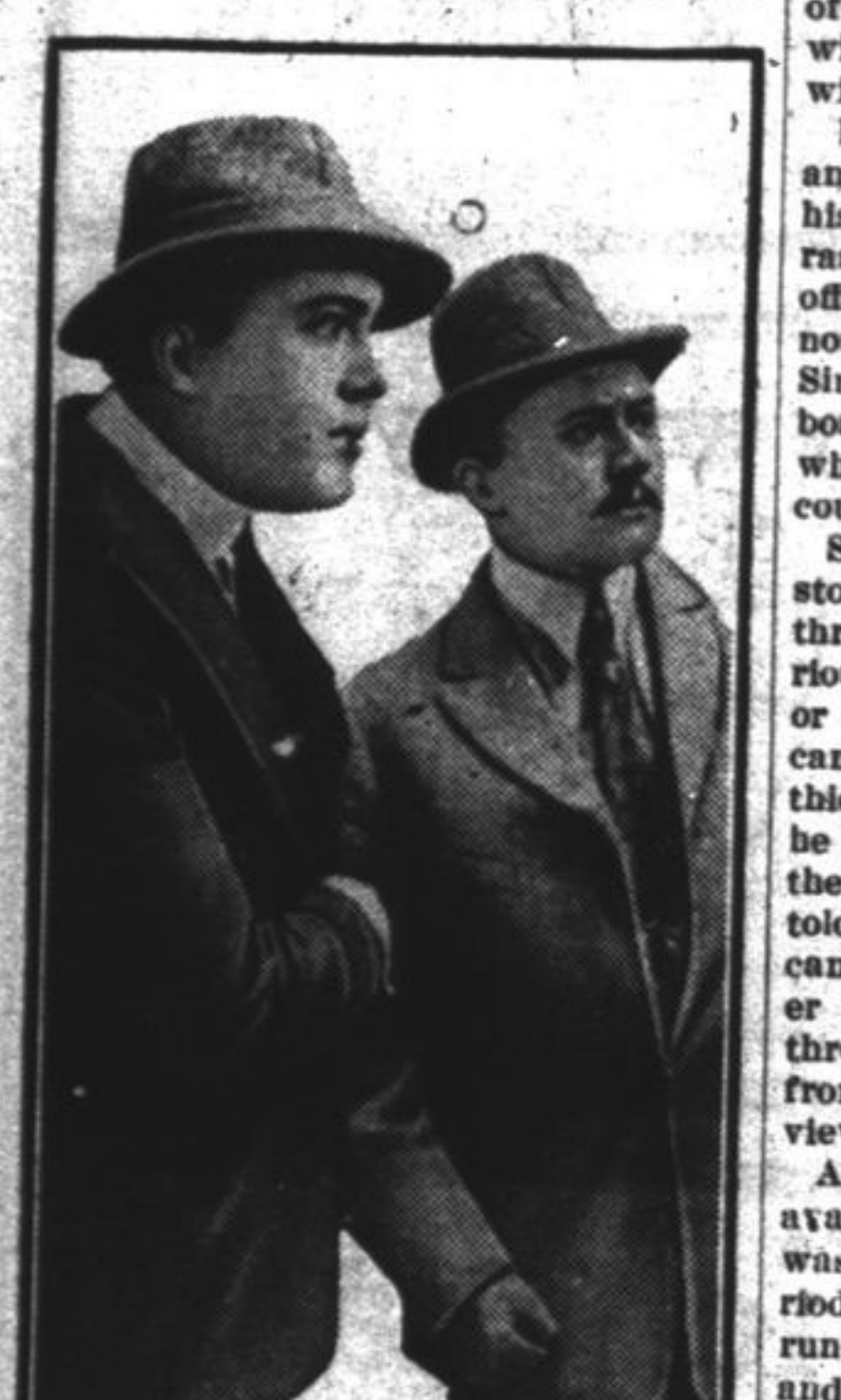


THE MASTER KEY CHAPTER XI.

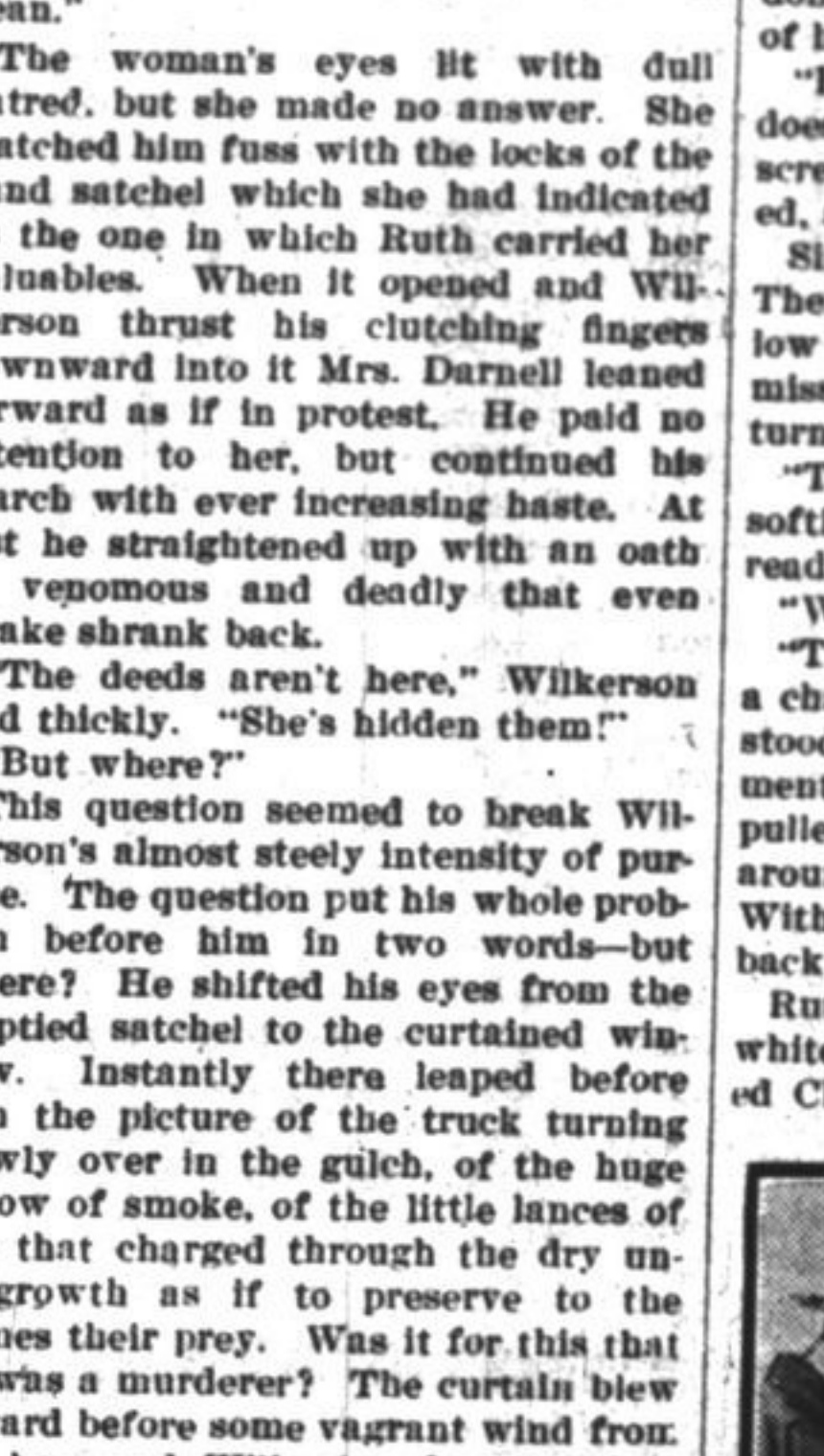
Sing Wah and His Wife. JOHN DORR stood stupidly staring at the papers which he had found in the locked drawer of the dresser. His brief inquiries at the desk had only served to make the matter darker, so he had come back to the room to puzzle things out.



"Do you know Mrs. Darnell very well?" she had been taken very ill and she was hurrying her to a hospital. There were a couple of men with her, and the house detective didn't like the looks of the whole affair, so he followed them.

to the young lady?" asked the detective mildly. John stared at him and then realized the oddity of his actions and words. He briefly explained his position at the mine and his wardship of the heiress.

son the cylindrical room which had a single door and revolved at a touch on a lever. "Dangerous stuff," commented Wilkerson. "If the police find that they'll sure land you."

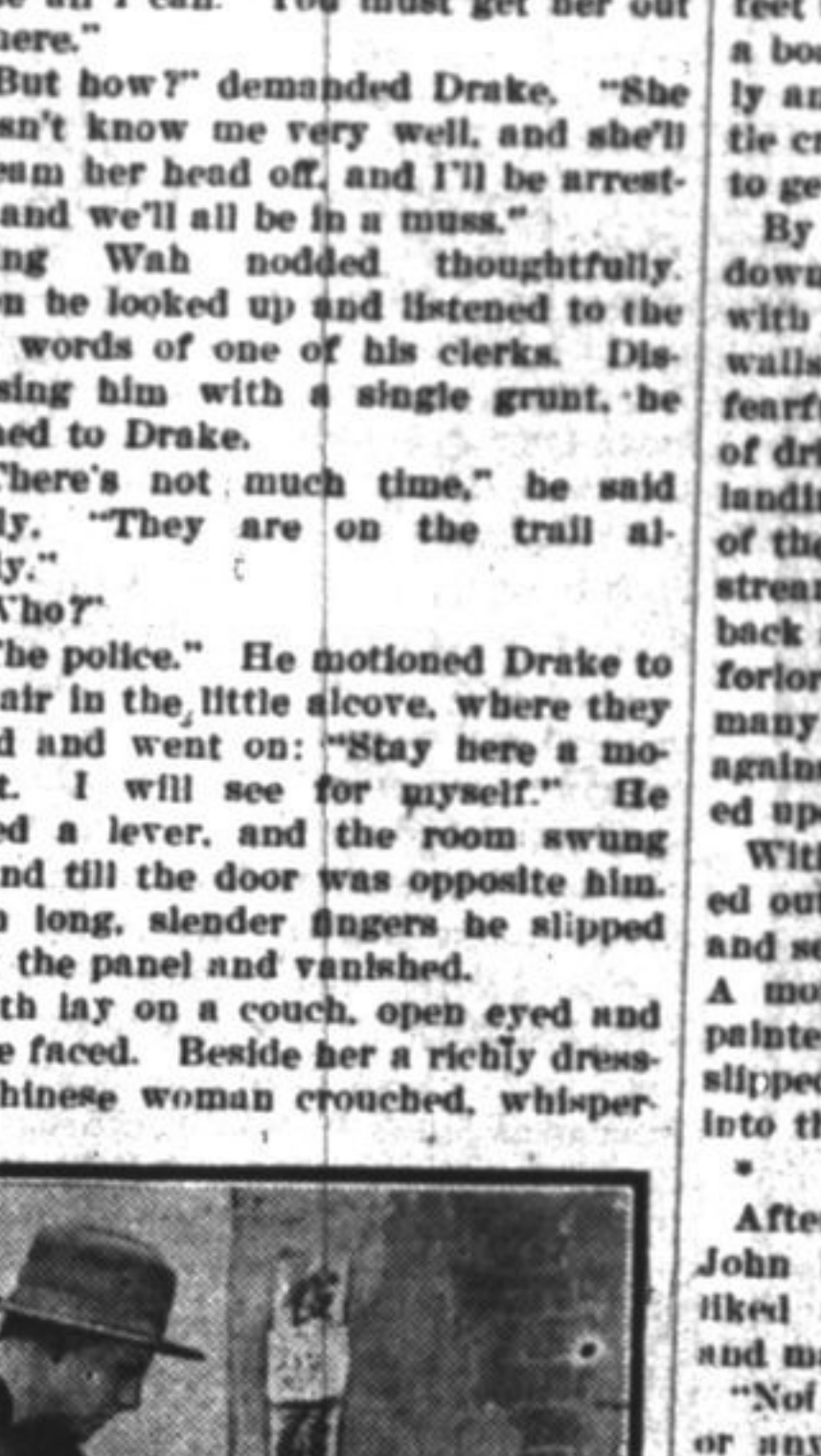


"You've got to do the trick," the stake was too great to risk, and she bitterly consented to Wilkerson's hastily outlined plan of hiding Ruth away somewhere in Sing Wah's precincts until they could once more get their plans into working order.

CHAPTER XII. Crossed Wires.

HUS it happened that just when Drake entered Sing Wah's unpretentious doorway the taxi with the hotel detective and John Dorr drew up in a side street and stopped.

"Which way did they take the girl?" said the practical detective. The driver led them around the corner and up an alleyway. He pointed to Sing Wah's door. "I think they went in there," he muttered.



After some futile parley with the Chinese, whose ignorance was complete in every detail, the two officers agreed that they were wasting time. "Old Sing's the boy to see," said the house detective. "Let's wait awhile."

"I am sorry, madam," he said quietly. "but I shall have to ask you to climb up this. It is the only safe way out." He laid one hand gently on her arm.

"You must come," said Sing Wah. "I will take you to a place of safety. All I ask of you is to follow me and be silent."

After some talk between the officers John Dorr was informed that if he liked they would enter Sing Wah's and make a thorough search. "Not that I think we'll find anything or anybody," said one of the policemen, "but it never does any harm to take a look-see through Sing Wah's, and the lieutenant is coming down now to take charge."

"What is it, Harry?" demanded Mrs. Darnell, instantly taking alarm. "Nothing," he said sulkily. "I was just thinking of something." He turned on Drake. "You've got to do the trick," he went on.

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