when I've found your love! I did it for you!"

Stuart looked at her through a mist of tears.

"The spell is broken, Nan, dear; our romance is ended. I don't say it in pride or anger; I say it in sorrow—a great deep, pitying sorrow that cuts and hurts!"

The woman understood. She had at last passed out of his world. Only the memory of a girl he had once loved and idealized remained, and that memory was now unapproachable. The living woman was no longer the figure in the mental picture. The struggle was over.

He extended his hand, clasped hers, bowed and kissed it, turned and walked quickly toward the door. With a half smothered cry she followed.

"Jim!"

He paused and turned again, facing her with a look of infinite sadness.

"Remember," she said brokenly, "I never expect to see you again—we cannot meet after this. I am looking into your dear face now with the anguish of a broken heart strangling me. You cannot leave like this—we have been too much to each other."

He took her in his arms and held her close.

"Forgive me, dear," he whispered, reverently kissing her as he would have pressed the lips of the dead. "I didn't mean to be cruel—goodly."

The door of the great house softly closed and he was gone. A few moments later the servants found her limp form lying in a swoon on the floor.

Strangers no longer live in the cottage Stuart built on the hills. A jaunty sailboat nods at the buoy near the water's edge. The drone of bees from the fruit trees in full bloom on the terraces promise a luscious harvest in the summer and fall. The lawn is a wilderness of flowers and shimmering green. The climbing roses on the southeastern side of the house have covered it to the very eaves of the roof. Stuart has just cut them away from Harriet's window because they interfered with her view of the bay and sea and towering hills they love so well. And the crooning of a little mother over a baby's cradle fills the home with music sweeter to its builder than any note ever heard in grand opera.

THE END.

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FASHION HINT

By JUDIC CHOLLET

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No. Size

Name

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WAYNE COUNTY.

Mary E. Shevalier v. A. I. Shevalier. To A. I. SHEVALIER: You are hereby required to appear in the said Court on the second Monday in August next, to answer the complaint exhibited to the judge of said court by Mary E. Shevalier, your wife in the cause above stated, or in default thereof a decree of divorce as prayed for in said complaint may be made against you in your absence.

F. C. KIMBLE, Sheriff.

P. H. Hoff, Attorney.

Honesdale, Pa.; July 11, 1913.

57 W 4.

SHERIFF'S SALE OF VALUABLE REAL ESTATE—By virtue of process issued out of the Court of Common Pleas of Wayne county, and State of Pennsylvania, and to me directed and delivered, I have levied on and will expose to public sale, at the Court House in Honesdale, on

FRIDAY, AUG. 15, 1913, 2 P. M.

All the defendant's right, title, and interest in the following described property—viz:

All that certain lot or parcel of land situate in Preston Township, Wayne county, and State of Pennsylvania, bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at a heap of stones, the corner of lots numbered 29, 30, 37 and 38 in the allotment of the Cadwallader-Equinn tract; thence by said lot No. 29, north twenty-seven degrees west, one hundred and sixty-four rods to a stone corner; thence by land in the warrantee name of Michael Kryder north sixty-three degrees east, one hundred and sixty rods to a stone corner; thence by lot No. 31 in said allotment south twenty-seven degrees east, one hundred and sixty-four rods to a stone corner; and thence by said lot No. 37 south sixty-three degrees west one hundred and six rods to the place of beginning. Being lot No. 39 and containing one hundred and eight acres and one hundred and four perches, more or less. Being same property which Richard W. Murphy, Sheriff of Wayne County, conveyed to Bertha M. Tiffany by deed dated April 3, 1896, and recorded in Sheriff's Deed Book No. 6, page 151, and recorded in the Recorder's office in and for Wayne county in Deed Book No. 81, page 351.

All that certain piece or parcel of land situate in the township of Preston, in the county of Wayne and State of Pennsylvania, bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at a stone corner of lots No. 29, 30, 37 and 38 of the allotment of T. Cadwallader; thence by said lot No. 30, north 63 degrees east, one hundred and six rods to a stone corner; thence by lot No. 26 of old allotments south twenty-seven degrees east, eighty rods to a stone and stone corner near the Equinn Creek; thence sixty-three degrees west, one hundred and six rods to a stake and stone corner in the line of beginning. Being the same land along the said line twenty-seven degrees west, eighty rods to the place of beginning. Containing fifty-three acres, be the same more or less. Being same land which Wm. J. Davey and Margaret Hughes Davey granted and conveyed to Bertha M. Tiffany by deed dated May 28, 1896, and recorded in Wayne County in Deed Book No. 81, page 171, etc.

Being the same property that J. W. Tiffany and Bertha M. Tiffany conveyed to George E. Haynes by deed dated February 27, 1896, and recorded in Wayne county in Deed Book No. 91, page 496.

About one-half improved land, one two-story frame house, frame barn and other improvements.

Seized and taken in execution as the property of Margaret Haynes and M. H. Davis, Executors of George E. Haynes, deceased, Margaret Haynes and W. J. Barnes, guardian ad litem at the suit of John A. Ballantine and Daniel W. Ballantine, assignees. No. 291 March Term, 1913. Judgment, \$2157.51. Attorneys, Mumford & Mumford.

TAKE NOTICE.—All bids and costs must be paid on day of sale or deeds will not be acknowledged.

FRANK C. KIMBLE, Sheriff.

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION, Estate of

Warren Akers, late of Dreher township.

All persons indebted to said estate are notified to make immediate payment to the undersigned; and those having claims against said estate are notified to present them, duly attested, for settlement.

H. M. JONES, Administrator.

Newfoundland, Pa., July 15, 1913

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