

THE HUMAN SPHINK

By **Ellis Parker Butler**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F.E. WATSON

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE
John Drane, prosperous Western man of
wealth, is visited by William Dart and
his friend, Simon Judd. As he speaks
to them, a young girl, Amy Drane, approaches
him.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.
When Simon Judd returned to
consciousness it was largely because
of the pain in the ear and when he
tried to move his head he could not
do so. For a moment or two he was
unable to remember where he was
or how he came there for, close to
his eyes, was what seemed to be an
enormous black pillar. It seemed to
be, as his senses returned, a most
unaccountable thing—a low black
shoe out of which arose a phenom-
enally large ankle, and when he put
his hand to his ear he was no longer
in doubt, a foot was standing on his
ear. Someone was standing with
one heel against his nose and the toe
of the other foot on his ear, and he
tried to push the latter foot away.

"Lave be! Sthop it, you!" a
hoarse voice whispered, but the foot
removed itself from his ear and Simon
Judd sat up. He found him-
self encompassed by skirts and he,
backed out from among them and
got to his feet. He was in a group
at the door of John Drane's room;
evidently he had been unconscious
but a moment or two, for Amy
Drane was still standing in horror
on the threshold. The maid Josie
still lay where she had fallen, but
there were now others peering into
the room. Norbert, the colored
houseman, was there, and the big
foot that had been pressed against
Simon Judd's nose was that of the
cook, a woman almost as enormous
as Simon Judd himself. Behind the
cook was a second maid, Zella, with
her hands pressed against her
cheeks, and Drane's chauffeur was
running up the stairs. To him Simon
Judd turned.

"John Drane's been murdered,"
Simon Judd said to the chauffeur.
"I can't look at him; I faint off at
the sight of blood. Always did and
I dare say I always will. This here
girl's fainted, too. Help me get her
into a bed somewhere and out of
the way or she's like to be tromped.
Here, you!"
He touched Zella on the shoulder.
"You come and get this girl out
of her faint," he said. "Where we
goin' to put her?"
"Here—this way," Zella said,
crossing the hall and opening a
door. "Miss Amy's room. Let me
help you George. You and me take
her shoulders and he can take her
feet. Go easy, George, she's got
heart trouble."

They carried Josie to the bed in
Amy's room and Simon Judd fol-
lowed the chauffeur into the hall.
"If you know who the family
doctor is you better send for him,"
Judd said. "You better send for
the police, too; this ain't my bal-
rick."
"Yes, I'll do that," the chauffeur
said. He, at least, was efficiently
businesslike. "You better not let
anybody touch anything in there, unless
it's alive yet."
"I know all that, young man,"
Judd said. "I'll take hold here;
you get a move on."
"I'll telephone," the chauffeur
said, and he started for the stairs,
but the cook took his arm.

"George! Ain't it awful? Ain't it
just awful?" she cried.
"Mighty bad, Maggie," he said,
"but don't you get excited about
it. You keep calm; you don't want
to fetch on another of those spells
of yours. You better go down and
take a—take a drink of water or
something."

"Yes, I'll be doin' just that," she
said. "It's terrible, George; a murder
right in the house. Who done
it, d' ye think?"
"We can't tell that yet," he said.
"Come on, if you want me to help
you down. I got to 'phone the doc
and the police."

Simon Judd turned toward the
murdered man's room. He put his
hand over his eyes to hide the dead
man from his sight.

"Now, you see here, Miss Amy,"
he said. "You better go downstairs
awhile until the doctor comes; that
man of yours is sending for him—

man with the whiskers. What did
John say his name was? Dart?
The housekeeper turned.
"Mr. Dart? Yes, sir. Why, I don't
know where Mr. Dart is. I made
up the blue guest room for him. Mr.
Drane said he was going to stay the
night."

"I left him down there in the par-
lor, or whatever you call it, when
I come up to bed," Simon Judd said.
They had something to talk over,
seemed like. I guess maybe they
talked late; maybe he ain't up yet."

"See, Norbert, if he's in his
room," Mrs. Vincent ordered and
the negro went. He came back at
once.

"No, ma'm," he said. "He ain't
in his room; his bed ain't been slept
in. I guess he got so mad—"

He stopped.
"You guess what?" Simon Judd
demanded.

"I said mad," said Norbert. "I



Simon Judd beckoned the two officers into the house.

and for the police. There ain't
nothin' to be done until they come."
"No, nothing to be done," she
said and turned, and then, suddenly,
she broke into sobs and threw her-
self against Simon Judd, weeping
temporarily on his shoulder.
"He was all I had!" she sobbed.
"He was so good to me; he was so
kind to me!"

"There, there!" Simon Judd com-
forted her. "I know just how you
feel, girl. You cry all you want to,
it won't do you no mite of harm.
All of you keep out of that room!"
he ordered, and then to the weeping
girl again! "I don't feel right com-
fortable about that hired girl we put
in your room; the other one said
how she has heart trouble. I don't
know but what you might help in
there some, if you feel up to it."

"Josie?" Amy asked. "In my
room? Yes, I'll go to her."
She wiped her eyes and hurried
across the hall, and Simon Judd
looked after her.

"There's a real kid," he said to
himself. "If that's a flapper she
ain't flapped none of the common
sense out of her yet, anyhow!"

He looked at those remaining at
John Drane's door.
"Say, look here!" he said sudden-
ly. "Where's that other feller; the

mean mad. What I mean is I've got
this cough on my chest and I been
takin' medicine for it. The doc
give me a medicine for to alleviate
the cough, and he says take a swal-
ler whenever the cough comes upon
me, and last night I leaves the bottle
down there. So when I starts to
cough I go down to get my bottle.
Yes sir!"

"What time was it?" Simon Judd
asked.

"Well, I don't rightly know.
Maybe one o'clock, maybe two
o'clock. I ain't look at no timepiece,
I jus' starts down. And when I get
on the steps here I hear Mist' Drane
and Mist' Dart talkin' together, and
Mist' Dart he surely is mighty mad
about it. Yes sir! swearin' and cus-
sin'; yes, sir! Mighty mad! So I don't
go down. I comes up."

"What were they talking about?"
Simon Judd asked.

"Now, that I don't know," said
Norbert. "I ain't listen; it ain't none
of my business what gentlemen
talk about. I jus' comes up."

The chauffeur George came up
the stairs.

"I got Doctor Blessington," he
told Simon Judd. "He'll be right
out. And I got the police station,
they're sending men."

In fact the police officers arrived
almost immediately, the local head-
quarters having telephoned to the
station nearby. They came, two of
them, on popping motorcycles which
they parked alongside the veranda,
and entered the house together.
From the top of the stairs Simon
Judd bade them to come up.

"No one been in the room," one
of the officers asked as he saw the
group at the door.

"No one," Simon Judd told them.
"Not that I know of, anyway," and
he told of having heard the scream
of the girl Josie and of coming at
once from his room. The officers
entered the room.

"Looks like murder, Joe," one
said.

"Sure is murder," the other re-
plied. "Looks to me like a case for

SOUTHERN FIELD PRICE CHANGES TO

Atlanta, Ga.—The
commodity prices are
freight rates is shown by
published in the latest issue
Southern Field, issued by the
Development Service of the South-
ern Railway System. One of these
dealing with cotton prices dur-
ing the period from 1922 to 1927, during
which freight rates were substantial-
ly higher, shows that prices have
been tated up and down inversely
with the world supply of cotton.

It is pointed out that, in
consideration of its value and
usual expense of handling, cotton
is handled more cheaply than any
other agricultural crop; that the large
ton carrier in the world of
average of only .272c per
average haul of 272 miles.
freight rates do not affect
the price of cotton received
by the farmer.

It is shown that there is no
other commodity, the price of
which is affected by so many factors as
that of wheat. During the period
of 1923 to 1926, inclusive, fre-
ight rates were substantially un-
changed, but the same date in differ-
ent markets having the same freight rate, the
price of wheat frequently differ-
ences amounting to more than the freight
rate.

Another article in the Field
discusses the market movement of
fruits and vegetables in the United States
and points out opportunities
for Southern producers to take advan-
tage of periods when markets are not
saturated by the products of other lo-
cations.

The second herd improvement
association has been organized
in eastern Carolina with 22 dairy
farmers owning 625 cows as members.
It is the eighth such organization
in the State.

"How long is it since you saw
him last, before yesterday?" Dr. B.
Blessington asked.

"Thirty-five years," said Sam
Judd.

"That is a long time; he is
greatly changed since then, isn't he?"
"Well, yes," Simon Judd ad-
mitted. "Yes, John had changed
a bit. Just as bony as ever
on, but a lot older."

"Would you have known
him if you had not known he
was Drane? Would you have recog-
nized him, for example, if you had
seen him on the street by chance?"

Simon Judd rubbed the back
of his head thoughtfully.

"Now, that's a hard one, do
you see," he said at length. "I might
have and I might not. It's been so
long, John last. Why, what was
he doing at anyway?"

Dr. Blessington turned
toward him.

"I wanted to tell you
about Miss Drane," he said.
"It will be a shock to
you, but she's up there in the
barn, under the name of
'man' the 'man' known as John Drane, is
at all. 'He' is a woman."

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