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ur ng

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Every Friday

The Million Dollar Mystery Every Saturday

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The real George Everett got out of his ilmousine on the corner of Vander bilt avenue and hurried through the revolving doors; brisk, debonair, afert, decided; with that happy style which denies foppery and avoids surveillance. It seemed strange that he should have a photograph in his hand at which he looked intently until he got in the concourse. There he stopped and, with the picture still in his hand, commenced watching the faces of the people thronging through the gates under the vast dome. As he waited he frowned slightly, "Why had John Dorr sent him during business hours on a wild goose chase?" He thought of this articulately and then smiled to himself, "A wild goose?" he muttered. It brought up darkling sunset vistas, takes smooth as quickstiver under the evening sky, and slim, gray, beautiful birds homing downward. The frown left his forehead.

"After all it will be good to see some body from out of doors," he said to

Half an hour later he discovered that he had irretrievably missed the arrival of the Chicago express and with it Ruth Gallon. He went back into his car and drove to his office. Once there he called his head clerk, an an cient and fragile man, as crisp and bloodless as the money that passes on Wall street, and told him to see at what hotel Miss Ruth Gallon was stopping. Then he wired John Dorr:

John Dorr, "Master Key" Mine, Silent Valley. Cal.:
Could not find Miss Gallon at train Am seeking for her, as it is important that the business be settled immediately. Wire

Far out on Broadway, above the eighties, an operator was ticking off another message addressed to Harry

Wilkerson, It read:

5 A West Eighty-fourth St., New York
Harry Wilkerson, "Master Key" Mine, Via

Everything all right. George met Ruthshe is now with me and waiting further
particulars. Have seen Everett under
guise of prospective purchaser of stock
The girl is charming
JEAN DARNELL

Some houses, like some people, should never be illumined with sunshine, and Mrs, Darnell's residence, overlooking the Hudson, was of this type. Its dull red stone front, marked by windows that seemed blind to all that went by. was not distinctive in that neighbor hood. A thousand doors within a mile would have suggested to the passerby nothing more nor less than the great oak portals within which she lived. To Ruth Gallon, of course, the house seemed tremendously formal and stately. Within she found an atmosphere so absolutely strange and alien to all she had ever known that she shrank within herself and had nothing to say until she had been conducted to ber own room on the third floor and a dis creet maid was busy unpacking her things. Ruth feit that society bad al ready laid its restrictions on her | She recognized the maid as the "gown and hat" policeman

This silent, but exceedingly obtrusive personage having retired at last. Ruth studied her surroundings. When she had completed her survey she thought to herself that there were two things wanting. One was a silk haired Person cat and the other a flaming color ed scarf across the bed that completed the altogether of an apartment severe by luxurious. Then she tried to analyze the odor, delicate yet insistent, which she was ever afterward to associate with Jean Darnell and her experience in New York.

At last she traced it to some pailed flowers in the great green and dark red vase, whose unwholesome beauty was that of plants whose roots have gever been in good, sound soit. They looked to her much like tilles, whose pads had floated on some dark and oparescent pool viscid with odors of the night. She was still staring at these and sniffing their scent through widened nostrils when Mrs. Durnett knocked on the door and entered slowly. She had changed her street gown for a negligee, which instantly caught the girls appreciation are

You look beautiful. she said quick by Jean Darnelt furned her tawny

eyes on her and smiled faintly
"I am not usually up until noon," she
responded, "and—I am getting old,-my
dear". She threw out her jeweled
bands with a sparkling gesture of half
comic resignation. Buth inughed.

in New York. Don't you like him?"

Mrs. Darnell looked into the clear eyes of the girl and almost failed to follow her baser instinct. But at that loose throat she saw the heavy gold of "The Master Key." As if it had supernatural powers, the sight of that key locked the door of her heart. "Of course I like John," she said easily "We must get everything fixed up now. George will be here—George Eyerett. of course, I. mean—tonight, and you

"You know, we simply must have the money," Ruth returned earnestly. The mine isn't paying now, but John knows where we can find the mother lode again; then we'll all be rich. "Ah!" said Jean Darnell. "You're

"I own it all," futh returned proudly, "It's my mine. My father left it
to me when he died." She did not see
the sullen hatred that slowly flamed
antil Jean Darnell's eyes fairly blazed.
In her own room she stood a moment
breathless. Then she tore off her fleecy
negligee in an intensity of silent rage
and despair, seen only by the unexcited
eyes of the god whom she had defied.

It is wickedness, not virtue, which
is theatrical, and at this moment Jean

Darnell flung herself into her evil passion with all the abandon of the trage dian, only her voice was almost inau dible: 'Tom Gallon, Tom Gallon, dead though you are, I'll have revenge! When her fury had spent itself—and tike all physically indoient women, she could not yield long to emotion she prepared her campaign.

First she called up George Drake and made certain that he would be at her home for dinner that evening. Then she called up two old acquaintances who were always glad to fill empty chairs at her well set table. This settled, she again sought Ruth and per suaded her from going down immediately to Everett's office.

"You must be very tired, my dear,"
Mrs. Darnell purred. "And, anyway,
you know, in New York young ladies
do not go about unescorted to men's
business offices, and I cannot go with
you until tomorrow or next day."

"That will be too late," cried Ruth.

Mrs. Darnell opened her eyes wide,
as if in surprise. "Mr. Everett is coming to dinner tonight," she said soothingly. "You can talk business to your
heart's content right here."

"That will be much better," sa

stood by the window trying to think more calmly of all that had happened since she had left "The Master Key" mine, but one thought was prominent: "What was John Dorr doing?" She recalled that there was three hours' difference in time. It was now 2 o'clock in New York, and it was only 11 in Silent Valley. Tom Kane would be just making his final preparations for dinner, and she could almost smell the odor of his coffee. These homely details occupied her mind tenderly for an hour; then she caught up and dressed herself for the street again.

She had barely finished when the maid came in with tea, followed by Mrs. Darnell.

"My child, what in the world are you going to do?" asked Jean. "Look, we'll have tea together."

"I was going out for a walk," Ruth responded. "You know I have never



"What was John Dorr doing?"

shame to waste this fine afternoon
Anyway, I want some fresh air

Mrs Darnell looked at her thought fully and smiled presently in a way that made fluth flush. It seemed to convict her of discourtesy to her hos tess. "You had best have tea!" and the girl obediently removed her but and jacket and sat down.

It seemed to her that the rest of the afternoon passed in flashes of such entertainment as she had never known it must be remembered that Ruth, iving to the mine nearly all her life since leaving school, had not had the advantages or the society of trained, alert, smart, clever women. Mrs. Darnell was very clever and she used her every art to keep Ruth's attention. She succeeded.

That night at dinner George Drake, posing as George Everett, suddenly flushed darkly and turned to the girl at his left. "Miss Gallon," he said in a whisper, flashing his dark eyes toward his hostess to see if she were watching, "I really hope that the trust you put in me you won't find misplaced I'll do everything I can to help you, even if it is funny that I didn't know that John Dorr has red hair."

Ruth looked at him very soberty. "I don't just understand a great many things," she said. "It all seems so strange, Mr. Everett, and, you know, I am worried I ought to go to the Ritz Carlton and see if there are tele grams for me, for that's where John would wire me I'm afraid Mrs. Unreall thinks I'm awfully impolite because I want to go and make sure for myself that John has not wired."

"I'll go myself," said the faise Everett, looking at his plate "I'll go to night in fact, I'll go right now." He caught Mrs. Darnell's eye and said apologetically: "I'm afraid, my der hostess, I'll have to leave you. I have just remembered my solemn promise to be at the club at 9 o'clock, and, besides, I've promised Miss Gallon to go to the Ritz and get her mail and telegrams." He turned to Ruth, and she noticed a very grave look in his eyes. which she was to understand later. He bent gallantly over her hand and lightly klased her fingers. "You may trust me," he said.

" he said. Continued next week

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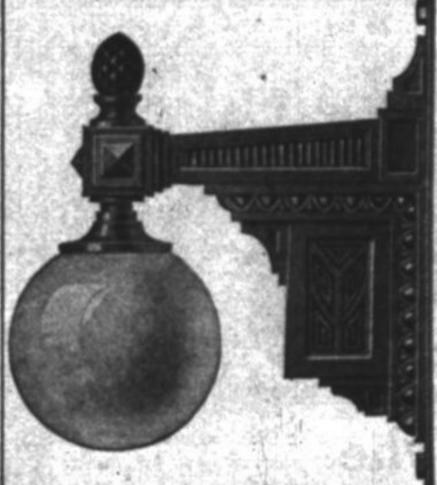
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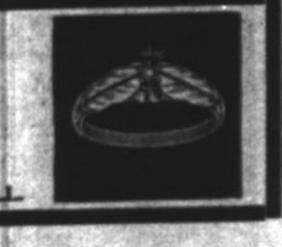
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