

The Great Secret

Novelized From the Metro Wonderplay Serial of the Same Name, in Which Francis X. Bushman and Beverly Bayne Are Co-Stars.

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Author of the Novelization of Clyde Fitch's play, "Her Sister," "His Back-door Romance," and other short stories.

CHAPTER I. THE SECRET SEVEN.

"Good morning, Jane. How is the patient?"

Jane Warren, the middle aged, careworn housekeeper for Multimillionaire Thomas Clarke, trembled at the question. Giving way to a sudden burst of emotion, she clutched her fists and glared reproachfully at Dr. Zulph.

"You ought to know. You are the physician," she exclaimed.

"Come, come," said Zulph, gazing coldly yet earnestly at her with his fishy eyes, "no anger. I know how to

of the room she turned and saw Clarke writing. He was signing the will. She hurried to the telephone.

Zulph at a meeting of the most rascally band of brainy criminals the world ever saw received her message and smilingly delivered it to The Great Master. This individual, keen eyed, alert, well groomed, bore all the outward marks of a prosperous business man. For years he had directed the operations of The Secret Seven, a band that garnered gold from every avenue of crime.

Meantime Frederick, the butler, was hastening to Beverly Clarke's home on the outskirts of the city with the note that meant millions to her. And trailing the unsuspecting servant was a band of the most villainous thugs in New York. They were led by two gun men who had taken a postgraduate course in the College of Crime and who were familiarly known as The Rat and The Spider. When Frederick entered the Clarke home the two leaders posted their men around it.

"Let's phone the Big Chief," suggested The Rat.

BRAZIL IS NEARING THE BREAKING POINT

Great Sentiment in Brazil Favoring a Break in Diplomatic Relations. Note be Published Today.

Rio Janiro, Brazil, Feb. 4.—The foreign minister, Dr. Daurio Muller has been in conference during the last 42 hours with President Wenceslau Braz and with members of the diplomatic corps. He is also in constant communication with the Brazilian embassy at Washington. The Brazilian reply to the German note regarding naval warfare probably will be made known tomorrow. There is reason to believe that the attitude maintained by Brazil up to the present time will undergo a change as a result of recent developments.

In this city the break in relations between the United States and Germany created a deep impression and the action of the American government was approved enthusiastically. The league of the allies adopted a resolution urging the President of Brazil to "put an end to the criminal neutrality which shames us before the world and injures us economically and financially, while causing us to be suspected by the Allies as passive accomplices of the German government."

Medeiros de Albuquerque, a member of the chamber of deputies, in the commenting in his newspaper on the current opinion that Brazil will follow the present policy of the United States expresses regret "that Brazil has missed the opportunity to take the action which the dignity of her traditions commanded her to do so long ago; namely to take her position on the side of the Allies."

"With the force of such a policy," he continues, "we should have gained economic advantages for we would have found ourselves bound up with the commercial interests of the greatest nations in the world. But again this noble aspiration of the Brazilian people, cowardice on the one hand and the activities of Germanism in the other, humiliating Brazil, have reduced us to unfortunate situation in which we find ourselves today."

CLIP THIS AND PIN ON WIFE'S DRESSER

Cincinnati man tells how to shrivel up corns or calluses so they lift off with fingers.

Ouch ! ? ? - ! This kind of rough talk will be heard less here in town if people troubled with corns will follow the simple advice of this Cincinnati authority, who claims that a few drops of a drug called freezone when applied to a tender, aching corn or hardened callus stops soreness at once, and soon the corn or callus dries up and lifts right off without pain.

He says freezone dries immediately and never inflames or even irritates the surrounding skin. A small bottle of freezone will cost very little at any drug store, but will positively remove every hard or soft corn or callus from one's feet. Millions of American women will welcome this announcement since the inauguration of the high heels. If your druggist doesn't have freezone tell him to order a small bottle for you.

MINERAL MIXTURE FOR HOGS

Charcoal, Sulphur, Lime and Common Salt Assist in Keeping Sows in Good Condition.

A shallow trough containing a mixture of charcoal, sulphur, air-slaked lime and common salt assists in keeping sows in good condition. This mixture can be made by mixing one bushel of charcoal with two pounds of powdered sulphur, five pounds of air-slaked lime and five pounds of salt. Wood and coal ashes dumped into the hog yard are beneficial and will help to serve the same purpose as the mineral mixture above.

BREEDING CLUB IS FAVORED

To the Interest of All Farmers to Get Together and Buy Good Registered Stallion or Jack.

If there are a number of good brood mares in your community and there is not a good registered stallion or jack within reach, it will be to the interests of all the farmers of your neighborhood to form a co-operative breeding club and buy a good individual.

In this way the members would get good service without a heavy investment.

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FLEMING BROTHERS
Laurens, S. C.



A SHOVEL AGAINST A PISTOL.

cure such a symptom in you, my good woman. Understand right now that you must obey my orders implicitly. If you do not!"

"You will expose something in my life I have been trying to hide," interrupted Jane in a weary, faraway tone—"you and your Great Master and your Secret Seven." Zulph recoiled in amazement.

"The less you say about the Great Master and The Secret Seven the better off you will be," he thundered.

"Why shouldn't I speak of them to you?" replied Jane. "Haven't I been in Mr. Clarke's home for years? Haven't I seen you and the other vile members of your organization come and go? Don't I know that Mr. Clarke is one of the brainiest of The Secret Seven; that most of his money was piled up through crime?"

"Ah," broke in Dr. Zulph, smiling outwardly, but raging inwardly, and resolving that Jane Warren should follow Clarke on a journey to eternity. "You know Clarke for what he really is. He is now a very sick man."

"Yes," said Jane, "he is a sick man, and you are a physician attending him. Heaven help Thomas Clarke!"

"And heaven help Jane Warren," whispered Zulph, his face close to hers. "Heaven help Jane Warren if she doesn't do as I say. I have brought a will here with me. I want you to see that Thomas Clarke signs it. Since you know so much about his affairs you probably know—sick men, always tell their troubles—that, by grace of what The Secret Seven has done for him, he has pledged himself to leave all of his wealth to The Secret Seven."

"I do," said Jane. "Better far if he would leave his money to poor Beverly Clarke, his niece, whose father—his own brother—he swindled. And the girl is now living in poverty with her mother."

"Thomas Clarke is going to keep his promise," sneered Zulph, fumbling in his pockets and finally drawing forth a small bottle filled with a dark liquid. "He will keep his promise—and he dies today. Jane, you have one of two things to do—either obey me and you will be rewarded handsomely, or refuse to obey and be punished. Refusal means ruin; obedience means opulence. I want you, as soon as I have departed, to see that Mr. Clarke signs his will. Then offer a toast to his health."

"In one of your glasses of wine place two drops from this bottle. One drop produces a prolonged sleep; two drops kill. Let him drink of the glass with two drops in it. I am going to a meeting of The Secret Seven. You have my telephone number. As soon as Thomas Clarke has signed the will telephone me. Then when he is dead—poor man—telephone again."

Let alone, Jane pondered over her frightful plight. Zulph was a powerful man in New York. He was of that modern Jekyll and Hyde type that grasps money and crushes all opposition by fair means or foul in one phase of life and is a smug, respected citizen in another. She thought of going to the police and exposing him. If she did he would only bring about her undoing, for Zulph had it in his power to blast her whole life. And she had tried to live down what she had done years ago. Well, she was weak. She knew it. She took the will to ailing Thomas Clarke.

"A pen and ink," he said when he saw it. "Quick! My heart—I do not believe I will live much longer. Call Frederick!" Jane summoned Frederick, the butler, and then delivered the pen and ink. As she reached the door

They did. The Great Master received their message and swore aloud at Dr. Zulph.

"What was it?" the physician asked. "It was a report from The Spider," he replied. "You yourself should have put Clarke out of the way. He has sent for Beverly. It is plain to me that when Jane Warren thought he was signing that will he was writing a note to Beverly Clarke."

"What of our two squads?" asked Zulph in alarm.

"They will kidnap the girl," replied the leader, now regaining control of himself and smoothing his closely cropped mustache with his long, wiry fingers. "Now let's proceed with the regular reports."

And so while the reports were being heard William Montgomery Strong, handsome, stylish, wealthy, was driving his tandem on the outskirts of the city straight into one of the greatest secrets of The Secret Seven.

Strong was a youth who had lived for innocent pleasure and let the rest of the world take care of itself. On this particular day the sun caressed him from a cloudless sky, and the great out of doors sang nature's sweetest song to him. Straightway he became a child of the singer. Turning the reins over to his flunky, he told him to drive back to the club, while he set out for a cross country run.

He had covered half a mile when a flash of something strange caused him to halt abruptly. He saw three men dart from a roadway into a stretch of woods, and he was sure that he glimpsed a woman's skirt between them. Inclination told him to mind his own business, but instinct said that something was wrong. He gazed intently toward the woods, every sense alert, until he heard a muffled cry of distress.

He ran toward a ramshackle house in the woods and tried the door. It yielded. He stepped inside to find The Spider, The Rat and a third gangster holding Beverly Clarke.

Strong felt that he was one good man against three. Out shot his right, and down fell one man. Next The Rat crumpled up under a blow from his left, and he gathered The Spider in his arms and tossed him through a window. Then he turned to the hysterical girl.

"Run!" he urged. "Follow me!" She did. They fled to the woods. In the distance they saw an abandoned barn. They made for it, entered and barred the door. The three kidnapers, now re-enforced by their entire band, surrounded it. Unable to batter their way in, they put dynamite under the structure and scurried for safety. Strong saw the smoke from the sputtering fuse. Lifting the girl in his arms, he swung her through the window, and both reached the shelter of a huge tree just as a tremendous explosion took place.

The gangsters came forward and dug through the wreckage, expecting to find two bodies. Soon they realized that their victim and her rescuer had escaped, and they began another hunt through the woods. One of them, pistol in hand, ran full upon Strong and the girl. The clubman disarmed him and, seeing the other gangsters approaching, called to her to flee. As she ran toward a roadway The Rat scampered after her.

"Now," yelled Strong, "it's a bunch against one! And I've got the drop on you. What are you going to do about it?"

(End Chapter I.)