

# The Fiend in Human: A Victorian Thriller

John MacLachlan Gray



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It's 1852, and the ranks of the London poor have doubled. In the swollen shadow of the great St. Giles Rookery, fallen women attract the perfumed dandies of the West End into a vicious circle of venality, vanity, and vice.

Edmund Whitty, correspondent for The Falcon, the city's second-best sensational tabloid, writes whatever will stimulate the reader, delay his (increasingly physical) creditors, and supply him with the alcohol and opiates required to see him through the day. His most recent triumph was to supply a name for the fiend in human form who has murdered an uncertain number of prostitutes with a white silk scarf: Chokee Bill. Chokee Bill incited a garroting panic that paralyzed the business of London---until the arrest of one William Ryan. Normality has returned. The hangman, Mr. Calcraft, as dusty and dreary as death itself, awaits.

Broke again and in search of crisp copy, Whitty makes a shocking but not altogether surprising discovery: the white-scarf slayings have continued. When he endeavors to find the real Chokee Bill, he is greeted with emphatic hostility on all sides.

This thrilling Dickensian tale offers galvanizing suspense and an evocative and witty vision of life in Victorian London.

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