

The PHANTOM DETECTIVE

APR.

10¢

THRILLING
PUBLICATION

THE
PHANTOM
AND THE
DAGGERS
OF KALI

A FULL-LENGTH NOVEL
FEATURING THE WORLD'S
GREATEST SLEUTH





C'mon - PICK YOUR PRIZE

BOYS-GIRLS
MEN-WOMEN

THESE PRIZES ARE GIVEN TO YOU - Just send for 24 packets of easy selling Garden Spot Seeds which you can easily and quickly sell to your friends and neighbors at 10c each. Return the \$2.40 collected and select your Prize in accordance to our offers. **SEND NO MONEY - WE TRUST YOU.**

22 Piece TABLEWARE SET



6 Knives 6 Forks 6 Teaspoons Butter Knife Sugar Shell **GIVEN** for selling only one order.

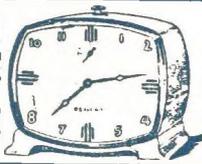
Good Luck FISHING OUTFIT



Steel rod, reel, casting line 12 spooled hooks, 12 lead sinker, cork float and stringer. **Set only one order.**

Household CLOCK

Can be used anywhere Rich finished in two tone effect 30 hour movement. **Diagnose** only 1 order and **Check** in yours. **WRITE TODAY.**



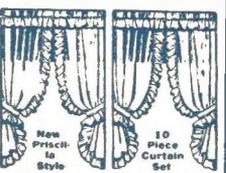
Real Live CANARY



What a pet! You will love it. **Canary** and **Cage** for selling only two orders. **WRITE TODAY.**

Sent Express Collect

10 Piece Priscilla Curtain Set



Curtain Set in soft-white pattern. Each with 2 1/2 inch ruffles in valance. Each curtain to floor. 10 pieces. **10 Pieces** in all. **Set** to you as one premium for distributing only one order. **Postpaid.**

32 Piece Rose Petal DINNER SET GIVEN



Set GIVEN for selling 2 orders. Sent express collect

JUNIOR GUITAR GIVEN



Get this hand-some instrument **NOW.** Here's how: Just send your name and address. **SEND NO MONEY. WE TRUST YOU** with 24 pkts. of Garden Seeds to sell at 10c a pkt. When sold send \$2.40 collected and **WE WILL SEND** this marvelous finished guitar and Five Minute Instruction Book absolutely **FREE.** Send for seeds **NOW.**

Ladies' New Fashion WRIST WATCH GIVEN



More Than a Guaranteed Timekeeper Sparkling enameled ivory case. Guaranteed for two years for disposing of the two pkts. of Garden Spot Seeds. **MAIL COUPON TODAY.**



The crinkled stripes are really smart in contrasting shades. **It's like a beauty.** Simply dispose of 5 orders.

BASKETBALL GIVEN



Latest Rubber Valve Type **Send No Money.** Just name and address. **Given** for disposing of only 24 pkts. of Garden Spot Seeds at 10c a pkt. **WRITE FOR SEEDS TODAY.** **Hurry Be First.**

SEND NO MONEY Just MAIL COUPON

Blue Bird Granite Cooking Set



Convenient and sanitary kitchen utensils. **Entire Set** given as one Premium, consists of four regular-sized pieces: 1 Mixing Bowl, 1 Pudring Pan, 1 Preserving Kettle, with handle, 1 Sauce Pan. **Given** for selling only 24 pkts. of Garden Spot Seeds at 10c a pkt. **Write for seeds TODAY.** **Send No Money We Trust You Happy!** Be First.



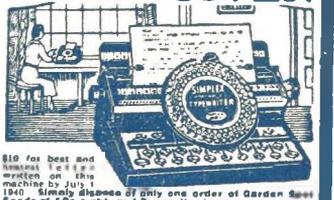
Handsome finish highly polished. **Given** for selling only one order. **Set of strings and bow included.** **Send No Money. MAIL THE COUPON TODAY. BE FIRST.**

Home BARBER Outfit



Here is a money saver, you can try children's or adults' hair yourself with out depending them to the barber. Consists of one pair of guaranteed Hair Clippers as well as a razor, comb and brush. **Given** for selling 2 orders. **MAIL THE COUPON TODAY. BE FIRST.**

PRIZE TYPEWRITER GIVEN



\$10 for best and honest letter written on this machine by July 1, 1940. **Simply dispose of only one order of Garden Spot Seeds at 10c a pkt. and Typewriter is yours.**



See moon, stars and people miles away. **Given** for selling only one order. **Send for seeds today.**

Midget Pocket RADIO GIVEN

For selling only two 24 packet orders of Garden Spot Seeds at 10c a pkt. **Make** made in best price of any in its class. **Complete** and ready for use. **Give** for selling only one order. **WE TRUST YOU. Happy!** Just use this Coupon. **Do not wait. do it NOW.**

Write for Seeds to Lancaster County Seed Co., Sta. 320, Paradise, Pa.

SEND NO MONEY WE TRUST YOU

MAIL COUPON TODAY for

5 FREE PROMPTNESS PRIZES!

SENT RIGHT ALONG WITH YOUR REGULAR PREMIUM IF WE GET THIS COUPON IN THE NEXT 5 DAYS. **SO HURRY! FILL OUT TODAY and MAIL.**

TRANSFER PICTURES

WREST WATCH

G-MEN BADGE

10 DELICIOUS CHIPS FOR YOU

MAIL COUPON TODAY.

Our 33rd Year

Lancaster County Seed Co., Station 320, Paradise, Pa. Please send me 24 packets (one order) of Garden Spot Seeds to sell at 10c, a pkt. for a fine Gift. I will sell and pay for seeds in 30 days. Also send right along with my Regular Premium the 5 FREE PROMPTNESS PRIZES SHOWN ABOVE

Name

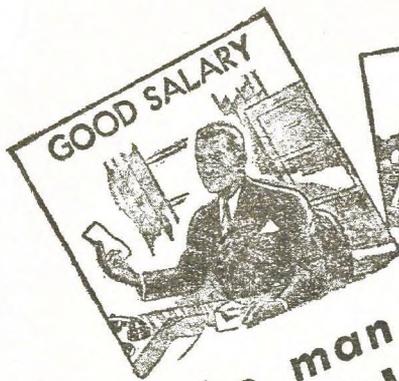
Post Office

State

Street or R. F. D. Box

Print your last name plainly below

Send 5 cents by filling in, pasting and mailing this Coupon on a 1c Post Card TODAY



To the man who wants to enjoy
an ACCOUNTANT'S CAREER



IF you're that man, here's something that will interest you.

Not a magic formula—not a get-rich-quick scheme—but something more substantial, more practical.

Of course, you need something more than just the desire to be an accountant. You've got to pay the price—be willing to study earnestly, thoroughly.

Still, wouldn't it be worth your while to sacrifice some of your leisure in favor of interesting home study—over a comparatively brief period in your life? Always provided that the rewards were good—a salary of \$2,000 to \$10,000?

An accountant's duties are interesting, varied and of real worth to his employers. He has *standing!*

Do you feel that such things aren't for you? Well, don't be too sure. Very possibly they *can* be!

Why not, like so many before you, investigate LaSalle's modern Problem Method of training for an accountancy position?

Just suppose you were permitted to work in a large accounting house under the personal supervision of an expert accountant. Suppose, with his aid, you studied accounting principles and solved problems day by day—easy ones at first—then the more difficult ones. If you could do this—and if you could turn to him for advice as the problems became complex—soon you'd master them all.

That's the training you follow in principle under the LaSalle Problem Method.

You cover accountancy from the basic Principles right up through Accountancy Systems and Income Tax Procedure. Then you add C. P. A. Training and prepare for the C. P. A. examinations.

As you go along, you absorb the principles of Auditing, Cost Accounting, Business Law, Statistical Control, Organization, Management and Finance.

Your progress is as speedy as you care to make it—depending on your own eagerness to learn and the time you spend in study.

Will recognition come? The only answer, as you know, is that success *does* come to the man who is really *trained*. It's possible your employers will notice your improvement in a very few weeks or months. Indeed, many LaSalle graduates have paid for their training—with increased earnings—before they have completed it! For accountants, who are trained in organization and management, are the executives of the future.

Write For This Free Book

For your own good, don't put off investigation of *all* the facts. Write for our free 48-page book, "Accountancy, The Profession That Pays." It'll prove that accountancy offers brilliant futures to those who aren't afraid of serious home study. Send us the coupon *now*.

Over 1850 Certified
 Public Accountants among
 LaSalle alumni!



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A CORRESPONDENCE INSTITUTION

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I want to be an accountant. Send me, without cost or obligation, the 48-page book, "Accountancy, The Profession That Pays," and full information about your accountancy training program.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

Position _____ Age _____

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Vol. XXX, No. 3

APRIL, 1940

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in*

A Full Book-Length Novel

The Phantom and the Daggers of Kali

By ROBERT WALLACE

Taken from the Case-book of Richard Curtis Van Loan

(Profusely Illustrated)

The World's Most Famous Sleuth Crosses Swords with "The Tiger," Grim Master of Crime, and Rips Apart a Tangled Web of Sinister Murder and Intrigue Cloaking a Deeper Terror! Follow the Phantom on a Blood-Drenched Trail of Mystery

12

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AND

THE PHANTOM SPEAKS . . . A Department 111

Join FRIENDS OF THE PHANTOM, Our World-wide Organization

Published monthly by Standard Magazines, Inc., 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y. Entire contents copyrighted, 1940, by Standard Magazines, Inc. Subscription yearly, \$1.20; single copies, \$1.10; foreign and Canadian postage extra. Entered as second-class matter November 10, 1932, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under Act of March 3, 1879. 173
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PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.



YES- I'M CONVINCED THAT I CAN MAKE GOOD MONEY IN RADIO. I'M GOING TO START TRAINING FOR RADIO RIGHT NOW.

NO- NOT ME. I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE MY TIME. SUCCESS IS JUST A MATTER OF LUCK AND I WASN'T BORN LUCKY.

BILL SAID "YES" HE'S MAKING GOOD MONEY IN RADIO NOW



THIS N.R.I. TRAINING IS GREAT. AND THEY SENT REAL RADIO PARTS TO HELP ME LEARN QUICKLY



YOU CERTAINLY KNOW RADIO. I'VE NEVER SOUNDED BETTER.

I'VE BEEN STUDYING RADIO ONLY A FEW MONTHS AND I'M ALREADY MAKING GOOD MONEY IN MY SPARE TIME

THANKS



OH BILL! I'M SO PROUD OF YOU. YOU'VE GONE AHEAD SO FAST IN RADIO

YES! I'VE GOT A GOOD JOB NOW AND A REAL FUTURE. THANKS TO N.R.I. TRAINING

TOM SAID "NO" HE'S STILL WAITING FOR "LUCK"



BILL'S A SAP TO WASTE HIS TIME STUDYING RADIO AT HOME



SAME OLD GRIND -- SAME SKINNY PAY ENVELOPE -- I'M JUST WHERE I WAS FIVE YEARS AGO



GUESS I'M A FAILURE. LOOKS LIKE I'LL NEVER GET ANYWHERE

YOU'LL ALWAYS BE A FAILURE, TOM. UNLESS YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. WISHING AND WAITING WON'T GET YOU ANYWHERE



I will Train You at Home in Spare Time for a GOOD JOB IN RADIO

J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute
Established 25 years.

Radio is a young, growing field with a future, offering many good pay spare time and full time job opportunities. And you don't have to give up your present job to become a Radio Technician. I train you right at home in your spare time.

Why Many Radio Technicians Make \$30, \$40, \$50 a Week

Radio broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, technicians. Radio manufacturers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, servicemen in good-pay jobs. Radio jobbers, dealers, employ installation and servicemen. Many Radio Technicians open their own Radio sales and repair businesses and make \$30, \$40, \$50 a week. Others hold their regular jobs and make \$5 to \$10 a week fixing Radios in spare time. Automobile, police, aviation, Commercial Radio: loudspeaker systems, electronic devices, offers good opportunities. My training includes Television, which promises to open good jobs soon.

Many Make \$5 to \$10 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

The day you enroll, I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets which start showing you how to do Radio repair jobs. Throughout your

Course I send plans and directions which have helped many make \$30.00 to \$50.00 a year in spare time while learning. I send special Radio equipment to conduct experiments and build circuits. This 50-50 training method makes learning at home interesting, fascinating, practical. I ALSO GIVE YOU A MODERN, PROFESSIONAL, ALL-WAVE, ALL-PURPOSE SET SERVICING INSTRUMENT to help you make more money fixing Radios while learning and equip you for full time work after you graduate.

shows many letters from men I have trained, telling what they are doing and earning. Read my money back agreement. MAIL COUPON in an envelope, or paste on a penny postcard—NOW!

J. E. SMITH, President
Dept. 0009,
National Radio Institute
Washington, D. C.

Find Out What Radio Offers You

Act Today! Mail the coupon for my 64-page Book, "Rich Rewards in Radio." It points out Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tells about my Course in Radio and Television;

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 0009,
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Send me FREE, without obligation, your 64-page book "Rich Rewards in Radio" which points out Radio's opportunities and tells how you train men at home to be Radio Technicians. (Write Plainly.)

Name..... Age.....
Address.....
City..... State.....





FISHING TACKLE

at **LOW Prices**

Send today for New 1940 Catalog listing thousands of bargains in Fishing Tackle, Baseball, Basket Ball, Golf, Tennis, Archery, Guns, Clothing and Sporting Equipment of all kinds. Top quality—**Money Back Guarantee!**

HERE ARE A FEW MONEY-SAVERS

- \$17.50 Bamboo Fly Rod, Alu. Case & 2 Tips **\$8.95**
- \$9.00 DeLuxe Split Bamboo Fly Rod . . . **\$4.95**
- \$4.00 Split Bamboo Bait Rod, 9 1/2' extra tip **\$2.85**
- \$3.00 1-pc. Steel Casting Rod, Offset handle **\$1.89**
- \$2.75 1-pc. 3 1/2' Split Bamboo Casting Rod **\$1.79**
- \$3.75 Automatic Fly Rod Reel, light weight **\$2.29**
- \$6.50 Feather-weight Bamboo Fly Rod, 7 1/2' **\$3.95**
- \$5.00 Double Tapered 30-yard Fly Line . . **\$2.95**
- \$1.00 doz. assorted scented Trout Flies doz. **49¢**
- \$1.00 doz. Ringed Trout & Bluegill Flies doz. **49¢**
- \$1.00 assorted 6 floating Bass Bugs, 1/0 hook **59¢**

- Spalding matched Bobby Jones steel shafted Woods, 1940 models, ea. **\$4.95**
- Spalding matched Bobby Jones steel shafted Irons, chrome finish, ea. **\$3.95**

Order any above specials C.O.D. or remit cash. **FREE** with \$6.50 purchase or more, metal snelled hook holder or metal ribbed sport glasses. Other premiums.

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Increase your income at home by new, simple Wentworth Tempera Color method. We instruct you and supply you with work. Write today for **FREE BOOKLET**.

Wentworth Pictorial Co., Ltd., Dept. 160, Hamilton, Ont.

PAYS Up To *This* **MAGIC-DISC** HEATS WATER INSTANTLY!

178% PROFIT

60 second Demonstration.

EVERY HOME CAN AFFORD THIS AMAZING LOW COST NEW IMPROVED ELECTRIC WATER HEATER

Made by an **OLD** Reliable Company. Amazing New Principle Heats Water Instantly. Just plug in the light socket. **SELLS FAST** and Pays Agents up to **178% PROFIT**. No Risk **SAMPLE OFFER**. Write at once for details.

THE LUX COMPANY

Dept. H-123

Elkhart, Ind.

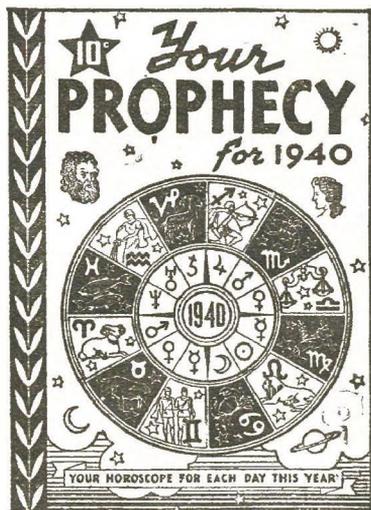


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NOW ON SALE **10c** AT ALL STANDS

Your Star-Guide for the Entire Year!



Now on Sale **10c** At All Stands

FINED FOR IGNORANCE!

Don't Let It Happen to You!

The average grade school graduate earns \$16.30* a week less than high school graduates earn.

The average high school graduate earns \$25.25* a week less than do men with college or vocational training.

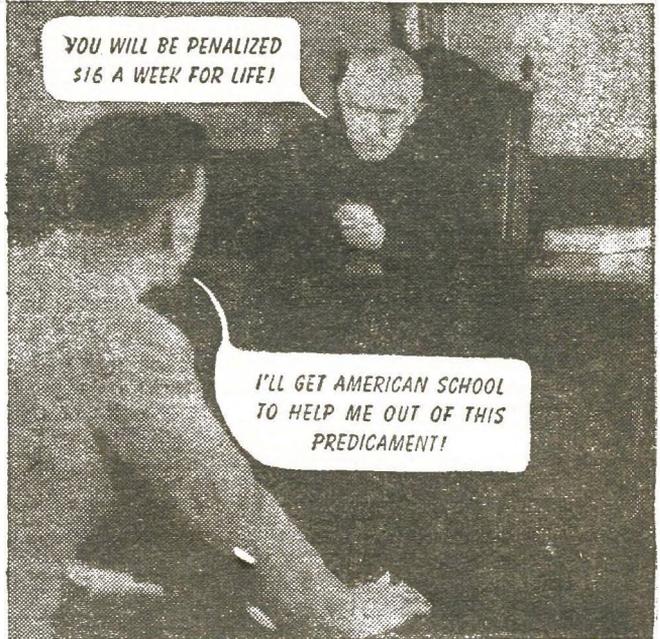
*Figures computed from Government report. For basis of computation, write American School.

College Grade Training Pays

Up to

\$40 a week*
EXTRA income

Study at HOME!



You Too Can Win a Better Job!

HAVE YOU thought about *home study*? You look around you at your friends, neighbors and fellow employees: This one earns \$10 a week more than you—that one earns nearly double—a third, though appreciably younger than you, seems to be making better progress. Why? How can you catch up with them? You know that literally *thousands* of ambitious men and women have won substantial Success through using their spare time at home to master the principles and practice of their chosen lines. How can HOME STUDY help you make good?

The "Magic" of Home Study

There's no magic to home study. It's hard work—but it is worth the effort because it helps you overcome the handicap of having left school too soon. It frees you from the penalties of Ignorance—enables you to compete to better advantage in this NEW world of college trained men and women.

In 1900, only ONE person in 800 was a high school graduate. Today, one in every 837 is college trained. That's why you need so much more "on the ball" today than ever before. That's why American School has stepped up all its complete courses to include so much work of college level. You NEED it, to win out today!

These Advantages Speed Your Progress

More than 150 noted educators, engineers and executives helped prepare American School courses. An Advisory Board of 20 outstanding authorities—each an active leader in his field—is consulted when our work is prepared or changed. A Staff of competent instructors—home study specialists—works closely with the individual student.

Courses are not prepared from the "academic" viewpoint—but from the practical. Although dozens of leading universities and colleges use the same texts, the primary aim of home study is to help graduates win BETTER jobs at BIGGER pay as QUICKLY as possible. Every course is geared to this end. Jobs and job requirements are analyzed, circumstances of the average student are weighed, then every course is speed-lined to put the Man in the Job he wants at the EARLIEST opportunity.

Write American School about your promotion problems TODAY!

American School

Drexel Avenue at 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois

Promotion Begins at HOME

Pay raises depend largely on what you do in SPARE time. Make it pay you dividends!

American School, Dept. G-458, Drexel Ave. at 58th St., Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen: I'll sit down and consider my Promotion Problems carefully if you will send me FREE Information covering special training in subjects checked below. No obligation on my part.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School Course | <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting and Auditing | <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting and Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture and Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Liberal Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Secretary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio and Television |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elec. and Gas Refrigeration | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail Merchandising |

Name

Address

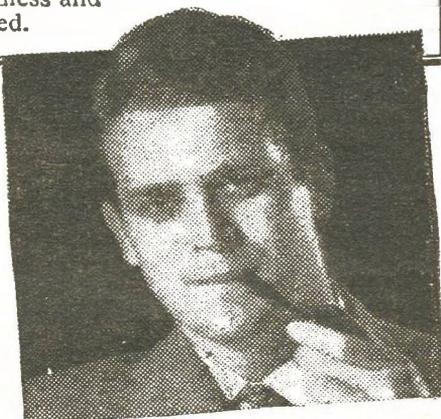
DON'T let Rupture make you Look Old!

Not the rupture itself, but the *worry and fear* it can cause makes many a man and woman look old beyond their years. But this is one kind of worry that is *absolutely needless*. Right here and now we offer to *prove* that it's needless and it costs you nothing if you are not 100% convinced.

If you have reducible rupture, wear a truss, and still have to worry, there is just one reason—an old-fashioned truss that doesn't half do its job. A hard, gouging pad is making you miserable. You constantly fear your rupture will slip down. You feel your condition is growing worse and can never get better. You can't be normally active and, in short, you worry all day and dream your worries at night. Stop it!

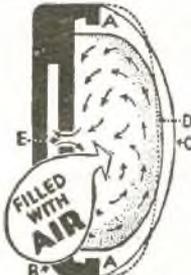
YOU WON'T WORRY WITH A BROOKS PATENTED AIR-CUSHION RUPTURE APPLIANCE!

If you knew the grand and glorious security and comfort of the Brooks Patented Air-Cushion truss, you'd be *wearing* it right now, instead of just reading about it. You would be feeling free as air to do whatever you liked in every normal activity, hardly aware you had a Brooks on, and with not a rupture worry in your mind. You see, with a Brooks your rupture is held securely in place by a patented, air-cushioned pad of soft, yielding rubber instead of a hard, gouging pad. That patented Air-Cushion is designed to flatten and cling in any position. It is so comfortable you can wear



THE FAMOUS BROOKS PATENTED AIR-CUSHION

- A—Pad which comes in contact with the body.
- B—Light weight disc which holds pad.
- C—Shows the shape of soft rubber pad before it is pressed against body.
- D—Dotted line shows how the pad flattens out under pressure, expelling air.
- E—Orifice through which the pad figuratively breathes as it adjusts to conform to different body pressures.



BROOKS CUSHIONS ARE MADE IN OVER
75 SHAPES AND SIZES

it night and day. That and the fact that the Air-Cushion holds like a hand gives Nature the greatest possible chance to close the rupture opening and free you from wearing any truss, the Brooks included.

YOU'D WEAR A BROOKS APPLIANCE ON TRIAL WOULDN'T YOU?

If complete deliverance from all your rupture worries sounds "too good to be true," *don't let that stop you!* BROOKS asks no man or woman, or parent of a ruptured child, to buy a BROOKS Appliance outright and "take a chance". No, we will send you a complete BROOKS appliance for a thorough *trial*. Wear it. Compare it. Put it to every test you can think of. Get your doctor's opinion. Then if you are not satisfied, if you don't bless the day you heard of BROOKS, the trial costs you nothing. Anyone can afford a BROOKS. It costs no more than many old-fashioned store trusses. Yet it is made up for you *individually*, after your order is received. It is never sold in stores or through mail order houses—only by BROOKS. Remember this and steer clear of imitations.

OVER 9000 DOCTORS HAVE ORDERED THE BROOKS FOR THEMSELVES OR THEIR PATIENTS

The principle of the Patented Air-Cushion appeals to the physician's scientific knowledge of rupture. That's why we say "get your doctor's opinion." There are no stiff, punishing springs to set your nerves on edge and make you want to scream—no metal girdle to rust and corrode. A velvety soft body band holds the Air-Cushion in place with glove-like comfort. And you prove every advantage on trial, with an absolute guarantee of satisfaction or no cost.

Send for FREE Rupture Book and Amazing PROOF OF RESULTS

The more you know about BROOKS, the more eager you will be to try it for yourself. You wouldn't be human not to want such glorious freedom from worry, such comfort and the peace of mind, the fresh, rested feeling that we say will make you younger looking, happier and more efficient. Send for FREE Book this very day!

BROOKS APPLIANCE CO.
480-L STATE STREET MARSHALL, MICH.

MAIL THIS COUPON NOW!

Brooks Appliance Co.,
480-L State St., Marshall, Mich.

In **PLAIN ENVELOPE**, please send your **FREE BOOK** on Rupture, **PROOF** of Results, and **TRIAL OFFER**. No representative is to call and bother me.

Name

Street

City State

State whether for Man Woman or Child

NEW LIFE POLICY INSURES WHOLE FAMILY FOR ONLY \$1.00 PER MONTH



One Policy Protects Entire Sullivan Family,
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FROM BABY TO GRANDPARENTS!

One Policy, One Premium, One Price!

Now you can insure your whole family at amazing **LOW COST!** Think of it! \$1.00 per month protects entire family—husband and wife, their parents, and children! Pays benefits for death from any cause, as specified in the policy.

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The Family Group Policy issued by the Marquette Life Insurance Company is under state government supervision. Pays cash for death from natural causes or accidental injuries as stated in the policy.

LEGAL RESERVE BASIS!

Approved securities, equal to the full legal reserve for every Marquette policy in force, are locked in the vaults of the State of Illinois.

SEND NO MONEY!

Remember, you do not send one cent! Just mail coupon. No obligation! No agent will call!

MARQUETTE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
Desk 70, Jefferson Station, Chicago, Ill.

NO AGENT WILL CALL!

MARQUETTE LIFE INSURANCE CO.
Desk 70, Jefferson Station, Chicago, Ill.

Please send details how to get the Family Group Insurance Policy for Free Inspection without obligation.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____

UP TO
\$3,000.00
BENEFITS!

For Only \$1.00 Per Month

Ages 1 to 75!
Men—Women—Children

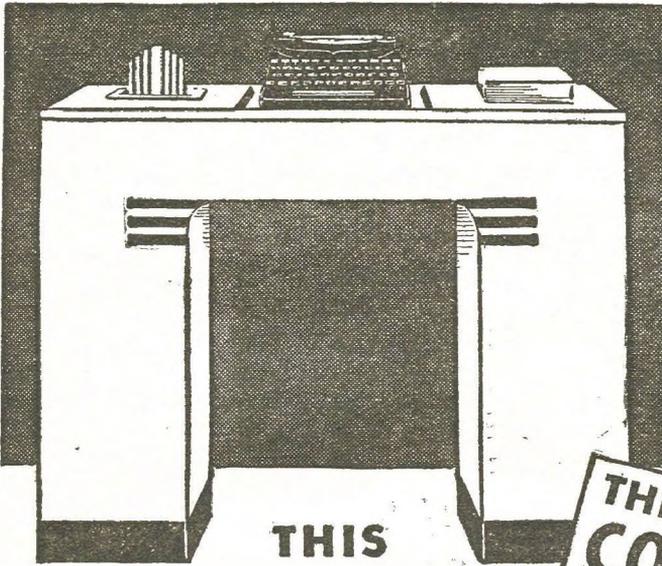
\$3,000 maximum in event of travel death as outlined in this marvelous Family Group Policy.

\$2,000 maximum in event of death by auto as shown in the policy.

\$1,000 maximum in event of ordinary or natural death as explained in the policy.

**PAYS FOR DEATH
FROM ANY CAUSE!**

**SEND COUPON FOR
FREE DETAILS !!**



**THIS
BEAUTIFUL
DESK FOR ONLY \$1.00**

WITH ANY

REMINGTON PORTABLE TYPEWRITER

A beautiful desk in a neutral blue-green fits into the decorations of any home—trimmed in black and silver—made of sturdy fibre board—now available for only one dollar (\$1.00) to purchasers of a Remington Noiseless Portable Typewriter. The desk is so light that it can be moved anywhere without trouble. It will hold six hundred (600) pounds. This combination gives you a miniature office at home. Mail the coupon today.

**THESE EXTRAS FOR YOU
LEARN TYPING FREE**

To help you even further, you get free with this special offer a 19-page booklet, prepared by experts, to teach you quickly how to typewrite by the touch method. When you buy a Noiseless you get this free Remington Rand gift that increases the pleasure of using your Remington Noiseless Portable. Remember, the touch typing book is sent free while this offer holds.

SPECIAL CARRYING CASE

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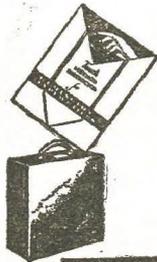
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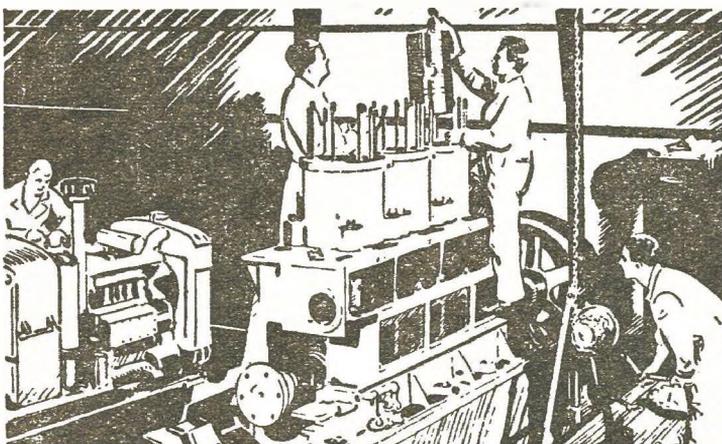
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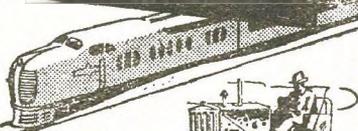
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THE PHANTOM and the



Van swung the chair above his head (Chap. XIV)

*Taken from the Case-book
of Richard Curtis Van Loan*

CHAPTER I

MURDER AT THE METROPOLITAN

IT WAS closing time at the Metropolitan Museum. In the arms and armor section, however, there were still a few lingering sightseers.

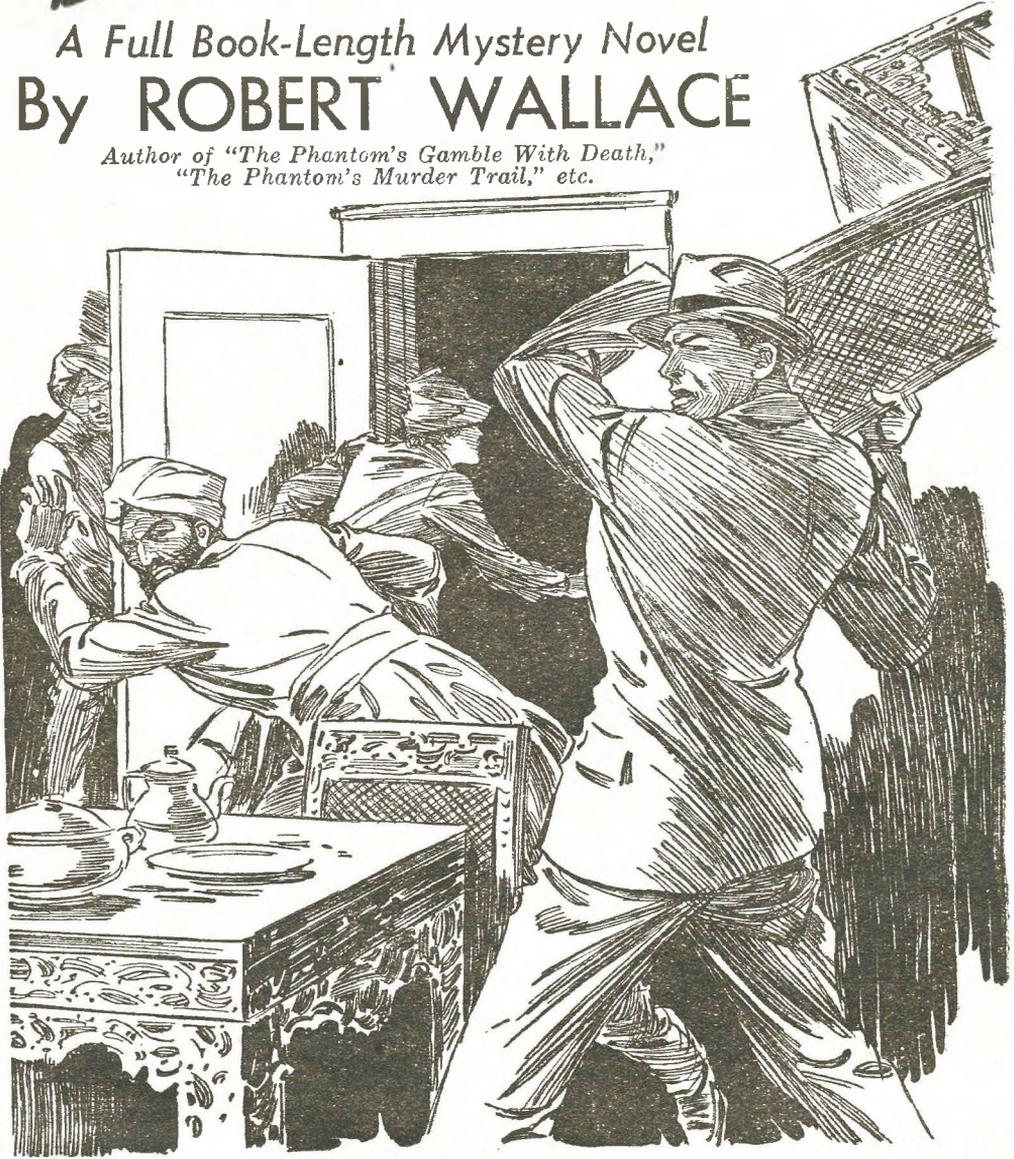
Charley Peters, the guard, turned out the main lights as a hint to these few remaining visitors. In the dim light, the armored knights, astride their great armored horses, seemed to

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move and shift. Their lance pennons drooped lazily in the shadows. The shadows deepened toward the walls where the Metropolitan Museum's priceless collection of jeweled swords

and daggers gleamed in their show-cases.

Charley Peters knew every item in that collection. There were *yataghans*, *stiletos*, *poignards* along the

Swords with "The Tiger," Master of Crime!

Van Rips Apart a Web of Sinister

walls. Rapiers and scimitars, *kampilans* and *krisses* were lined up beside them. There were Gurkha *kuk-kris* with their double sigmoid curve designed to concentrate the weight of the blow on the forward cutting edge. Near them were some Japanese *kodachis*, razor sharp, and some Japanese *tantos* with their smaller accompanying knives—the *Kozuka* for throwing and the *Kogai*, which was the smaller knife used to plunge into the head of an enemy after behead-

carved ivory likeness of Kali, the Destroyer, the Goddess of Murder, the deity of the Thuggees, who had sacrificed countless victims to their insensate and unappeasable goddess. The Seven Daggers of Kali, loot from some ancient sack of Delhi, were among the most valuable of the treasures of the Metropolitan Museum's collection of arms.

The shuffling feet of the last few visitors were growing dimmer in the distance.

One or two of them still lingered along the row of showcases.

A voice was raised argumentatively.

"I tell you that this *tanto* is wrongfully ascribed to Soshu Masamune. His blades always bear the filing marks from right to left, diagonally downward, while this blade has the filing crosswise of Masamune of Bingo Mihara and has many characteristics of the Mihara school. It was clearly made in the Era of En Bun, that is to say about 1356 A.D. . . ."

SOMETHING, a faint sound, like the tinkle of breaking glass, caught Peters' attention. He strode toward the line of showcases partially separated from the main room by a row of heavy pillars.

The grotesque figure of a warrior in *Samurai* armor loomed in threatening and sinister fashion from the shadows of one of these pillars, directly opposite the show case which contained the Seven Daggers of Kali.

In the half light, Peters' eyes roved swiftly over the glass tops of the showcases. The last of the visitors seemed to have departed.

Not until he reached the showcase containing the Seven Daggers of Kali, did Peters halt. Then he swore and leaned forward, unable to believe his eyes.



Richard Curtis Van Loan

ing to identify the slayer to the feudal lord.

Ivory and gold hilts, turquoise, ruby, diamond and emerald-encrusted scabbards and hilts, Toledo and Damascus steel, gold inlaid, bronze and silver embossed—all this beauty of design and ornamentation did not conceal the deadly purpose for which these weapons had been fabricated.

The least ornamented and probably the most deadly were those slender-bladed Daggers of Kali, their round, gold-inlaid steel blades tapering to needle-sharp points. Their gold and ivory hilts were surmounted by the

Murder that Cloaks a Deeper Terror!

For the glass top of the showcase had been neatly cut away.

The Seven Daggers of Kali were gone!

Peters turned to give the alarm. Out of the tail of his eye it seemed to him that the threatening shadow of the *Samurai* warrior became endowed with life, or that some shadow within a shadow moved behind him.

At that second a piercing, needle-like stab of hot agony pierced him. His gurgling cry stilled itself in a sob. He staggered a second and then plunged forward heavily, narrowly missing the edge of the showcase in his fall.

PERHAPS the public and the press had grown numb to the daily recital of death from the air and from the depths of the sea, and the slaughter of men in Asia and Europe. Whatever the reason, the news of this strange murder at the Metropolitan Museum made the headlines, crowding out the war news, and men turned to it as a novelty in the steady stream of monotonous battle communiques.

The sinister aspects of the murder, with its connotations of the malevolent powers of the goddess, Kali, was played up by the newspapers. The body of the murdered guard, Charley Peters, showed no wound save the round hole below the shoulder blade that could have been made by nothing else but one of the needlelike daggers of Kali. The body had been found by the night watchman coming on duty after all trace of the last visitor had departed.

The attendants at the door, tired and anxious to be homeward bound, had not observed anything of especial significance about the last few departing visitors. One of them dimly recalled having seen a dark-skinned man who might have been

an Oriental, although the attendant's impression of him was that he was too tall for a Filipino or a Japanese.

From Brooklyn to the Bronx and from east side tenements to Park Avenue apartments there was considerable speculation about the mystery and the strange theft of the daggers.

IN THE servants' dining room of one ornate Park Avenue apartment, that owned by E. Knowlton



Steve Huston

Lucas, there was an added zest to the discussions of the strange murder and theft.

For the servants' hall had as a guest on the night following the murder, no less a person than Detective, First Class, Thomas Balban, New York City Police. The presence of the detective not only gave added piquancy to the mysterious atmosphere that had pervaded the household for the past two days, but gave the servants an opportunity to discuss the Metropolitan Museum murder with an official expert on crime.

Grimes, the English butler, whose

face was lacquered red as a result of his conscientious efforts, extending over many years of service, in testing every species of bottled goods that came from his master's cellar, acted as host.

In honor of the distinguished guest he had brought forth a bottle of priceless aged Scotch whiskey, so high in quality that it was not labelled with any vulgar trade name. It was numbered and signed by the maker like a de luxe limited book edition.

But Detective Balban refused to drink, rather sadly, murmuring that he was on duty, whereat Grimes doubled his own drink.

"All I can say about that job at the Metropolitan," asserted Detective Balban, darkly mysterious, "is that there's more to it than appears on the surface!"

Grimes noted the warmly admiring glance that Mary, the comely parlor maid, directed on the detective, and the too evident admiration of the women of his staff for the stranger.

He cleared his throat portentously.

"H'exactly what I said to the missis only this evenin'," he announced. "There's more goin' on right here in *this 'ouse* than appears on the surface!"

The attention of the gathering immediately centered upon him. The detective glanced at him sharply, then snorted.

"What's goin' on except that your boss has received a couple of threatenin' letters from some crank and has asked for police pertection?"

Grimes took an appreciative sniff of the Scotch before him, emptied the glass and frowned darkly.

"Knownin' Mr. Lucas as I've known 'im for goin' on fifteen years, I say, and mark my words, that it'd take more than a couple of threatenin' letters from some crank to make 'im lock 'isself hup in 'is library every evenin', lettin' nobody come near 'im, not even me with his regular evenin' whiskey and soda!"

The women glanced apprehensively about them and drew nearer.

"It ain't natural for him to act like that," Grimes went on, "and moreover, when I picked up the telephone extension just off the library this afternoon, I overhears Mr. Lucas talkin' to somebody and I couldn't 'elp overhearin' 'im say—'I'm in mortal danger of my life, Frank'!—them was his very words!"

"Who was he talkin' to?" asked Detective Balban.

"'E was talkin' to Mr. Frank Havens, the publisher of the *Clarion*."

DETECTIVE BALBAN nodded. He knew of the wealthy publisher, who not only owned the *Clarion* but was proprietor of a chain of newspapers extending over the United States.

"Mr. 'Avens is a very close friend to Mr. Lucas," explained Grimes. "Then I 'eard Mr. 'Avens talkin'. He says it sounds to him like it was a job for the Phantom—'I'll get in touch with 'im, if you like', 'e says, and ask him to investigate!"

"The Phantom!" Detective Balban's tone expressed a vast respect. "If the Phantom is gonna be called in on this case, there must be something ugly and dangerous going on!"

The very name of the Phantom, known to the New York police force, as well as to Scotland Yard and the Paris Sûreté, was enough to make any professional crime hunter sit up and take notice. For who did not know of the Phantom, that brilliant artist in crime detection, whose exploits had become almost legendary throughout the world? He was the terror of evil-doers and the dread of criminals, that mysterious detective genius who struck like a hawk in the dark underworld of crime.

"There ain't any doubt about it," said Detective Balban. "If the Phantom is to be called in on this case, there's a whale of a lot goin' on that don't appear on the surface!"

Grimes shook his head forebodingly.

"Knowin' Mr. Lucas as I know 'im, it ain't like 'im to refuse 'is evenin' snifter, three fingers of whiskey, no more and no less . . . summer, spring, fall *and* winter—it don't make no difference!" Grimes glanced at the wall clock which showed half past eight, then nodded to Anya, the kitchen maid, who obediently rose, brought forth a silver tray, a bottle of soda water and a glass containing ice. After filling his own glass again, as a precautionary measure, Grimes placed the square, unlabelled bottle upon the tray and moved majestically toward the door.

"I'll lay you five to three that 'e won't even let me in the library, me that's been servin' 'im for fifteen years!" he said as he passed through the swinging doors to the butler's pantry.

CHAPTER II

DAGGER DEATH



GRIMES passed silently through the dining room with its heavily carved Italian Renaissance table and chairs and great sideboard, gleaming with massive silver, into the rose drawing room with its Aubusson tapestries; through that into the green and silver drawing room with its deep piled lustrous Chinese rugs.

A lone man sat reading a paper as Grimes entered, a man whose hard capable face and solid, square-toed shoes plainly marked him as a detective with some of the marks of the "harness bull" still upon him.

"Is Balban through eatin' and gassin' yet?" he asked, "I'm hungry enough to eat a horse and chase the rider!"

"Mister Balban was about to finish 'is dessert and coffee as I was leavin'," announced Grimes and continued his progress to an arched doorway that was the entrance to the library.

Arrived here, he stopped and listened. Not a sound came from inside. Grimes glanced back at the detective, seated halfway down the room. The man had immersed himself in the baseball scores and did not even look up. Some sort of a vague premonition of evil gripped the butler, a vague, impalpable mist of uncertainty and foreboding. The silence behind that door was a dead silence, somehow, a silence that flowed out of the keyhole and over the threshold and drifted into the drawing room like some miasma, a fog holding the secrets of terror and death in its tenuous wreathing billows.

Swallowing hard, Grimes ventured a timid knock at the door.

The sound echoed hollowly within the room. There came no voice or stir of movement to acknowledge it. With a growing certainty of evil, Grimes knocked again, this time more loudly, in a sort of panic. The detective, affected unconsciously by the strained atmosphere, glanced up, then dropping his paper on the floor, came quickly across the room.

Without a word he raised inquiring eyebrows at the butler, and, after reading Grimes' expression, began to knock. His knock was the decisive, imperative knock of the authority of the law, louder and more compelling than the respectful and deferential rapping of a servant.

But his efforts were productive of no better results than those of the butler.

"Something wrong here!" he announced briefly, and tried the door. It was locked securely from the inside.

The two men stared at each other for a few seconds. Not a sound came from inside, but something of im-

palpable disquiet seeped through the door and gripped the two men.

"Get hold of Balban!" said the detective huskily. "And look here! Have you got any kind of a pass key so's we won't have to break down this door?" The man leaned down and peered through the keyhole, free from any blocking key on the other side.

He stared long and intently, then straightened up, his face grim and worried.

"Get that key—make it as quick as you can!"

GRIMES, tray in hand, hurried back the way he had come, meeting Balban enroute.

"Something wrong!" Grimes said in a strained voice. Balban took one look at the butler's face and ran through the dining room, disappearing into the salon beyond, hurrying toward the library.

In another moment Grimes was back with the key, a fringe of frightened women trailing behind him. Balban seized the key and unlocked the door.

The two detectives passed through the door, followed by Grimes walking on tiptoe, the better to see over their shoulders.

In a second Grimes came staggering out, white and sick looking, mopping his face as he leaned against the door jamb.

Within the library the bust of Pallas Athene stared down with sightless eyes on the thick rugs, the softly shaded lights, the great desk with its silver and green jade ornaments, at



the rows of beautifully bound books and the small oriel windows piercing the ornate wainscoting, carved deeply in Mauresque fashion.

Balban was at the desk, calling Headquarters, reporting.

The other detective was kneeling on the rug beside something that had been a living man a short half hour before.

The body of E. Knowlton Lucas lay stretched on its face, arms outflung, face downward.

Under the left shoulder blade a stain of something dark and sinister had spread over the back of the soft-collared evening shirt.

"The Lootenant's sendin' up the Homicide Squad pronto!" announced Balban as he rose.

The two men, careful to leave everything as it was, stared intently about the room. The key to the door was on the desk where evidently Lucas had placed it after locking himself in. The eyes of the two men ranged restlessly over the room, seeking some place where the murderer might have entered.

The three oriel windows gave upon an inner courtyard. All three windows were open, it being a warm evening. But one glance at the windows was enough to show that no human being above the size of a very small child could possibly have squeezed through them. Balban glanced out of one of the windows. There was no fire-escape nor any means of scaling the wall. The apartment of E. Knowlton Lucas was on the fourteenth floor and the rumble of traffic on Park Avenue could be heard only distantly.

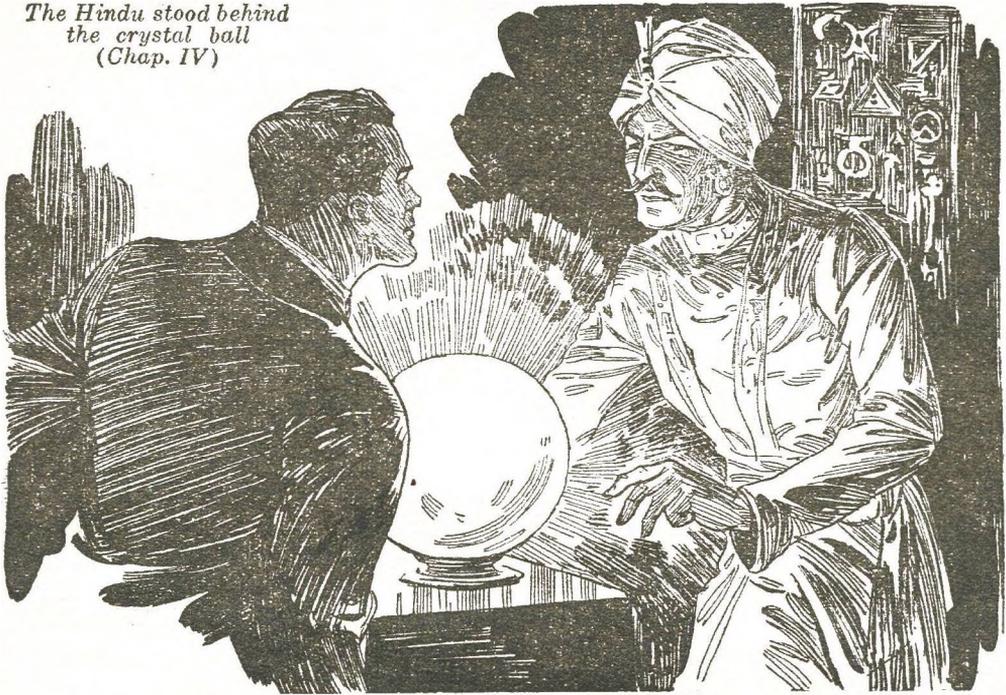
Balban shook his head.

"It beats me!" he confessed.

The wail of sirens coming muffled from far below heralded the arrival of the police cars. In a few seconds the bell rang briskly and Grimes, visibly aged and tottering, let in the group of hard, businesslike men, the Homicide Squad.

They went to work with scarcely

*The Hindu stood behind
the crystal ball
(Chap. IV)*



a word, the medical examiner finishing his examination in short order. The dagger which lay by the body was blood-stained nearly to its hilt.

"Cause of death—deep stab wound . . ." and the examiner gave the technical description required. The fingerprint experts, the photographers and the other specialists went busily about their duties, while in the drawing room two men questioned the servants, huddled in a frightened group. The newspaper men were on hand a few minutes after the arrival of the police—they were made to stay in the outer drawing room until the examination was finished.

Not until then were they permitted to enter and view the scene of the murder while the newspaper photographers filled the place with a steady succession of white flashes.

It was one of the newspaper men, a reporter from the *Clarion*, who picked up the dagger found beside the body of the murdered man. With the weapon in hand he went over to the officer in charge of the investigation. Inspector Thomas Gregg, Chief of the

Bureau of Detectives, had taken personal charge of the case. He was a rugged looking, square-jawed, hard hitting man who looked every inch a capable police officer. He was strangely respectful to the newspaper man.

"Notice anything funny about this dagger, Tom?" the reporter asked.

The response was a puzzled shake of the head.

The reporter pointed at the hilt and haft of the thing.

"It's one of the Seven Daggers of Kali!" he said. "Stolen from the Metropolitan Museum yesterday!" He pointed out the carved ivory hilt with its sinister delineation of the famed Hindu Goddess of Murder and the slender, stiletto-like blade, tapering to needle sharpness at the point.

"I haven't been working on that case," Gregg said. "Believe me"—his voice sank to a whisper—"I'm glad you're giving me a hand, Phantom!"

For only the Chief of the Bureau of Detectives knew that the mild-looking reporter was the famous Phantom!

CHAPTER III

SEVEN MEN—SEVEN DAGGERS



BUT Gregg did not know the *real* identity of the Phantom. He had not the slightest idea that he was speaking to Richard Curtis Van Loan, man about town, member of exclusive clubs, dilettante playboy

whose face and figure were objects of respectful consideration by the most austere headwaiters in Manhattan.

Those same headwaiters would have been startled had they known the other Richard Curtis Van Loan—the man of an infinitude of resource and skill, an adept in disguise, a man who appeared ghostlike out of the shadows, a grim and fateful Nemesis of criminals, remorseless in the swift certitude with which he tracked down the ruthless and unprincipled men, the Napoleons of crime, the twisted criminal master minds behind every great series of criminal events.

There was one man and one man only in the world who knew that Richard Curtis Van Loan and the Phantom were one and the same person.

That man was Frank Havens, millionaire publisher of the *Clarion* and a coast-to-coast chain of newspapers. The wealthy publisher was the one link between the identity of Van Loan and the Phantom, a tried and true link, loyal and cooperative.

It was Frank Havens who had called Van from a gay, after-theater supper party which was in progress at the Stork Club.

"Van!" had come the voice of Frank Havens over the wire, "I've just heard from E. Knowlton Lucas. He happens to be a college classmate of mine, and he is in great danger! I've a hunch that there is something big and sinister threatening him.

How about having a talk with him? You know his address—"

So it was that the young man in faultless evening kit, tall and broad-shouldered, left the Stork Club and in less than half an hour turned up at the apartment of E. Knowlton Lucas. But he did not get a chance to talk to the millionaire, for murder had preceded him!

No one could have recognized in the rather stoop-shouldered young man in the carelessly pressed tweed suit, any resemblance to Richard Curtis Van Loan. It was as a Mr. Drake, reporter of the *Clarion*, that he appeared. Even the lightning change that he had made turned him into another individual, another personality. It was only the inspector, Thomas Gregg, who knew that the young reporter was the Phantom, for Van Loan had told him so.

The Phantom had already studied windows, walls and doorway and examined that dagger, with its needle-sharp point.

"I suppose there were no fingerprints on the hilt?" he asked the fingerprint expert casually.

"Not a trace!"

The Phantom's eyes came to rest on a square of paper on the desk. He quickly noted that the paper was unusual, in that it was a very expensive grade of Japanese hand-made stock of exceeding fineness and softness. He picked it up carefully by the edge. The paper, so far as he could see with the unaided eye, was blank. He sniffed at it carefully, noting that it had a faint odor of sandalwood, then slid it casually into his inside pocket.

FOR a moment or two he stood in low-voiced conversation with Inspector Gregg.

"I can't figure out the connection between this dagger used on poor Lucas, and that murder and theft of those daggers from the Metropolitan Museum today," said the inspector, frowning.

"One lead might be to find out where the Seven Daggers of Kali came from," suggested the Phantom quietly. Inspector Gregg raised his head quickly.

"I'll bet you know!" he said.

"Yes," the quiet-looking reporter answered. "They were presented to the Metropolitan Museum by Perrin Calder—he was in charge of the Bombay office of the Norris-Scantley Chemical Company, before he was made a vice president."

"Hells bells!" the inspector broke in. "Poor Mr. Lucas here is also a vice president of Norris-Scantley—maybe that's the motive we're looking for—some Hindu gang is sore at the theft of their sacred relics!"

The inspector's delight at this easy solution of the motive began to lessen as he stared thoughtfully at the dagger. Then he shook his head.

"If that was the case, though," he said, "why would they leave the dagger behind? They'd want to keep the daggers once they got hold of them again—they wouldn't leave them behind—"

"Don't forget," interrupted the Phantom, "that the daggers would be defiled past redemption—first by being handled by unbelievers and secondly through having crossed the Dark Waters, as the Hindus call the ocean—revenge for that defilement might be the motive."

He studied the dagger thoughtfully.

"Have you had a report made on the telephone calls received by Mr. Lucas today?" he asked.

"Not yet but soon!" returned the willing inspector, and gave a quick order to one of his subordinates, who immediately got busy on the telephone, noting down numbers and names on a sheet of paper.

The list was handed to the inspector.

"Not much here of any use," he said, glancing over it. "A couple of calls from his lawyer, a call from some lady, a Miss Hastings—Patricia

Hastings—and a call from some funny sounding person, a Hindu—Yogi Bandranath Das—lives at 143A Forty-seventh Street—that address might bear looking into!"

One of the press photographers was standing nearby, seeking new subjects for his lenses. The inspector had raised his voice. The press photographer overheard the last words.

Without a change of expression, the fellow adjusted his camera and with a white flash, snapped a picture of the two men, the inspector and the Phantom, talking low-voiced together. Neither of them noted the act. The photographer assembled his kit and departed.

In a few minutes more the Phantom took his own departure.

HE NOTED that a blue sedan was parked near his own roadster, but there seemed nothing suspicious about that circumstance. Leaning against the sedan, talking to someone inside, was a press photographer. Van would have changed his mind had he been able to hear what the photographer was saying.

"I tell you, Goldie, I'll have the picture developed in half an hour. I don't know who the guy is but the cops were certainly standin' around for him—he's some kind of a big shot. He'll be down in a few minutes and I'll point him out to you—yep, he's headin' up to see Bandranath Das—you better get word to the Tiger—here's the guy now!"

The man called Goldie edged, ferretlike, out of the car and leaned against the door as the Phantom passed by. Van's eyes idly passed over him, receiving an impression of a flat-faced, gold-toothed individual with peculiarly sardonic eyes—eyes reminding him of stagnant water.

Only the echo of that single word—"the Tiger"—chanced to come to Van's ears. Accustomed to notice all things, however unimportant seeming, the word embedded itself in his

mind as he climbed into his small, black, powerful roadster. The covert glance of the gold-toothed man and the evident interest of the photographer in him as he passed also registered. Nevertheless, satisfied that no one, with the exception of Gregg, knew his Phantom identity, he merely noted these things without interpreting them as possible forerunners of danger to him. He sped down Park Avenue.

His mind was on that strange murder. Queer thing—those Daggers of Kali! The inspector's idea of a motive was a little far fetched. If a secret Kali sect were murdering to recover the knives, why would they leave one of the daggers at the scene of the murder?

Granted that the daggers were defiled by being taken by unbelievers and brought across the Dark Waters—even then the motive was not clear. There was something bigger and more sinister than that, he was certain.

He turned off in the Forties and found a telephone booth.

Scanning through the telephone book he put in a call for a certain William Ennisley, listed as the curator of arms and armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Mr. Ennisley was none too pleased at being called at that late hour, but the Phantom apologized, stating the necessity for it.

"What we on the *Clarion* are especially interested in," said Van Loan, who had introduced himself as a reporter, "is whether there have been any especial incidents connected with those daggers since their acquirement by the museum. Has anyone tried to beg, borrow, or steal them before?"

"No one has tried to steal them," came the reply, "but we've had a very strong effort made to purchase them from us."

"By one or several people?" asked the Phantom quickly.

"By one person—a Hindu chap—I've forgotten his name—wait a minute, I have it in my notes—here it is—Yogi Bandranath Das—"

Van placed the telephone back in its cradle.

THE Yogi Bandranath Das! That was the second time he had heard that name tonight. Das was one of the people who had phoned the murdered man, Lucas—that trail was leading somewhere. It was clear to the Phantom that his next step would have to be to look up this strange Hindu yogi at 143A Forty-seventh Street.

But there was one thing he must do first—there was that square of fine, hand-made rice paper smelling faintly of sandalwood. He must see what that was all about, and the place to find out was his own laboratory.

He sped uptown and over to the east side of the Bronx where he parked his car in a secret garage. In a few seconds he was at the door of a small building standing by itself. From his pocket he took a queerly shaped key and thrust it into a special multiple lock.

The interior of the place would have delighted an expert criminologist. It was equipped as a scientific crime-detection laboratory containing a multitude of apparatus, including lightning-fast reflex cameras with telephoto cameras and wide-angled lenses and ultra-violet cameras used to detect forgeries. There were all sorts and conditions of microscopes, including the famous Greenough Super-Microscope for the detection of clues.

It was the secret workshop of the world famous Phantom, a workshop in which he had invested thousands of dollars in the finest equipment to be had. No one knew of its existence with the exception of Frank Havens, the publisher, and the neighborhood knew it only as the laboratory of a stoop-shouldered old fellow with a

scraggly grayish beard, and a pair of thick-lensed glasses, who went under the name of Dr. Paul Bendix.

The Phantom went quickly to work. From his notebook he took the rice paper he had taken from Lucas' desk. He examined the paper inch by inch. From the microscope bench he turned to the well equipped shelves and treated the paper with a certain chemical. The first effort was a failure. He sniffed the paper again and this time tried a second combination. On this try, faint lines began to appear on the smooth white paper until finally some three lines of writing and a small drawing stood clearly revealed to his eyes.

"This is the last warning," read the message. "Before the dawn of another day the servants of Kali will wreak the vengeance of Kali. . . ."

The message contained no signature save a small drawing of the head of Kali, the Destroyer, a replica of the head carved in ivory on the stiletto-like dagger of Kali.

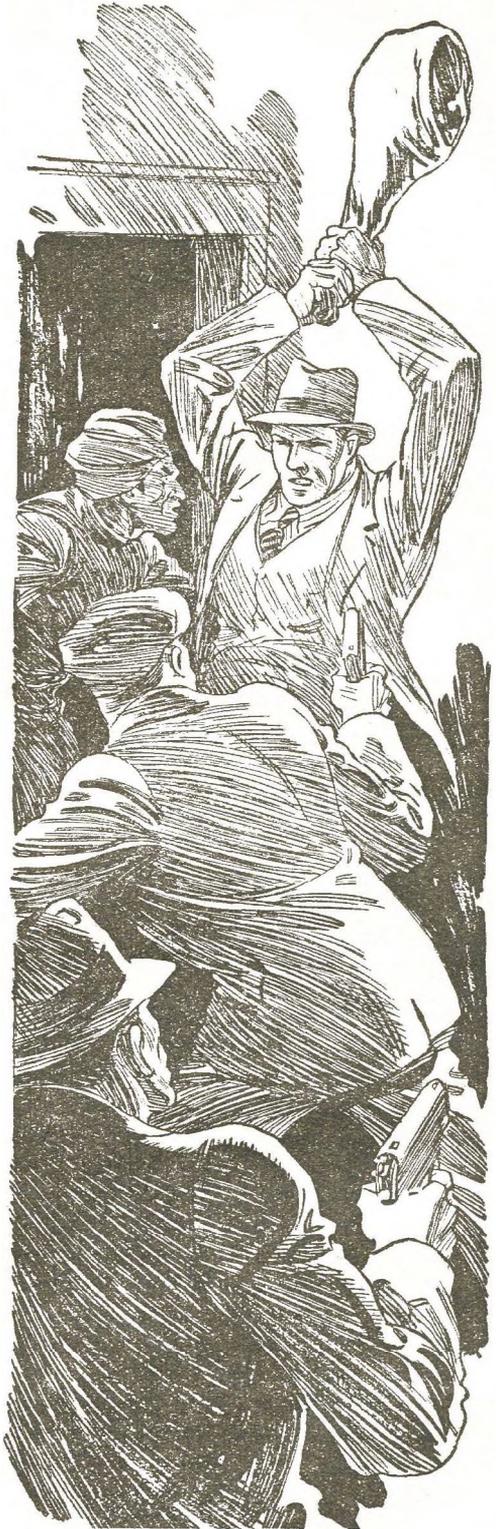
Van considered this gravely for a time, then rose and went to his well filled bookcases. Here he took down a directory of New York Corporations and a copy of *Who's Who in America*.

THE various members of the Norris-Scentley group were easily found.

"E. Knowlton Lucas, vice president—graduated Groton—Harvard—member Union League, Tennis and Racquet—New York Yacht Clubs—vice president Norris-Scentley—member board of directors—etc."

The murdered man's business associates in the company came next.

Mitchell Hamberly, president, was listed as a graduate chemist with several degrees from foreign universities. Van knew of him as a wealthy public spirited man widely esteemed for his philanthropies and his civic spirit in the Long Island community where he lived.



Van struck savagely with the frozen lamb (Chapter VI)

Colton Fairlee was listed as a vice-president of the powerful chemical combine which Norris-Scentley had come to be since the depression. Van knew him as a reserved and silent banker who had mixed little with the world outside of business hours and whose main hobby was gardening, in which he specialized on dahlias and had considerable success at winning in garden shows.

Harrington Dowd was listed as vice-president in charge of sales.

Next came the name of Perrin Calder, also a vice-president, a club member. Van remembered him as the man who had brought the Kali daggers to America. He noted that he had been thrice divorced and on the verge of a fourth marriage.

Hilden Barret followed next, whom Van knew as a former minister to Siam, in addition to being a corporation lawyer of some ability and attainments.

The last man was Dorkley Evans, a man of about Van's own age, and like Van a wealthy man's son. Evans was Harvard and Harvard Club, in addition to having a six goal rating at polo, his home being Westbury, where he played at Meadowbrook and had made a record of some brilliant playing.

"Seven of them," said Van, "and there are seven daggers of Kali!"

CHAPTER IV

THE HINDU YOGI



SHORTLY after memorizing the data on the Norris-Scentley board of directors, Van reappeared on a street near his laboratory and hailed a cab, giving the driver the address, 143A Forty-seventh Street.

The house was a rather florid specimen of those dignified brownstone

front residences that housed the more solid New York citizens of the gay Nineties.

The windows were draped with heavy silk hangings but light shone from the entrance hallway.

Van mounted the steps and rang the bell. He was inconspicuously dressed in gray tweeds and a soft hat, the same costume and makeup in which he had appeared at the Park Avenue apartment of the murdered Lucas.

The bell tinkled far in rear. There came the shuffle of slippers. A silken curtain screening the glass part of the door was drawn aside an inch and a pair of inscrutable dark eyes stared at the stranger on the threshold.

After a moment's scrutiny the door opened. A wizened Hindu in white robe and slippers stared unemotionally at Van.

"Tell your master," said Van, speaking in Hindustanee, "that I am from the newspaper *Clarion* and that I would like to see him concerning a report that has come to our ears concerning him."

At the sound of his own language, the demeanor of the Hindu changed. He bowed low and ushered the white man into the hallway, closing the door softly behind him.

The servant led him into what was evidently his master's office and library and bade him be seated.

Van was on his feet the second the man disappeared. The library was solidly built up on three sides with shelves. A good half of these were filled with books but the remainder were stacked with examples of East Indian art. There were jewel boxes in alabaster, in silver and in sandalwood, there were trays and boxes in Benares brass work and inlaid silver and turquoise from Khotan, there were statuettes of all the gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon, in brass and silver, in lapis lazuli and jade, in soapstone and some grayish

white material which upon inspection turned out to be rock salt.

It was not the array of an ordinary collector of Hindu art, Van quickly decided, for there were in each case several examples of each item, as many as six each of the rock salt statuettes of Siva, for example, and Van reasoned that the yogi was probably in the business of selling these things to collectors.

Van's eyes, in ranging over the well filled shelves, came to rest on a sandalwood box, of a type he had seen aforetime in the Orient. It was the type of box used to hold fine grades of writing paper.

His curiosity aroused, he lifted the carved sandalwood cover and stared at the contents.

The box was filled with rice paper of a fine quality, hand-made paper such as is only made in the East.

It was exactly similar in size and general appearance to the rice paper which he had found on the desk of the murdered Lucas that same evening.

Van lifted out a sheet, folded it and placed it quickly in his pocket.

Well, that was certainly drawing a couple of threads together pretty fast, he reflected.

But Van put a check rein on self-congratulation—there was such a thing as progressing upon a case *too* fast.

He moved quietly over to the doorway, waiting for the soft-spoken servant's return.

IN THE street below, Van's taxi driver glanced at the meter, lighted a cigarette and tuned on his radio, seeking for a program to while away the time.

The blare of saxophones and strings filled his cab for a second until he noted that some one was leaning in the window from the sidewalk.

He tuned down the radio and stared at the interruption. The face in the cab window was peculiarly flat,

except for the teeth which were protruding and liberally plated with gold. The eyes were like small pools of stagnant water which only partially veiled their glare of cold ferocity.

"Look here, buddy," said the man, "here's five bucks for your fare. I got some business to talk over with my pal that just went into that house—so scram—see!"

The taxi driver turned around and saw that there was another cab just behind him. He shrugged his shoulders. From the looks of this customer there would not be much good in arguing. Besides, five dollars was five dollars.

"All right, guy!" he agreed, and took the folded bill, turned off his meter and pulled away, disappearing up the street.

The following cab drew up in his place. The gold-toothed man, after a whispered word to the driver of the new cab, slid into the rear seat and huddled in the far corner in the darkness of the interior, a snub-nosed automatic pistol across his knees.

Meanwhile, Van stood studying the hallway from the open library door, while the Hindu who had admitted him shuffled away and disappeared into a doorway that opened off to the right.

There came to Van's ears a faint shuffling of slippers from the upper regions. From the rear of the house came a subdued rustling and whispering. On his right there were heavy silken portieres screening the drawing room from the hall. These began to billow out, soundlessly. The white robes of the Hindu servant appeared between them.

"Come, *Sahib*," he whispered, and bowed low as Van strode into the drawing room.

This room was even more dimly lighted than the hall. So far as Van could determine, the place was draped in black velvet. Its most distinguishing feature was a large crystal ball set upon a stand that seemed to be a

solid piece of ebony. Back of it was a screen in which there were conventional drawings of the signs of the Zodiac, interlaced with pentagrams and cabalistic designs with texts in Sanskrit bordering the edges.

"You wished to speak to me?" a clear voice, speaking English with the intonation of Oxford broke on Van's ears and suddenly there was a tall, imposing figure standing beside the teakwood stand with its crystal ball. How the man had appeared there so silently and so suddenly, Van could not tell, but he did not betray by the faintest twitch of a muscle that the sudden apparition had startled him.

"You are the Yogi Bandranath Das?" asked Van, level-voiced.

THE Hindu, whose dark and burning eyes were the most compelling feature in a finely carved, rather ascetic face, light bronze in tone, inclined his head.

"You have heard of the murder of Mr. E. Knowlton Lucas this evening?" Van went on. The Hindu jerked his head up, staring at his questioner a second, his nostrils distended as though startled. Then he recovered his calm.

"I had not!" he stated, his voice betraying no tremor. "And why, if I may ask, do you come to me?"

"I come to you seeking knowledge of the Seven Daggers of Kali. Two men have met their deaths because of those daggers. It is said that you offered to buy them from the Metropolitan Museum. My newspaper would like any information that would shed light on the murders."

"I can shed no light on the murder of Mr. Lucas already committed," said the yogi composedly, "nor upon those to follow. The daggers are evil and will continue to wreak evil until they are returned to their rightful owners. I sought to avert the evil by buying them. Since then they have been stolen."

The tall yogi stared at the crystal ball beside him for a time, then raised his head.

"The future evil to be wreaked by the Daggers is clothed in darkness," he continued. "They are in the hands of the forces of evil—forces so powerful as to endanger any mere individual who tries to obstruct them—"

There came an interruption then. The soft-footed Hindu servant appeared in the doorway and spoke in a low voice to the yogi. Excusing himself for a moment, the yogi faded out toward the hallway. Van very quietly followed and stood in a deeper shadow amidst the shadows of the doorway. The yogi was talking on the telephone.

"Yes, yes, I understand," the man's cultured Oxford voice was agitated. "You say it happened at the Bombay Restaurant? Yes, yes, I know the place, it is on Twenty-seventh Street between Second and Third Avenues." The voice dropped to a lower tone and the conversation ended.

Van was back once more when the yogi returned.

"You were speaking of these forces of evil," said Van, "too powerful for any mere individual to cope with."

The Hindu flung out his hands. It was the first spontaneous gesture that Van had seen him make.

"The wise wolf hound will battle with wolves—and leave the tiger alone!" he said impatiently.

Van suddenly recalled that word—heard by chance as he left Lucas' apartment house.

"It is then a question of battling against the Tiger?" Van's voice was deceptively casual. "It seems to me that I have heard the Tiger mentioned before. You have no information on this Tiger?"

The Hindu yogi looked up startled. For a second his face grew hard and suspicious. Then he swiftly recovered his poise.

"I am sorry," he said frigidly, "but I know nothing of the tiger you mention. I simply quoted a proverb."

Van Loan sensed that the Hindu yogi was anxious to be rid of him, but he persevered nevertheless.

"Mr. Das," he said gravely, "you seem to be rather closely mixed up with the actors in this case. You are on record as having tried to buy the Daggers of Kali. You called up the murdered man by telephone a few hours before his death. I wish you would be frank with me, Mr. Das. I assure you that it is not newspaper curiosity alone that impels me to seek information from you. Why, for example, did you call up Mr. Lucas today?"

The Hindu looked at him searchingly for a moment before replying. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"It is very simply explained," he said. "I wished to get in touch with a friend of mine who has been missing for several hours. I heard that he was to call on Mr. Lucas during the day. I simply left a message to have my friend call me on his arrival."

"Would you mind telling me the name of that friend," asked Van.

"I would prefer not to have him dragged into the discussion," said the Hindu grimly.

"Did your friend arrive at Mr. Lucas' apartment and did he call you?" pressed Van, unperturbed.

"Whether he arrived or not I have

no means of knowing," responded the Hindu, "but I rather imagine not, as he failed to call me."

"Would you happen to know Miss Patricia Hastings, who also called Mr. Lucas today?" Van shot the question suddenly.

THE question elicited a sudden flicker in the eyes of the Hindu; then his face resumed its immobility.

"I do not know her," said the Hindu, smoothly, too smoothly. Van gave him a sudden, sharp look.

"Was your friend to meet you at the Bombay Restaurant?" he asked the question quickly, watching the effect. Again the Hindu's eyes flickered.

"What do you know about the Bombay Restaurant?" he asked.

"I am asking you!" returned Van. The yogi was plainly perturbed.

"I know nothing about it. I am sorry, but I have to ask you to excuse me!"

The servant slid unobtrusively through the curtains which screened the room in the rear. It was plain to Van that the Yogi Bandranath Das wished to terminate the interview. The servant beckoned to the visitor, and led him toward the hallway. The yogi faded back into the shadows behind the crystal ball. [Turn Page]

**BIG BOY
TAKES A
TIP**



BOB: Say, fellow, are you taking Ex-Lax? Thought that was for women and kids.

JIM: Wrong, Big Boy! I've been taking Ex-Lax for years. It fixes me up fine!



BOB: Oh yeah! Well, I'm pretty husky... I need a laxative with a wallop.

JIM: Don't kid yourself! Ex-Lax tastes good, but it's plenty effective!



LATER

BOB: Thanks for the tip, pal! I tried Ex-Lax and it's great stuff!

JIM: What did I tell you! It's the only laxative we ever use in our family.

The action of Ex-Lax is thorough, yet gentle! No shock. No strain. No weakening after-effects. Just an easy, comfortable bowel movement that brings blessed relief. Try Ex-Lax next time you need a laxative. It's good for every member of the family.

10¢ and 25¢



In the second that the servant had drawn back the curtains of the room in the rear Van had a sudden, fleeting glance of a statue in the rear room.

It was a lifesize statue of Kali, the Destroyer!

The outer door was opened. Van went down the steps. The door was closed softly behind him.

CHAPTER V

TRAPPED!



VAN'S taxicab awaited him by the curb, nor did he in that none too brightly lighted street note anything amiss with it.

His mind carried the picture of that tall Hindu and he was analyzing the man's cryptic statements. The statue of Kali, cruel and forbidding, seen only for a second, remained a clear picture in his memory.

The taxi driver did not turn around as Van glanced at him before opening the door and entering the darkened interior.

It was then that Van felt the pressure of a cold steel muzzle against his side.

"Reach for the ceiling, old pal, old kid!" rasped a half-amused voice containing nevertheless a snarl of unmistakable menace. "That's a good guy. Act sensible and no harm will come to mama's boy!"

Even as the strange voice talked, the pressure of the pistol muzzle was increased until Van's hands were raised above his head. A quick patting hand located his shoulder holster and slipped out the automatic pistol which it held. Meanwhile the driver, without a word, put his machine into gear and the cab moved rapidly down the street toward Sixth Avenue. The curtains were drawn on the doors and the rear window. The curtain be-

hind the driver was jerked down. The interior of the cab was in complete darkness. Subconsciously Van noted that the cab turned south on Sixth Avenue.

"If it's all the same to you," he said, "I'd like to know why this sudden interest in me and what it's all about anyway!" His voice was calmly casual.

"What you'd like to know, and what you're likely to find out, are two different things," said the voice with the strange hint of amusement mixed with menace. "All the same, if mama's boy doesn't want to get hurt, he'd better not ask too many dumb questions!"

Van started to lower his arms, which were getting tired by this time, only to be met with a snarl and a menacing jolt of the pistol. The cab gathered speed.

Van followed its progress fairly accurately by the traffic lights, which brought them to a halt at regular intervals.

As nearly as he could estimate, they were going steadily southward until somewhere in the region of City Hall they turned off to the west.

Van sensed rather than felt they were coming into a region of warehouses.

The cab came to a stop at last.

His captor reached forward and jerked Van's hat down roughly over his eyes.

"Come on," he ordered. "This is where we pay a visit to some friends of mine that's anxious to give you the once-over!"

Stepping out of the cab, his hands still raised, Van saw that they were halted before a dark and narrow alleyway stretching between two tall somber warehouses with loading platforms in front and a windowless expanse of wall stretching high above.

FOLLOWING close behind him and using the pistol both as threat and guiding rod, Van's captor directed

him to a small door. The fellow whistled a double note and the door silently opened before them. Nor could Van see anyone who had opened it.

As they entered, the door closed quietly behind them with an effect of solidity and permanence that Van found disquieting.

THE beam of a flashlight in the hands of his captor lighted the dark passageway until they came to a door at its farther end.

This way opened in the same mysterious fashion and Van blinked, blinded by a light that shone directly into his eyes. Half turning as though to avoid its glare he caught a momentary glimpse, for the first time, of his captor.

It was a single instantaneous impression that Van received of a ferretlike individual with a peculiarly flat face, strange, muddy looking eyes and a profusion of gold teeth. The man swore and jerked him about facing the light again, and slammed the door shut behind him.

He already realized that he was standing in the full flood of several strong lights set in reflectors which concentrated their glare upon him and shut off view of the space beyond as though by an impenetrable black curtain.

Beyond this curtain shadow, he sensed a larger room and then noticed that he stood upon a sort of platform and felt for the first time the unseen scrutiny of many eyes focused upon him.

It came over him suddenly that the crooks, whoever they might be, had borrowed a page from police technique and had evolved their own "line-up"!

Aside from the slight shifting and a muttered word or two, no sound came from that dark space before him, but that steady unrelenting stare of many hard and hostile eyes had a disturbing effect even upon the Phantom, who had been hardened to

many nerve-racking and dangerous experiences.

A voice rasped out of the darkness like a suddenly hurled spear, its impact the more shattering in contrast with the absolute silence which had preceded it.

"Who are you, fellow, and what is your business with Bandranath Das?" the voice demanded.

Even with the impact of that suddenly hurled question, Van did not show the slightest tremor, nor betray by any outward sign how busily his brain was trying to figure out the import of it.

"Before answering that," he said calmly, "I'd like to know why an in-offensive citizen is shanghaied in this fashion!"

For reply a menacing growl came from the darkness, rising to a crescendo which exploded in the rasping voice which had first addressed him.

"Smart guy," it said. "If you don't want that frame of yours picked up by some scavenger on the city dump tomorrow morning, you'd better answer and answer fast!"

"I still don't know what all the shouting is about," said Van, "but I happen to be a newspaper reporter working for the *Clarion*. My boss sent me to question Bandranath Das about his next seance. My name is Drake, and my reporter's card is in my pocket."

WHEN Van finished speaking a low-voiced discussion arose in the mysterious darkness of the room before him.

"It looks like the guy is telling the truth!" said one voice above the clamor. "It sounds reasonable at that!" said another voice. "The guy looks phony to me," argued a third. Then suddenly all the voices stilled themselves. In the silence Van heard the opening of a door in the darkness of the room before him. Another voice rose. There was something intense and dynamic about that voice,

so vibrant that it seemed fairly to make the room quiver to its resonant notes.

"Fools!" it said. "Do you expect the man we're looking for to reveal himself? Do you expect him to get up before you and announce that he is the Phantom? Throw him into the freezing room. A few minutes of that and maybe he'll tell the truth! Move, I tell you. Don't stand like a pack of bleating sheep!"

It was as though a whip had writhed and whistled over the assemblage.

There was an immediate clattering of chairs. The light beating down so remorselessly upon Van was suddenly extinguished, leaving him in a sea of velvet blackness.

BEFORE his eyes had recovered from the sudden change from the white glare to the Stygian blackness in which he was now immersed, powerful hands seized him. His arms were jerked forward and his wrists tied. He deliberately put up no resistance—it would have been futile at this point, and his energy would only be wasted.

Without a word being said, he was jerked from his feet and half dragged, half carried, three or four steps down from the platform. He was in the grasp of some powerful brute, whose muscles were gorillalike, and who carried him in the darkness to where a suddenly opened door exhaled a dank, chill Arctic temperature.

He was flung forward into a gripping cold that struck at him like an edged sword.

The door closed softly behind him and he was alone in darkness and cold that was like the blackness and chill of outer space itself.

The very intensity of that chill warned him that he must move, and move quickly before the all-pervading cold benumbed his nerves and muscle and brain, and laid the icy hand of death itself upon his heart.

CHAPTER VI

FROZEN LAMB



HE ROSE quickly to his feet only to crack his head against some odd object which swayed in the darkness about him. The floor was covered with sawdust and he fell back into this. His bound

wrists were beginning to ache. This was a matter that the Phantom had taken precautions against. With a single quick motion he drew the cords across that tiny projecting flange of sharpened steel set inconspicuously on the inner side of the heel of his shoe, and his hands were free.

He rose more cautiously this time, trembling already with the cold that was seeping into his system. Flinging his arms and twisting and shaking to keep his body-warmth at normal, his swift darting hands reached out in an effort to find out what manner of place this was.

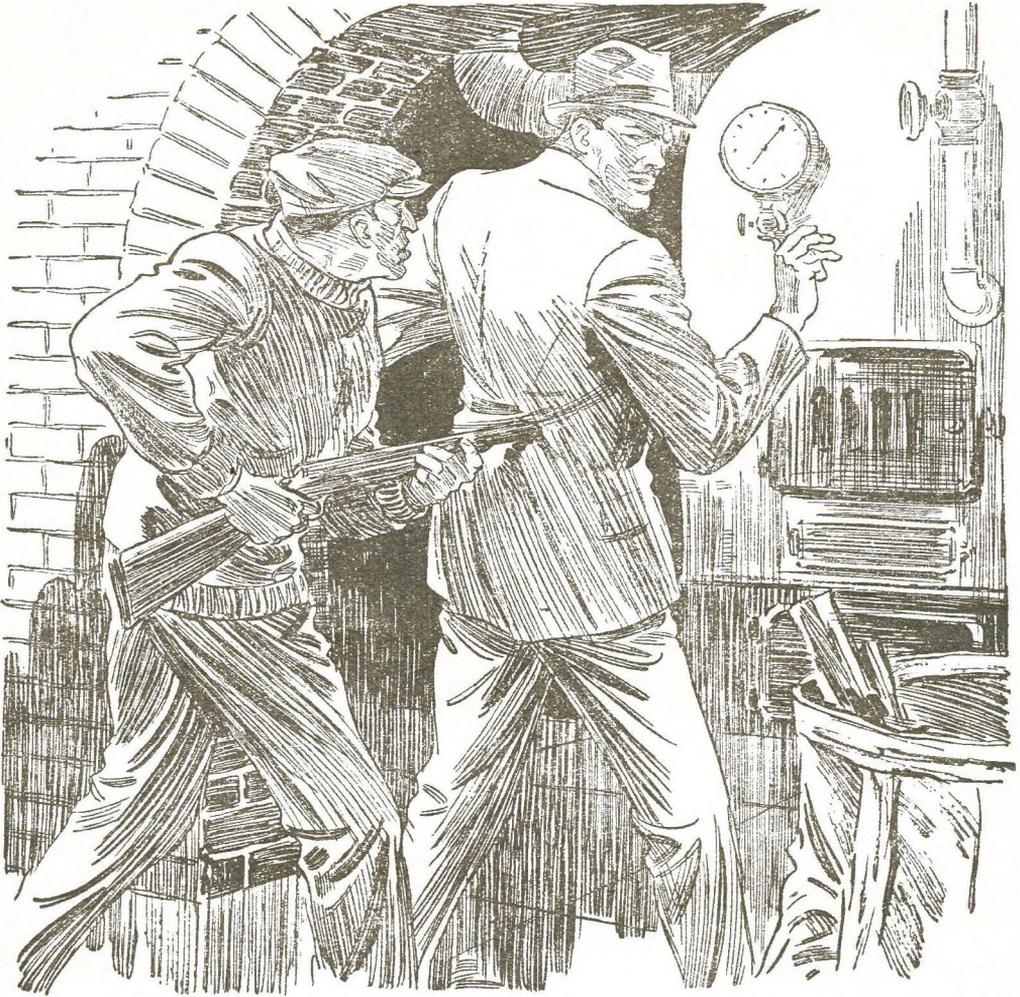
It was as he had suspected. A refrigerator warehouse, with long lines of beef, pork, and sheep carcasses stretched about him.

It came to him that his captors would not leave him long alone, only so long as they figured that the malignant chill of this place would have time to effect a loosening of his tongue.

Gasping with that chill and moving as violently as the treacherous darkness permitted in order to retain his bodily warmth, he tried desperately to find some measure that would permit his escape.

Weapon, he had none. But his hands found a swinging, ice hard carcass which he judged to be that of a lamb. The thing was frozen solid.

Van turned suddenly from this object as a strange sound fell upon his ears.



Van stiffened against the gun muzzle (Chap. XVI)

From somewhere in the darkness about him there arose a strange whimpering sort of a cry, a monotone of weird chanting words, that rose and fell in a queer tuneless melody, barbaric and strange.

The queer effect of that chant stilled Van's shivering for a moment. There was something vaguely familiar about the chant. He moved toward the sound. The strange chant continued, Van began to pick out words.

The queer voice was chanting in Hindustanee!

In another second Van recognized the chant.

It was the invocation to Kali—the

cry of a Kali devotee in distress, calling upon his goddess and the followers of his goddess to aid him and avert the doom that was threatening him! Van had last heard that song in a dim bazaar alley in Benares, the words had buried themselves in his memory, half forgotten until suddenly revived in this strange dark place!

He was now nearly arrived at the source of the strange chant. He leaned down in the darkness and his hands came in contact with a human form.

With quick searching hands Van found that the man was bound hand and foot, shivering with the stark

cold and nearly at the last gasp. There in the darkness he cut the cords that bound the unknown and helped him to his feet, shaking and patting the shivering figure to restore circulation. There came a muttered word of thanks from the unknown fellow prisoner. There was no time to discover his identity. That chilling cold was settling too remorselessly into Van's own frame. He moved back to where he had discovered that heavy frozen object in the darkness and felt for it again.

JERKING the object from its hook, he swung it about his head, finding that its frozen bulk made it no mean weapon in lieu of something better.

So malignant was the chill descending upon him that he found his brain racing crazily and half-formed phrases escaped his lips.

"Samson slew the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass!" he said aloud. "But I'll bet he never thought of using a frozen lamb. The lion and the lamb—Daniel fighting in the lions' den with a leg of lamb!"

Muttering to himself, he stumbled as nearly as he could estimate in the direction of the door.

"If that door would only open!"

Another few minutes and he would be too chilled even to wield the frozen weapon he carried. To maintain his already sluggish circulation, he swung the thing about his head.

Suddenly he crouched, that heavy frozen object poised. The door was opening!

As it swung completely open, the beam of a flashlight leaped like a pointing arrow, darting over the floor.

Before that shaft of light had a chance to blaze upon him, he struck savagely at the dim figure behind it.

The flashlight clattered to the floor where its beam still shone in a pool of light.

There came a startled grunt from

the darkness beyond the door. In a second Van was out of that frightful chill into the comparative warmth of the outer room. The frozen carcass of the lamb swung by its stiffened hind legs thudded like a battering ram into forms half seen in the room. A dim figure brushed by him from within the freezing room—it was the man whom he had rescued, he was certain. But there was no time to speculate on this.

Shouts rang out, and curses. A pistol crashed near at hand. A bullet smacked sharply against the solid, frozen weapon Van wielded.

Swinging the heavy object in great circles about his head, he leaped into the thickest of the mob before him, and felt the warmth of savage exultation flush through him as his strange weapon collected its toll.

Screams of pain and groans followed his progress.

If only they would not turn on the light!

He was working his way toward that platform upon which he had stood at his entry.

Striking down at a lurking form that came up on his right, he recovered swiftly and crashed his heavy weapon down on an attacker on his left. In its return swing he shifted the bulky mass of frozen meat and bone and knocked down two who tried to block his way in front.

In another second he nearly fell over the lowest of the three steps to the platform.

Swarming up this, he kicked out viciously with his left foot, smashing it full into the face of a man who tried to tackle him, and felt a shattering impact as his heel drove home against cartilage and bone.

A BULLET smacked viciously into the wall above his head. Another thudded into the carcass he bore. His worry was now whether or not that door would open. If not, his fight would have been useless.

He was now on the platform and, holding his weapon as a sort of shield, he tried the door. His heart sank as it failed to respond to his hand upon the latch.

Turning at bay, his brain working swiftly to find some way out of this *impasse*, he heard the strange dynamic tones of that dominating voice which had ordered his imprisonment in the freezing chamber.

"Fools! Idiots!" stormed the voice. "A dozen of you can't down one man! Get him, dead or alive! None of us is safe! It must be the man we seek! None but the Phantom could fight as this man is fighting!"

"The Tiger says to kill him!" shouted a deep-toned voice. "Get out of the way and lemme blast him full of holes—room for my tommy gun!"

There was a concerted rush to get out of the line of fire. Van knew well what that portended. At any second now the devastating blast from a sub-caliber machine gun would riddle brain and nerve and muscle.

With a last stupendous heave he threw himself, in desperation, at that door.

A sudden wild joy surged through him as this time the door gave way.

He leaped through it, plunging into the blackness of the passage and slamming the door shut behind him a split second before the vicious rattle of a hail of steel rendered and crashed against the heavy wood.

He stood there a second. That frozen carcass was firm in his grip and his ears were alert for any new danger.

Something moved in the darkness. His trained instinct warned him, and he side-stepped the very second that an object hurtled past his face, so near that the breath of its passage fanned his cheek. The object thudded into the wooden wall with a vicious steely twang.

Van sensed a lurking shadow in the passageway before him. The ma-

chine gun had ceased its deadly clatter. In another second there would be a rush of men crashing through the door behind him.

He leaped forward, whirling that great frozen object until he felt it thud into flesh and bone.

A sudden roar of sound fell upon his ears as the door behind him flung open and men fought to get through it.

Knowing well that he would have but short shrift if they caught him in that narrow passage, Van raced to the entrance door.

As he neared it, a gun barked out of the darkness and a bullet thudded into the wall. An answering shot came from the place he had just left.

In three swift strides he was at the outer door.

SOMEONE barred his way. There was another barking crash and the smell of burning powder, but Van flung himself, holding the frozen carcass before him as a shield, at the shadow beside the door. The man went down before the impact of that weight, a weight which struck him like a battering ram.

The foremost of his pursuers was racing down the hallway as Van turned, and, putting every ounce of muscle and balance into the act, he flung the heavy frozen carcass at the leading man and saw the thing strike him and drive him back against his fellows.

Without waiting Van flung open the door and leaped out, crashing it shut behind him.

Like a hare pursued by the hounds, he sped down the narrow alley to the dark street, made a turn into the street and dived under the loading platform which faced it.

Back in the alley he heard excited voices and the rush of many men. Wondering what had become of the strange man whom he had rescued from the freezing room, he waited, tense and silent.

CHAPTER VII

A STARTLING DISCOVERY



CROUCHED under that dark platform, Van made some swift changes in his appearances, notably by removing his coat and deftly changing the salient outlines of his face. To aid him in this

he called upon the little flat leather case inside his waist-coat pocket.

The hue and cry was now coming down the alleyway. Men rushed by him. From his concealment Van saw the press thin out until at last there was but a single individual. This man, in full stride, was suddenly flung on his face by Van's outstretched leg. Before the fellow had time to recover, Van had leaped upon him, sought and found a pistol and swung it heavily against the side of the man's head.

So swiftly and so silently did he work that there was no outcry and in another few seconds Van had jerked off the dark turtle-neck sweater the fellow wore, had pulled it over his own head and shoulders and had replaced his own soft hat with the unconscious man's greasy cap. In a few more seconds the unconscious gangster was rolled unceremoniously back under the loading platform and Van hurried on after the pursuing gang.

A clump of them had come to a bewildered halt a few yards down the intersecting street. In the shadows none paid any heed to the new arrival. Van found them milling about, arguing about the probable course their escaped prisoner had taken.

"I hate to think of the tongue lashin' the Tiger is goin' to give us when we get back!" said one voice.

"And that ain't the worst of it!" said another. "The Tiger'll get leery of this place and chase us all down to the Long Island hideout—"

"You mean the new place—with them funny lions on the gate?" asked another.

"Yeah, the new place—it ain't a bad joint except it's a long way from the bright lights—"

"Bo, you said plenty!" agreed another, and a noticeable gloom descended upon the group of ten or twelve men as they turned about and dispiritedly made their way back through the alley. At the door to the warehouse they found their watchman seated, rubbing his head and nearly incoherent from the jolt administered to him by Van. Farther along the hallway was another badly upset victim nursing a dislocated jaw. Inconspicuous in the darkness and the crowd, Van allowed himself to drift along with the dispirited men.

One thing, and one thing only was in his mind.

He was returning into the lions' den intent upon finding out, if humanly possible, the identity of this strangely dynamic personality whom these men feared and dreaded, and whom they called "the Tiger."

Again Van found himself on that platform but this time there was no blinding light shining upon him. On the far side of the room, a single flashlight darted its beam at the incoming group of men, flickered over them rapidly and then went out.

THE vibrant, forceful voice, that voice which Van was risking so much to identify, cracked like a whip through the darkness.

"If ever a man was served by a group of brainless, clumsy jellyfish, I am that man!" rang the voice. "You let one man make fools of you—you let him tumble you around like ninepins—you let him escape!" The voice rose to a roar. Van felt the men about him cower in dread.

"—and that man is the Phantom!" continued the voice. "You had him in your grip and you let him go! That means, you fools, that we have to

clear out of this building and block it off from the other warehouse. That means that we have to have our every movement stalked by fear. That means that we can afford no more clumsiness, not one single mistake, or else that smart Phantom will upset our whole powerful organization. You, Al, and you, Lefty, remain behind and seal up the secret entrance. The rest of you clean out every trace of our presence here and follow me into our second hideout!"

As the voice was speaking, Van quietly edged toward the wall from whence the angry tones proceeded. Once at the wall, Van edged his way toward the voice, drawing gradually nearer until he was within four or five paces.

As he was about to close up the intervening distance the voice ended on an angry snarl. There was the sound of a door opening, and of footsteps rapidly receding.

Flitting like a shadow, Van slipped through the doorway and followed. Behind him lights flashed on and there was a busy clatter of men hurriedly collecting their belongings and equipment.

Ahead of him, the footsteps beat a staccato tempo and then seemed to descend. Following after, Van found himself on a narrow staircase. Below him he saw the stabbing beam of the flashlight. Hoping against hope that his quarry would not flash it backward and expose him, Van descended the steps, following that dangerous will-o'-the-wisp ahead of him.

There were not more than fifteen steps until the passage straightened out. By now Van heard the rumble of the gang of men following. They had finished their clean-up operations more quickly than he had estimated.

That the danger of his own position was intensified by this quick follow-up did not weigh too heavily upon him. He was in a perilous situation but he did not falter.

With one ear on the sounds behind

him, he watched the play of the flashlight over walls, ceiling, and floor until its beam lighted up a small iron staircase seemingly at the end of the passage.

The man in front of him, however, did not go up the staircase but turned to the left and the flashlight disappeared from view. As Van came abreast of the staircase he peered around the corner and saw a dim light shining in a vacant room. Behind him the shuffling footsteps of the following men grew ever louder.

IT DID not seem wise to enter that lighted room alone. He made a quick decision and instead climbed silently up the staircase, coming out on a small platform before a half-open door from which light issued.

There was the distant hum of a motor coming from somewhere beyond the door. Cautiously Van pushed the door a few inches and peered in.

The first thing he saw was a large instrument board with dials and switches. Seated before it was a man with earphones clamped to his head, his back to the door.

"If that isn't a radio sending apparatus, I miss my guess!" said Van to himself, and then turned to listen as the noise of footsteps grew ever louder in the passageway below.

He held his breath for a tense moment, wondering whether the men would come up the stairs or continue on into the dimly lighted room. He was not long left in doubt.

The men continued on past the foot of the staircase, following the route taken by their leader. Van started down the steps to merge himself in their group when he halted.

The man at the instrument board was speaking. Van strained to make out the purport of the message. A disconnected phrase caught his ear:

"—calling station 2N74—calling station 2N74—our objective following northern route, latitude and lon-

gitude will be sent in later message—station 2N74 stand by to await latitude and longitude—”

The voice died down and the room was silent save for the humming of that motor. The last of the men below were shuffling into that room. Van hurried down the staircase and followed along after them.

As he approached the door he noted that the light had been turned off and that the room was in darkness. From the darkness inside he heard the murmur of voices and the shuffling about of the group of men.

He stood at the entrance of the room a moment, his brain working rapidly, repeating over and over again the message he had heard in that radio room upstairs. It did not make sense. Did it have any bearing on the mystery he was trying to solve?

He turned back from that crowded room and quietly made his way up the stairs again. The voice of the radio sender was again speaking in a low monotone. Van hurried up the few remaining steps and arrived at the top as the voice stopped.

The man at the radio board scraped his chair and rose with the evident intention of coming toward the door beyond which stood his listener.

To avoid discovery Van sped swiftly down the steps.

As he reached the bottom step he heard voices growing louder and a shuffle of footsteps. The group of men were coming out of that room.

FOR a second Van paused, swiftly planning his next move. But only for a second. Through long training his decisions were swiftly formed.

Before the group of men below had reached the foot of the staircase, he turned about and sped up the staircase, expecting any second to meet the radio operator. The door to the radio room was half open as he had left it. He pushed it cautiously aside and stood rigid at what he saw.

For the form of the radio operator lay slumped in a crazy, unnatural position, face downward on the floor. The man had died a violent death in the few seconds that had intervened from the time Van had last seen the radio operator alive!

The situation was growing more complicated by the second.

For the group of men below instead of continuing along the passageway were coming up the stairs to the radio room!

Even now the footsteps of the foremost rang on the metal staircase.

It would be only a matter of seconds until they saw him, and discovered the dead body of the radio operator.

Moving with the silence of a wraith, Van slipped through the door and closed it behind him.

Behind the temporary protection of the locked door he took time to examine the dead man. There was no mark of any wound upon him nor any trace of blood. In an effort to see the face of the unfortunate victim, Van lifted the body and partially turned it over. It took him but a second to determine that the man's neck had been broken. The face was that of an olive-skinned man of indeterminate age and with a slight slant to his eyes, and a coarseness of hair that betrayed some Oriental blood. The man was evidently a half-caste, of mixed white and Oriental blood. There could have been little time for the murderer to escape. Van's eyes probed every corner and angle of the room but found no sign of any living thing.

Someone, one of the men from below, was trying the door, unsuccessfully. A voice called from outside demanding admission. There were no windows in the room and no sign of any exit from where Van stood by the body.

The big instrument board concealed a small part of the wall. As the clamour outside grew louder, Van went quietly across the room and be-

between the instrument board and the wall found that which he sought, a small doorway.

As he stood there, he heard a faint murmur coming from the earphones. Reaching over he placed them to his ears.

"—2N74 calling—acknowledging receipt of bearings—will intercept objective approximately—" and here Van reached for the stub of a pencil and noted down the latitude and longitude, computing swiftly that it was approximately 350 miles from New York, out on the Atlantic.

The station ceased calling. Van listened to the crackle of static intently. The clamor outside the door was growing more insistent. He knew that his doom was sealed were he to be found there with that dead body.

HE STARTED to remove the earphones when the crackle of static was subordinated to a deeper hum, that of some station on the air. The hum suddenly crackled into words. A flat mechanical voice with a trace of accent was speaking:

"The Baron calling Satcha Inoye—will report any change in course—Baron calling Satcha Inoye—no special instructions—please acknowledge."

The message started over again, repeating its cryptic phrases. Van noted that the clamour outside had lessened somewhat. The explanation of that came to him. It was time to

move swiftly before men were sent around to enter the radio room by the other entrance.

He dropped the earphones, gave a last look at the prone form silent on the floor, rounded the radio apparatus and left the room through that small door.

Moving warily, he hurried along a low-roofed passage, up another staircase and found himself in the darkness of what he felt was a big warehouse. Great stacks of bales and bags filled the place. The air was redolent with the odor of chemicals and drugs of which he recognized several familiar fragrances.

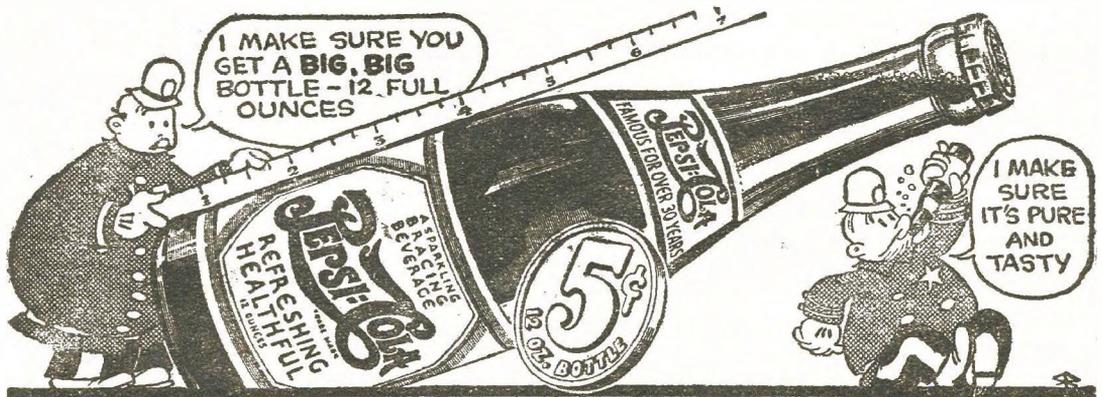
From far back in the warehouse he heard the opening of a door and the sound of voices, and crouched back in the shelter of a pile of sacks as the voices came nearer.

As the words grew more distinct he heard phrases which proved to him that the newcomers were members of that same group coming around by this other entrance to enter the locked radio room.

Keeping well away from the advancing men, Van made his way quietly down through stacks of bales and sacks until he came at last to the main entrance of the warehouse. This was bolted and locked but he kept on his way until he found a smaller door leading through a silent and deserted office to the street.

Once outside he turned back and

[Turn Page]



studied the building. In the dim radiance of the waning light of the street lamps, the building loomed up dark and forbidding before him.

His eyes, studying each detail of the appearance of the warehouse came at last to rest upon a sign in letters over a foot high, spread along just above the great entrance. He stared at it thoughtfully for a full minute.

The sign read "Norris-Scentley Chemical Company!"

CHAPTER VIII

NO TIME FOR SLEEP



DAWN was just beginning to gray the east and the scattering street lights were pale yellow and ineffective against the rising tide of daylight. Fixing the location of that warehouse in his memory, Van

headed for a more active thoroughfare, coming at last to a broader avenue.

A night prowling taxi slid into view and Van hailed it, overcoming the driver's suspicion of his appearance by flashing a five dollar bill at him.

"Take me to the *Clarion* Building!" ordered Van, and sank back, relaxing for the first time in hours of strain and nervous excitement. His body relaxed but his brain was probing and sorting. Who was the strange being called the Tiger who had produced such fear in his men? Why the radio station? What were the messages all about—the latitude and longitude—the Earen—the man called Satcha Inoye? There were many inexplicable angles to this queer case but he gave them up for the moment to concentrate upon that cryptic message.

The cab stopped with a jerk that

nearly threw Van from his seat as they reached the *Clarion* Building. Inside, the faint rumble of presses sounded like the beating of distant surf. Van tossed the man a bill and told him to wait as he hurried to that private elevator which led to Frank Havens' apartment, knowing full well that in these days of war in Europe and sudden crises, the publisher would be near his presses.

"I was beginning to get worried about you," said Frank Havens, in lounging robe and pajamas. He immediately ordered breakfast sent up for his strange-looking guest.

While Van changed his clothes and his appearance again, he told of his experiences.

"But what I can't figure out is how this gang, whoever they are, with their leader called the Tiger, knew that I was working on the case. Whom else, beside poor Lucas, did you tell I was interested in the Kali murders?"

Frank Havens looked thoughtful.

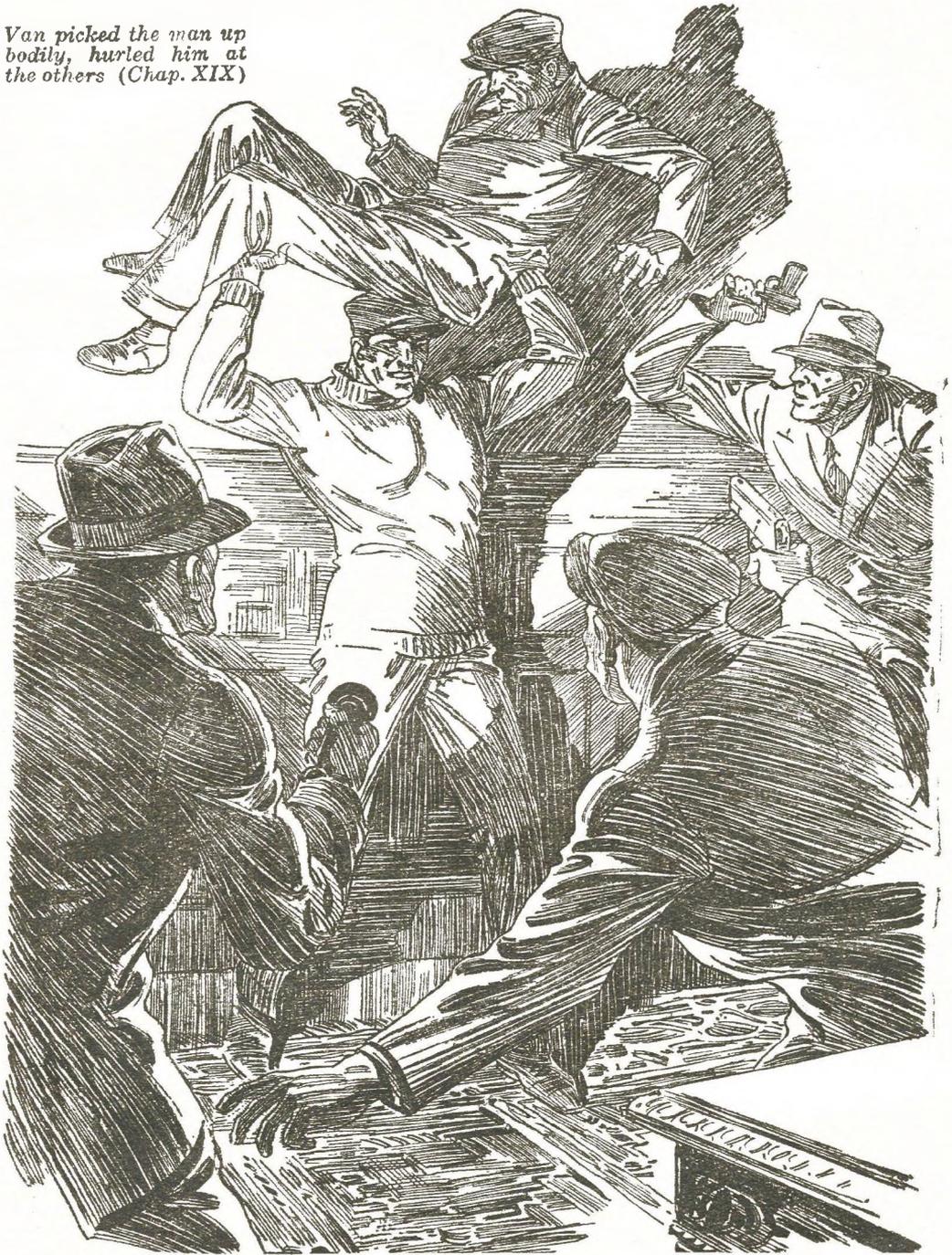
"As a matter of fact," he said, "it was the Norris-Scentley crowd as a whole, the Board of Directors, who asked for your services—after I told Lucas that I could get in touch with you. That came up after I telephoned you about Lucas."

Van thought this over in silence for a space.

"And from the Norris-Scentley crowd the word came to the Tiger—whose hang-out is in the Norris-Scentley warehouse!" he said, then suddenly alert once more: "Speaking of that warehouse, I'd like to have it watched—how about lending me Steve Huston?"

STEVE HUSTON was the keen reporter, a member of the *Clarion* staff, whose courage and loyalty had been tested before this by the Phantom, whom Steve knew only as the Phantom. Therefore it was not until Van had completed his change of disguise that Steve was called in.

Van picked the man up bodily, hurled him at the others (Chap. XIX)



He was delighted with the assignment. His face grew serious as Van explained the events to date and asked him to go to the warehouse and watch for any movement of the gang to the Long Island hideout.

"I'm especially anxious to find out about that Long Island hideout," said the Phantom. "Will you do your best to locate it, Steve?"

"Will I do my best! Will a fish swim?" came Steve's enthusiastic re-

sponse, and with a few more directions he was gone.

"That's that!" said Van. "This thing seems to center around the Norris-Scentley crowd. First the Kali daggers themselves given to the Metropolitan by Perrin Calder, one of the vice presidents of that company. Then the murder of poor Lucas, another vice president of Norris-Scentley. And now the hideout of this Tiger gang, in the Norris-Scentley warehouse. I'd say the best thing would be to get the Norris-Scentley crowd together and I'll meet them and try to extract what information I can. Will you ask them to meet me this morning at their offices? Yes? Fine! The sooner the better!"

Frank Havens reached for his telephone. Before he could pick it up it rang.

Frank Havens lifted up the receiver.

"Yes?" he answered, and then Van heard the publisher gasp: "Murdered! When? At his country home—greenhouse—yes, get someone out there immediately—let me have any further details as soon as you receive them." He listened intently, then hung up the phone and turned to Van.

"They've murdered Colton Fairlee, eh?" said Van.

Frank Havens looked startled.

"How did you know?" he asked.

Van shrugged his shoulders. "The mention of the greenhouse. It just fits in, that's all. When did it happen?"

"Some time last night, before midnight," Havens replied. "He is a garden enthusiast, and potters around with his plants a lot. He has a sort of storeroom off his main greenhouse, a cement block building where he keeps his seed catalogs and the notes on his experiments. He went there after dinner last night and locked himself in, stating that he wanted to be undisturbed. Somebody saw the light burning about half an hour be-

fore midnight. One of the gardeners noted that there was no light on shortly after midnight. His servants began to get worried about him early this morning and broke down the door. He was found dead with a stab wound under his left shoulder blade—"

"And one of the Seven Daggers of Kali beside the body," interrupted Van.

"Yes, but how the dickens did you know that?" asked Frank Havens, puzzled.

"Because it's logical, that's all," returned Van. "Ask your switchboard to get me the police officer who is making the investigation."

IN A FEW minutes Frank Havens handed the telephone receiver to Van. For the next few moments Van, after identifying himself as a newspaper reporter on the *Clarion*, asked questions.

"Have you found a square of Japanese rice paper anywhere about his desk?" asked Van finally.

The reply came back after a moment of search. Yes, the policeman had found such a square but there was nothing written on it. With this piece of information Van hung up and stared broodingly at the desk top for a moment. At last he rose.

"I've got to get busy," he said, speaking in a preoccupied fashion. "The first thing is to see this Norris-Scentley crowd—"

"Good Lord, man, you ought to have a couple of hours' sleep!" protested Havens.

"There's no time for sleep, Frank," returned Van. "There's too much at stake. This thing is too blamed complicated to be comfortable. Complicated things give me a pain. I always want to simplify them. I've got to find out what these Kali murders are all about—what connection the Tiger has with the Norris-Scentley crowd and the murders, if any, and last but not least, what this mysterious unknown man represents, the man who

strangled the radio man in the warehouse."

"But he must be a member of the Kali gang," objected Frank Havens strenuously.

Van shook his head. "The Kali gang uses the Kali daggers," he said. "This unknown murderer uses another and a far more ancient method of Oriental murder!"

"It looks to me as though this Norris-Scentley crowd is being killed off in revenge for their having seized the Seven Daggers of Kali—"

"That's just what it's intended to look like," said Van cryptically. "That trail is too broad and much too obvious."

"How about the trail leading to the Yogi Bandranath Das?"

"That's a puzzling trail," admitted Van. "We know that he called up Lucas before his death. He says that he called simply to locate a friend who was supposed to appear at Lucas' apartment the day of the murder, but the friend, according to the yogi, did not show up. Then there is the box of rice paper I found in the yogi's library—the same type of hand made rice paper on which the death note to Lucas was written—"

"That should be conclusive!" interrupted Frank Havens.

"Conclusive of what? Of the yogi's guilt?" Van shook his head. "Again its too obvious—someone may be trying to frame the yogi! I'm always suspicious of the too obvious in this sort of game! But I've got to find out somehow who that mysterious friend of the yogi could have been—and also find out what he knows of Patricia Hastings, the other person who called the murdered man before his death. Certainly the yogi is involved in this thing somehow—just how, I haven't figured out yet. All I know is that the yogi was upset when I mentioned the Bombay Restaurant, whatever bearing that has upon the case. But you'd better get to work, Frank, and line up what's

left of the Norris-Scentley crowd before any more of them get murdered!"

Frank Havens then busied himself at the telephone for several minutes and then looked up, nodding.

"They'll be waiting for us at the Norris-Scentley offices by the time we get there," he announced. "You certainly are a conservative looking specimen."

For Van, upon his arrival and before seeing Steve Huston, had quietly changed his appearance from that of a young reporter to something more mature. He was the picture of a common sense business man in his late forties, graying and grave, with a well tailored suit of expensive materials but conservative cut and a confidence-inspiring bearing.

CHAPTER IX

SEALED LIPS



HEY arrived at the Norris-Scentley Building some time after nine o'clock in the morning.

A trim secretary escorted them to the board room, a luxuriously furnished affair, dominated by the directors

table with its leather-covered easy chairs about it and each place supplied with a bronze desk set, complete with pads and neatly placed sharpened pencils.

In another minute four of the directors filed in and Frank Havens introduced each one in turn to the Phantom.

The president of the company, Mitchell Hamberly, was the first to meet the dignified middle aged business man who bore that mysterious Phantom title.

Van found himself under the scrutiny of a pair of dark, enigmatic eyes staring at him from a pale,

rather sallow face. Hamberly was of medium build but was one of those nervous dynamic types who radiate energy. His hand, when Van grasped it, seemed somewhat at variance with his appearance, for it was limp and loose, like a handful of bones with a scant covering of flesh.

Young Dorkley Evans was next to be introduced and Van had to repress a smile, for he had met Dorkley Evans a score of times in his true personality of Richard Curtis Van Loan. They were members of the same clubs and frequented the same night clubs. Young Evans was a well built, athletic looking type, but he seemed to be dissipating somewhat if reddened eyes, a pale skin and shaky hands were any indication.

Perrin Calder, who followed him, was in like condition. Normally he was a well fed, well tailored individual, sporting a waxed mustache and possessed of a roving and genial eye, which latter attribute had evidently been responsible for his three marriages and the imminence of a fourth. But the waxed mustache was slightly bedraggled looking, his eyes were haggard, his cheeks unshaven and he looked a much older man than his years warranted.

The last of the four, Harrington Dowd, was a tall man dressed in well cut tweeds, and was, so far as Van could judge, the one of the four who seemed to be least affected. His voice was calm and well modulated but Van detected under its calm a capacity for dominant speech. It was as though the man kept the strength and volume of his voice under strict control.

HIS greeting was polite and in-curious, without any hint of warmth or friendliness.

They seated themselves in what were evidently their accustomed places at the big table.

It was Hamberly, the president, who opened the meeting.

"We've been waiting for Mr. Hilden Barret, another member of the board," he said, "but he seems to be detained. I suggested to Frank Havens that we go ahead with the meeting without him, in the hope that he may join us later."

He turned to the other members:

"I called you together, gentlemen," he went on, "to take advantage of the excellent abilities of the Phantom who has so kindly agreed to aid in this case, and to help us avert, if possible, this danger that seems to overhang the members of this group. In passing, and apropos of that same subject, I must confess that I'm considerably worried about Hilden Barret's non-appearance." He turned to the trim secretary who sat nearby with notebook and pencil. "Please put in a call at Mr. Barret's home and see if he has left for the office, Miss Willins!"

He turned back to the table as Van drew up a chair, facing the group.

"Gentlemen," said the Phantom quietly, "my appearance here is for the sole purpose of asking you to give me any theories or information that any of you might have that would throw light on this most peculiar case."

Four pairs of eyes regarded him steadily, no one answered. Van turned to Dorkley Evans.

"How about you, Mr. Evans?" he asked the young man. Evans shook his head.

"I haven't the iota of an idea," he said, "except that these murders have got me in a blue funk. With two of our board already gone—poor old Lucas and Fairlee—and any of the rest of us liable to be bumped off next—I'm getting the blue willies! I'll be picking things out of the air if this keeps up much longer! No, sir, I haven't any theories nor any information!"

"What in your opinion is the motive behind these murders?" asked the Phantom quietly.

Young Evans puffed at his cigarette in nervous fashion. His eyes avoided the Phantom's direct gaze.

"I thought," said Evans, "that the motive was pretty clear! At least the newspapers have already announced it. It seems to be a matter of revenge on the part of some Oriental gang because a member of our firm came across the Seven Daggers of Kali in India, secured possession of them and brought them into the United States!"

The Phantom made no comment upon this but continued to gaze silently at Dorkley Evans.

The young man grew uncomfortable under the steady glance.

"You know of no other possible motive?" asked the Phantom at last.

Dorkley Evans shook his head.

THE Phantom turned from the dejected younger man to the equally dejected Perrin Calder.

"I'm equally at sea," said Calder, giving a twist to his bedraggled mustache. "All I know is that somebody has threatened my life and I don't sleep well of nights, worrying about when the blow is going to fall. Everything has been sort of up in the air since I received this thing!" And he pulled out of his notebook a folded oblong of what Van recognized was that same fine, handmade rice paper which had been present at Lucas' murder and in the yogi's office.

"The paper had some writing on it

but now it's faded out," explained Calder morosely.

"Have you any theory concerning all this?" asked the Phantom.

"Not a theory," said Calder in dejection, "unless it's a matter of revenge on the part of these followers of the Goddess Kali over the removal of their daggers to the United States."

"You were more or less responsible for that, were you not, Mr. Calder?" asked the Phantom.

"Yes, confound it!" said Perrin Calder. "They were brought to me by a dealer who swore that they were rightfully his. I bought them and brought them to the United States in perfectly good faith, not knowing that they had been stolen from the Temple of Kali at Benares."

"The Temple of Kali at Benares," Van repeated after him, reflectively, thinking of that statue of Kali he had seen in the rear room of the yogi's house.

"I understand from the museum authorities that a certain Hindu, a Yogi Bandranath Das, tried to buy those daggers from the Metropolitan and return them to India. Do any of you know anything about Bandranath Das?"

Van looked around the faces watching him intently.

"I've heard of him," said Perrin Calder.

"He's some sort of a mystic ma-

[Turn page]

GOOD TASTE



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MARK

hatma fortune teller, isn't he?" asked Mitchell Hamberly.

"He was in here one day trying to peddle some Hindu statuettes," said Dorkley Evans. "I think he sells art junk and curios on the side."

Van looked inquiringly at Harrington Dowd but the bored looking vice-president only shrugged his shoulders, intimating that he knew nothing of the yogi and cared less. He puzzled Van.

"I take it, then, that none of you know very much of the Hindu yogi and have no dealings with him?" They all shook their heads in denial. Van turned once more to Perrin Calder.

"I asked about the yogi for he seemed to think that the daggers were bad luck and would bring more bad luck before they were through," explained Van, "and you seem to think, Mr. Calder, that the daggers are the only motive for these murders?"

"Naturally!" Calder's reply was almost too quick. "Why should there be any other motive? Isn't there motive enough in those daggers?"

THE Phantom's mind was alert behind his impassive exterior, probing, sorting, analyzing. Perrin Calder's reply was a little too pat and lacked sincerity.

"I don't think so," he replied. "That motive does not seem to be strong enough to warrant all these killings. Vengeance on the part of some Oriental gang presupposes fanaticism. The minds of fanatics are not generally orderly and shrewd enough to plan out a series of events as carefully planned and executed as these murders.

"No, I would rule out vengeance in favor of some other motive—I'm thinking out loud if you don't mind—and that motive, judged by the care taken to plan and execute it, must have some definite objective, some goal whose achievement is worth all

the risks the Kali murderers necessarily have to take.

"I would say, off hand, that you gentlemen have something that the Kali murderers want badly enough to take these risks. Are you all in possession of some article of value that might arouse the cupidity of these Kali murderers?"

They shook their heads emphatically.

"That leaves then one other supposition—involving either fear or cupidity. Are you engaged in some activity which might lead to results that could arouse the cupidity or fear of the Kali murderers?"

Calder raised his head quickly.

"I'm sure we don't know what you are talking about!" he replied coldly, but for a second his haggard eyes became keen and searching, probing his questioner swiftly before they again were sheathed in dullness.

One of the Phantom's best attributes was the possession of a perfect poker face. And that face gave no sign that its wearer might have found here a faint inkling as to the cards held by his opponents.

The Phantom turned to Mitchell Hamberly, posing the same question. Hamberly shook his head, smiling.

"I wish it were as simple as all that!" he said fervently.

Harrington Dowd shook his head in turn, his eyes frosty.

"So far as I am concerned," he said with a faint tinge of contempt in his tone, "I know nothing and care less. In my opinion the thing is some kind of a shake-down. I don't need your assistance. I can look after myself. And if I have any theories, they are my own business!"

His tone was just one degree short of insulting.

The Phantom was evidently growing a little tired of these tight-mouthed men.

"At the rate you people are being killed off," he said quietly, his eyes on Dowd, "you are very liable not to

have any business that would interest any one except the undertaker. Please remember that there are Seven Daggers of Kali, and that so far, two of them have struck!"

The trim secretary came in then, looking pale and distracted. She said something in a low tone to Mitchell Hamberly who nodded and rose quietly.

"You'll have to excuse me a moment," he said, "there seems to be some trouble getting in touch with Hilden Barret!" and he walked rapidly toward the door and disappeared from view.

The men at the table stared at each other sharply.

The same fear was evidently in the minds of all of them. Dorkley Evans was pale. Perrin Calder's eyes grew even more haggard looking. The only one who retained his composure was Harrington Dowd. He sat idly drawing with his pencil on the pad of paper before him.

In two or three minutes Mitchell Hamberly returned. His face was grave.

"They got poor old Hilden Barret!" he announced.

CHAPTER X CONFUSION



OF THE four of them, the only one who betrayed little emotion was Dowd.

"Hilden was found stabbed to death in the game room of his house on 10th Street this morning!" continued Hamberly. "He

was stabbed in the back with one of those infernal Kali daggers! The dagger that killed him was left beside his body—"

Dorkley Evans interrupted:

"He's been in a blue funk for the past week. I know he locked himself

up in that game room every night and kept himself pretty well soused!"

"We all know that game room," said Hamberly, puzzled. "The strange thing is that no one could get into the place except through the door. It has no windows, being in the basement. How in blazes the murderer could get in there and stab him and get out again I can't figure, for the life of me!"

"Heavy walls and locked doors don't seem to make any difference to whoever is committing these murders!" Harrington Dowd's voice broke in, sardonic and, as Van thought, with a note of scorn in it.

The others looked at Dowd half angrily but he continued to scribble on his pad of paper indifferently.

"This last murder makes it all the more necessary that each and every one of you divulge any information or clue that you have to these murders!" Van's voice broke in sharply. "There are four of you left—and four Kali daggers left. Do you intend to do nothing but sit by like a bunch of sheep and let the murderers slaughter each of you in turn?"

They looked at him dully. Each man was now intent upon the pad of paper before him, scribbling meaningless lines. It was Dorkley Evans who spoke up in the silence.

"It isn't up to me to sound off," he said, "but don't forget that Perrin Calder brought those damn daggers to this country in the first place!"

"You've made that remark about ten times and once is enough!" Perrin Calder's haggard eyes were suddenly ablaze with anger and he rose threateningly.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" Hamberly's voice reproved them. "Quarrelling will get us nowhere. We've got to combine against the common enemy!"

"What's the good of combining if we don't tell the truth!" Dorkley Evans retorted stubbornly. "The Phantom is trying to save our skins for us—he asked a perfectly fair

question—whether we had any other activity in which we are jointly engaged.”

His voice was drowned out by an immediate protest from the others.

“You have no right to talk about confidential matters,” blazed Perrin Calder.

“You talk too damn much!” said Harrington Dowd.

“That matter is outside of and has nothing to do with the subject under discussion!” said Mitchell Hamberly sharply.

YOUNG EVANS subsided grumbling and unconvinced.

The Phantom rose.

“Gentlemen,” he said bitingly, “I see that we are not going to get very far. I won’t need to detain you any longer. I’ll just look over my notes a moment if you don’t mind. Good day!”

The four directors were glowering at each other as he finished but they rose quickly nevertheless and made their ways back to their respective offices, leaving Van and Frank Havens alone in the board room.

“Did you get anything of value?” asked Havens.

“Yes! There’s some kind of a deal on. The Norris-Scentley Company is mixed up in something. I’m going to find out what it is before another twelve hours!”

Van’s face was grim. He stared at the table before him.

It was littered with pads and pencils at each of the vacant places. Knowing that the aimless scribbles of absent minded men are often dictated by promptings of the subconscious mind, Van studied these pads, each in turn.

The first one he glanced at had plainly been used by Dorkley Evans, for that young man had written his name in carefully shaded letters, printed in several places all over the sheet. Down in the right hand corner of the sheet were some crude sketches

mixed up with a lot of squares and circles. One of these crude sketches drew Van’s attention and he stared at it long and thoughtfully.

The thing was recognizable, even with the unskillful drawing. It was a rough attempt to delineate the outline of the statue of the Goddess Kali. Beside it was a clumsily drawn representation of one of the Seven Daggers of Kali.

Next to this pad was another one also scribbled over but in finer, more workmanlike fashion. The writer had tried several combinations of his initials in monogram form. Some of the monograms were square, and some round but all were alike in that they contained the initials H. D. Those initials undoubtedly stood for Harrington Dowd. Van examined his idle scribbles intently and his eye came to rest on one which he studied carefully.

This was a drawing of an ocean liner, rather well done, with its three great slanting smokestacks, and its decks crowded with passengers. It was only on the second glance that Van saw the sinister note in the picture.

That was a representation of a tiny periscope with an almost indistinguishable torpedo shown speeding toward the doomed ship.

The next seat was the large chair Hamberly had occupied at the head of the table. On the pad before this seat there were several little columns of figures, additions and subtractions of varying sums. There were also some scribbles but these scribbles all followed a certain pattern. The clearest of them resolved itself into a sort of conventionalized flower which might have been a chrysanthemum, an aster or a dahlia.

PERRIN CALDER’S pad showed nothing at all. Van remembered having seen him tear off the sheet of paper which he had scribbled upon and thrust it into his pocket.

It occurred to Van that he would like very much to see what was on Perrin Calder's pad but there was no chance of that now.

"Have you any lead at all, Van?" Frank Havens asked.

"Maybe yes, and maybe no," returned Van thoughtfully. "As sure as shooting, the Kali murder motive is not vengeance—and the Norris-Scentley crowd are keeping something back."

"You told them you thought there was some other motive," said Frank Havens. "What other motive could these Kali murderers have?"

"No motive!" said Van cryptically.

"No motive! How could that be? There must be some motive!" Havens was emphatic.

Van shook his head.

"Not necessarily," he corrected. "The Kali dagger murders might be simply a smoke screen to cover something else! Something that has nothing to do with Kali. In fact, I'm beginning to think they're almost *too* carefully staged. Why should they go to all that trouble, leaving the dagger there beside the corpse—setting the stage as it were? It's pretty stagey, after all, to leave a blood-stained dagger beside a corpse each time—a blood stained dagger! Supposing"—he grew silent and thoughtful—"I wonder—that may be the answer—it would prove the point!"

"What do you mean?" asked Havens puzzled.

"I mean, supposing the Kali dagger murders themselves were a fake!"

"The murders a fake!" Havens was startled. "How could they be a fake? The men were killed, weren't they?"

"Yes," agreed Van absently, "but that isn't the point—there's something there that bothers me—I've got to clear it up!"

Frank Havens knew Van too well to interrupt the train of thought. Knowing Van he knew that it would lead to some startling new angle on the case.

As for Van, he attempted no explanation but sought and found a telephone. Frank Havens heard him call for the telephone number of the murdered Hilden Barret. In another minute or two Van was talking to some one whom Frank assumed to be Thomas Gregg, Chief of the Bureau of Detectives.

"Listen, Tom," concluded Van, "I'll be up there inside of thirty minutes—keep everything as is, will you?"

With this he rang off, still thoughtful and non-communicative.

Frank Havens glanced at his watch.

"Listen, Van," he interrupted, "I've got to get on back to my office. Do you mind my asking you one question?"

VAN shook himself out of his abstraction.

"Certainly not—what is it?" he asked.

"There's one thing I noticed you didn't ask the directors," said Frank Havens. "You didn't say a word to them about their warehouse being used as a hideout and as a radio station. Was that omission deliberate on your part?"

"Yes. No use telling them everything when they refuse to tell me anything. Listen Frank, I wish you'd get every scrap of information on those four directors you can rake and scrape together, everything concerning them from the day they were born. Can you get it for me today? Also a complete report on the finances of Norris-Scentley!"

"I'll put my best men on it immediately," promised Frank Havens. "Where are you going from here?"

"From here I'm going uptown, to see Hilden Barret's body. Then I'll head to my laboratory. I'm expecting a call from Steve Huston. When it comes, relay it through your private wire to me at the lab. I'm getting a little worried about Steve. He should be reporting in before this!"

CHAPTER XI

THE HIDEOUT



FRANK HAVENS' ace-reporter, Steve Huston, was by this time far down on Long Island.

The Phantom had told him to watch the gang at the warehouse and discover if possible where their Long

Island hideout was located.

It was a job to Steve's liking. In the first place he had an immense respect for the Phantom and in the second place this sort of shadowing and sleuthing contained more of adventure and thrills in five minutes than did his prosaic reporting in a whole week.

Therefore, he was an exceedingly happy individual when he left the Phantom in Frank Havens' office and hurried down to his car, a small sport sedan parked on a side street near the newspaper building.

He was speeding downtown almost immediately.

The warehouse, after the directions given him by the Phantom, was not hard to locate. Steve parked his car in an inconspicuous alley nearby and prowled about on foot, studying the place. The day's activities were beginning, the warehouse men and the office staff were arriving. Trucks were beginning to line up before the great doors and the hum and stir of another working day began.

It was not long before Steve found what he had sought, that inconspicuous door on the side alley about which the Phantom had told him.

There were several cars and trucks parked by now along the street near the alley and Steve edged in his sport sedan among them and sat within its shelter while he watched and waited.

The minutes grew into an hour

before his patience began to reap its reward. Up to this time no one had entered or left the alley.

But he grew alert now as a group of five men, roughly dressed in working clothes, came edging out of the alley mouth, looked about them cautiously and then made their way to a black sedan parked on the opposite side of the street.

Here, after a quick and furtive look around, they piled in and drove away.

Steve Huston rose from where he had been crouching below the wind shield of his car, keeping his eyes so intently upon the black sedan ahead that he failed to note the appearance of three more men from the same alley.

These three drew back in the shadows as Steve put his car into gear and followed the black sedan. With a quick glance at each other, the three went to another car, a station wagon, and were quickly off and after Steve as he twisted through the trucks clogging the narrow street and broke out into the main avenue.

STEVE'S quarry was in plain view, headed uptown. He was certain that these were his men and his belief was confirmed when, nearing the Fifties, they turned east and headed toward the Queensboro Bridge, leading to Long Island.

Elated by this proof of his judgment, Steve kept the black sedan steadily in view, nor did he note the light-colored station car following after him with grim tenacity.

The station wagon continued to follow after, down through Queens and past Flushing but here it suddenly drew up to one side of the road with a blow-out. Cursing, its crew clambered out to change tires.

Steve Huston continued on his way oblivious, his mind centered on the black sedan ahead. The black sedan hurried through Douglaston and Little Neck into Great Neck

where it headed for Kings Point. The traffic thinned out and Steve had to drop well behind to prevent his quarry from spying him. It was because of this that he rounded a turn in the road and nearly ran into the black sedan.

The car had halted in front of the entrance to one of the large estates along the road. Steve had just time to see that the gangster car was halted by a big gateway flanked with white stone pillars each of which was surmounted by a stone lion *rampant*, when the speed of his car carried him on by. Glancing behind him he saw that the black sedan had driven through the gates which were closed after it.

Now Steve, had he strictly carried out his orders, would have returned to New York and reported the hideout. But Steve was not one hundred percent certain in his own mind that this was the hideout. He wanted some more proof. It might be also that Steve wanted the thrill that further search would entail.

Whatever his reasons, he found a side road, parked his car and went back to survey the scene on foot.

The main gates were impassable. He had seen two men on guard there in his swift passage by the place. It was broad daylight and he could not hope to enter the place by any ordinary means and escape detection fully.

As he stood there he heard the sound of an approaching car.

As it rounded the turn of the road, Steve saw the familiar green truck of the local light and gas company. He formed his plan of action instantly.

Halting the truck he showed his newspaper card.

"I'm trying to get a story from some one in that house. How about driving me in there? They'd let you in to look at the light and gas meters—"

The driver, a young fellow, grinned

The blow descended swiftly (Chan. XX)



in friendly fashion and then thumbed through his slips.

"Yeah, I guess I could mosey in there," he said. "There's been a complaint about the bill from Mr. Harrington Dowd's agent—says it was sent to the wrong address—hop in!"

"The house belongs to Mr. Harrington Dowd, you said?" Steve asked as he settled into the seat. The driver nodded and turned into the gate.

TWO hard-faced men lounged out of the gate house, glanced over the truck and opened the wrought iron gates negligently, waving the equipage on inside.

The driveway curved up through lawns and shrubbery to a great white pillared house of imposing proportions and graceful lines. Two men lounged under the porte-cochere but otherwise the place was seemingly untenanted save that the black

sedan which Steve had followed down from New York stood before the front doors.

The green truck sped around to the rear of the house where an open cellar door gave entry to the meters below.

Steve followed the driver down into the cellar, whispered his thanks, waited until the man had examined the meters with his flashlight and left. Then he made his way to where he saw a staircase rising up from the center of the big cellar.

He was halfway across the cellar when he heard a car drive up outside and come to a stop. Above him he heard voices and the tramp of feet of someone entering the house. From one of the small windows in the cellar he saw what seemed to be a station wagon. It had no particular significance for him, since he was unaware that it was the station wagon that had followed him down from the warehouse.

The voices and footsteps approached the head of the staircase and he crouched back in the shadows of the furnace as the upper door opened and men came down the steps.

"If it hadn't been for that blanket blowout!" growled one voice, "we'da had that guy sure as shootin'!"

"Yeah!" jeered a strange, half jocular, half menacing voice, "if the dog hadn't stopped to sniff, he'd a caught the rabbit! Meantime the guy is loose around somewheres and maybe by now has tailed us right into this place. Fine work, I don't think. I gotta get the Tiger on the wire right away. Hurry up—that's him calling now!"

Steve, crouched back in the shadows, heard from somewhere the muffled note of a telephone bell ringing peremptorily. Some five men came into view, hurrying across the cellar to the sound of that muffled telephone. They headed directly

toward a wall solid with shelves, which were loaded down with empty bottles of fruit jars.

The man in the lead reached behind the bottles and pulled at something.

To Steve's astonishment, the entire wall of shelving swung slowly outward, disclosing a narrow doorway. The ringing of the telephone immediately grew louder and sharper, issuing from the space behind the hidden doorway.

Steve figured it as one of those concealed wine cellars, a holdover from prohibition, when owners of big country houses guarded their valuable wines and liquors like precious jewels.

The men disappeared into the room behind the shelving, leaving it ajar.

STEVE crept forward and placed himself beside the entrance.

One of the men was answering the telephone.

"Goldie talkin'—yes, sir—I get you—yes, sir—Bombay Restaurant—the same place we snatched the old geezer—yes, sir—Patricia Hastings—six o'clock—we'll be there—yes, sir—"

Steve heard a step at the top of the staircase and hurried back to the shadows of the furnace. Some one came down the steps and went into the secret room.

In another few minutes the group of men came out once more.

"Alf, we'll take the two sedans—seven in the black car—six in the blue one—leavin' room for the girl when we grab her off. Shorty, get adhesive tape and some chloroform so the dame won't holler."

Their voices died down as they went back up the stairs to the floor above. Evidently one of their number had been left behind to watch the telephone in the secret room, for the door had been left ajar and Steve heard someone moving about.

He was trying to piece together the things he had heard. There was no shadow of a doubt now that he was in the hideout of the gang. But what was all this stuff about the Bombay Restaurant and the girl and "the old geezer?"

The Phantom had told him nothing about these things—but maybe the Phantom didn't know about them. It was evidently some sort of kidnap plot—the girl Patricia Hastings, whoever she was, was to be seized at the Bombay Restaurant—wherever that was. The pattern became clear as Steve pieced out the various statements. It also became clear to him that he must get word to the Phantom as quickly as possible!

That part of it was not going to be so easy!

From upstairs came the sound of men moving about. Occasionally one would come down the steps and into the secret room, exchanging messages with the man on duty there.

Steve saw that it was hopeless to attempt to escape up through the house.

In an attempt to depart the same way he had come he moved silently back toward that cellar entrance. Standing at the bottom of the stone steps leading up outside, he heard voices at the kitchen door, not three yards away. Two men were seated there, talking in low guarded tones. Their voices droned on and on. Steve circled the cellar in an attempt to find another exit, but the windows were too small to permit the passage of even his short frame.

If those men would only leave the kitchen door! He was certain now that they were guards, placed there on duty, for he heard the original two men depart after two or three hours and two more take their places.

The hours dragged on slowly as Steve fumed and waited, his every means of exit blocked. The afternoon sun faded and dusk came on.

It was just between dusk and darkness that he heard the truck roll clanking and rattling up outside the cellar door. It came to a stop and there followed the rattle and boom of ashcans. The garbage remover was making his rounds, Steve figured.

There were some half empty ashcans near the furnace. Steve heaved one of these onto his shoulder and moved over to the shadow of the doorway.

The garbage man came tramping down the cellar stairs and passed him, going on into the cellar.

Scarcely waiting for his going, Steve went quietly up the stairs carrying the ashcan.

He came out into the dim light of early evening, and saw the truck not five yards away. Carrying his ashcan so as to conceal his face from the two men on the kitchen steps, he went around behind the truck, heaved the ashes in, and clambered up, concealing himself just in rear of the truck's closed cab.

There followed a few minutes of puffing activity on the part of the garbage man before that worthy climbed into his seat and drove down the driveway toward the gates.

Back in a welter of paper, orange peels and ashes, Steve kept crouched down out of sight. Once through the gates and on the road once more, he leaped nimbly to the ground and sped down the road to where he had left his sports sedan.

As he started his engine, a shadowy figure in the bushes next to the fence, roused up, gave one look at Steve and doubled back through the fence, running toward the main road.

Unaware of this, Steve rolled smoothly out on the main road, and headed back toward Great Neck, seeking for a telephone.

It was several minutes before he located a gas station with a pay telephone.

As he entered the telephone booth a light colored station wagon slid

quietly up. One of its occupants engaged the gas station attendant in the task of getting gas and oil. The two other occupants moved quietly towards the telephone booth where Steve Huston was even now ringing New York in a frantic effort to get his message to the Phantom.

CHAPTER XII

BLOOD ANALYSIS



NO TIME was wasted by Van in getting up to the scene of the murder, this third murder of a Norris-Scentley executive.

Hilton Barret's house was one of those substantially built houses erected by successful business men of the nineties, just off Fifth Avenue on Tenth Street.

There were two police cars before the door when Van arrived.

He quickly made himself known to the policeman on duty at the door and was ushered into where Inspector Gregg awaited him.

"I'm glad you called me, Phantom," said Gregg. "These Kali dagger murders are getting too frequent and too mysterious to suit my taste. The newspapers are beginning to holler why don't we do something! They never figure out that maybe a gang of murderers plot something for a whole year and a cop is supposed to solve it in five minutes!"

They were descending the steps down to the cellar game room as they talked.

Van gave a rapid glance around the game room, with its brightly colored decorations and gay atmosphere to which the form, huddled under a sheet on the floor, was in strange contrast.

The wound was behind the left shoulder blade, as the others had

been. Van went down on hands and knees and examined it minutely. So long did he study it that Tom Gregg cleared his throat and ventured a question.

"Yes, it's interesting," said Van thoughtfully. "Do you notice that the lips of the wound are separated—that they haven't closed up?"

"Ye-a-h," said Gregg doubtfully, "but its a clean wound, exactly the size of the dagger—"

"Where's the dagger?" asked Van. Gregg handed it to him.

Van examined it carefully. It was the same type of slender, sharp-pointed instrument that had been used in the Lucas murder.

"Do you mind if I take this with me?" asked Van.

"Take anything you want!" said Gregg fervently.

"I'll only need one more thing," said Van, "and that is a sample of the blood around the wound."

This was secured for him shortly.

With these two things and after taking another sharp look about the murder scene, Van departed, saying good-by to Gregg at the door.

Van was plunged in deep thought as he automatically threaded his way through traffic. He had a theory that, should it prove tenable, would considerably lighten up some of the dark spots of this mystery. Examination of the wound had strengthened the possibility of his theory being the correct one. But only the laboratory test would prove it.

INSPECTOR GREGG was plainly baffled over the case. Van's mind harked back to the telephone conversation he had had with him before arriving at Barret's house.

"I tell you, Phantom, my mind's made up!" Gregg had said. "Everything points to one man—"

"And who is that?" Van had asked.

"The fellow that called up Lucas the day he was murdered, the fellow who deals in Oriental bric-a-brac, the

fellow who has a statue of Kali in his house—and has some of that funny kind of paper the death note was written on—this Hindu guy, the Yogi Bandranath Das!"

"I see you've been busy, Tom!" commented Van.

"Yeah, and I'm going to keep on being busy, Phantom, I'm going to have that Hindu fakir under lock and key inside of half an hour!"

"I wish you wouldn't do that, Tom," said Van quietly.

"Why not, Phantom?"

"I don't know yet—I'm suspicious of the yogi, but somehow I have a feeling that the trail leading to him is too broad and well marked. Lay off him for another twelve hours, will you, Tom?"

"Anything you say, Phantom."

Van dismissed the memory of that conversation from his mind as he turned east on the lights and sped toward his laboratory.

His mind went back to the warehouse and seized upon that name he had overheard on the radio—*Satcha Inoye*.

Somewhere, somehow, that name struck a chord of memory, but he could not recall the connection nor the idea association.

It might be that his files, which were unusually complete for the files of a private operative, could give him a lead on this angle.

With this on his mind, the first thing he did after entering his laboratory was to seek out those same files.

His eyes lighted up as he found the reference card.

"Inoye, Satcha," he read, "born, Kiev, Russia, December 4, 1889—mother Anya Doubrowsky, Russian—father, Toia Inoye, Japanese—father killed in accident—mother and son arrived America 1899—young Satcha brought up on New York East Side—juvenile delinquency 1905—petty racketeer—pushcart peddlers robbed—headed small gang—became bootlegger during Prohibition—Department of Justice noted suspicion of spy activities during World War—after

repeal of Prohibition became narcotic dealer or smuggler—no convictions—grew suddenly wealthy and disappeared—known by his intimates as "Tiger"—"

Van sat up alertly. His elusive memory had not failed him! So the Tiger was Satcha Inoye! But who else was the Tiger? Van pondered on that brief note referring to the spy activities of the half caste Japanese. There was that radio set—the strange messages to something or someone out at sea. Van shook his head. The thing was getting complicated.

HE TURNED now to the other matter he had in mind—the test of his theory concerning the Kali murders and their motive.

In two minute he was at work. To clear the ground he made a routine test of that piece of rice paper he had taken from the yogi's office. As he had surmised, it was of the same workmanship and the same batch as the paper used in the murder notes. But he shook his head over this, somehow unconvinced.

The important task still lay before him and he tackled it with breathless interest. From that Kali dagger loaned him by Inspector Gregg he carefully scraped samples of the dried blood and went after them with microscopes and chemicals, making notes of each step as he worked.

This task finished he took the sample of Barret's blood and went through exactly the same exhaustive process.

With mounting excitement he studied each reaction. He felt himself nearing the goal of an important discovery, a discovery that might change his whole concept of the Kali murders and throw new light on the tangled mystery.

The final reaction was noted at last.

He jotted down the last few notes. He compared the two blood counts. The blood on the Kali dagger was

of a different blood count than Barret's blood!

Barret had not been killed by the Kali dagger!

The Kali daggers were a smoke screen!

CHAPTER XIII

THE BOMBAY RESTAURANT



THE Kali daggers being a smoke screen, pointed resistlessly to the fact that the murders, committed supposedly by their aid, were themselves a smoke screen for something bigger and more sinister. What

was behind these murders of Norris-Scentley directors? And how did they tie in with the Tiger and his gang?

Satcha Inoye was the Tiger—and Satcha Inoye had been accused of spy activities—and the Tiger was in communication with parties unknown over a secret and unlicensed radio station! How did all this fit into the mystery-cloaked murders?

It was time to get busy. The first thing was to change his appearance—he was becoming too well known as the dignified middle aged business man. He rapidly changed over into another suit and made a few deft alterations in his facial appearance that made him a younger man—this time an unobtrusively dressed inconspicuous middle class figure who might have been one of the thousands of clerks, and bookkeepers hurrying down town to take up their duties in banks and brokerage houses.

As he worked, his mind returned to Steve Huston. Steve had been gone practically all day. It might be that in his enthusiasm he had gone far afield. And again there was the chance that Steve might have run into foul play. This latter possibility

was not comforting to dwell upon.

Van was in a quandary. If he left the laboratory he might miss the call from Steve which would point the way to that hideout on Long Island. That hideout assumed a new importance with the clearer view he now had of the picture. It was important to run the Tiger to earth and discover if he had any connection with the Norris-Scentley crowd and what that connection was.

For the Kali murders themselves had assumed a lesser importance in his mind. The shadows of something greater and more dangerous lay behind those murders, of that he was sure.

Glancing at the clock he gave Steve ten more minutes in which to call. At the end of that time he must depart. In those waiting minutes he went through the case from his first contact with it—Lucas' murder—the dagger, the rice paper—the telephone calls, from the yogi and from a Miss Patricia Hastings. He sat upright suddenly. He had not traced that call or made any effort so far to determine her connection with the case.

In another second he was on the phone, calling Frank Havens over their private wire.

"See if you can have the call traced, Frank," he said. "There's a possibility that this Patricia Hastings might have some bearing on the case."

In five minutes Havens called back.

"That call came from the Majestic Hotel," he reported. "Miss Hastings has been living there for several weeks with her father. I tried to get her on the telephone but the clerk told me she had just gone out. She asked him the way to the Bombay Restaurant and was evidently bound there for dinner."

VAN hung up. That was blame queer. The Bombay Restaurant! That was the place the mention of which had made the yogi so agitated!

The yogi—the Bombay Restaurant—and Miss Patricia Hastings! Something was forming up there undoubtedly.

Well, his ten minutes was up. He could no longer wait for the call from Steve Huston. He would call Frank back from downtown somewhere from time to time, in order to keep in touch in case Steve should call while he was out.

He had already turned out the light and was making his way out the door when his telephone bell rang sharply!

It was a call through from Frank Havens' private wire.

"Steve Huston calling, the Phantom—Steve Huston calling— This is Steve, Phantom"—the voice sounded agitated—"I followed up those parties—down here on Long Island—I've located the house—lions above the gates—overheard them plotting to kidnap somebody from the Bombay Restaurant—a Miss Patricia Hastings—six o'clock—I'm down at a gas station on—"

Van heard something thud at the other end of the wire.

The connection was broken.

He tried frantically to get the connection re-established.

The toneless voices of telephone girls sounded hollowly over the wires—operators' voices talked endlessly and impersonally—it was nearing six o'clock.

He gave up his futile attempts.

This Patricia Hastings, whoever

she was, who had called Lucas the day he was murdered, was to be kidnaped by the Tiger's gang from a place called the Bombay Restaurant within the next half hour—unless he could hurry and prevent it!

He hurried.

It was growing dark as he sped downtown, and the street lamps flashed on. A fine misty drizzle began to fall, making the street a black expanse of polished ebony in which the traffic lights reflected themselves in great pools of green and red—ruby red, the red of blood.

He hoped he could get there in time to save this Patricia Hastings whoever she might be, from anything that the sinister gang of the Tiger intended to perpetrate.

There came to him again, as there had come so often in the past, that tightening up of every nerve and faculty, that realization that danger lay ahead and that he would need all he had of skill and luck to win through in the next few hours.

It was already growing dark when he found himself in the block which housed the restaurant which was his goal, a street walled in on either side by a great bulk of office buildings and lofts, their street fronts dark and deserted. Halfway down the block, a subdued ray of light cast a greenish glow across the sidewalk and wet asphalt, making a small oasis of light in the dank gloominess of the street.

[Turn page]

College Humor

15 CENTS

THE BEST COMEDY IN AMERICA

FICTION • SATIRE • CARTOONS

ON SALE EVERYWHERE!

The light came from a small illuminated sign which marked the restaurant which he sought. Approaching the place he found a small dark doorway to the left, while to the right of this were closely curtained windows through which no ray of light appeared.

The door gave easily enough to his touch. It was as though his arrival was expected. It opened into a dark hallway, dimly lighted from discreetly shaded lanterns which cast a faint aura of light from the main entrance room on the right. There was no one in the hallway to relieve him of his hat, and he carried it with him into the dimly-lighted restaurant. The place was gloomy enough in all truth, containing some eight or nine tables, only two or three of which were lighted by the greenish glow of dim lanterns hung from the ceiling, lanterns which diffused an unearthly and sinister pallor over the two or three center tables, leaving the rest of the place in semi-obscurity. There was no sign of the girl. Van reasoned that she had not yet arrived at the restaurant.

Selecting a table, he sat down, giving no hint in his casual manner of the tenseness with which he watched the shadows in that room. He expected a waiter to appear but a slow minute passed and then another, and none came. He had a sense of being watched.

Growing impatient at last he rapped smartly on the table.

There was no response but he thought he heard a whisper in the shadows at the rear of the room. He rapped smartly again and raised his voice, calling for a waiter.

The whispering died instantly and a silence followed. In that silence his ears caught a new sound, the soft padding of slippers in the dim hallway through which he had entered.

This was followed by the click of a door bolt being shot home.

CHAPTER XIV

KIDNAPED



GAIN Van called for the waiter. There was no response.

At that second he became suddenly aware of a human form moving above him, just outside the circle of light cast by the dim lanterns.

As steady as were his nerves, it required considerable self control to repress a nervous start as his eyes swept over the silent figure, that of a tall Hindu dressed in dark robes.

Van spoke sharply to the man in Hindustanee. The fellow looked blank.

"Is this a restaurant, or isn't it?" asked Van, in English, assuming the normal impatience of a man kept waiting for his meal. The man before him bowed his head.

"What will the *Sahib* have, sar?" said a voice, this time directly in back of him. Van turned about calmly only to find another figure standing there in the shadow. He addressed him in Hindustanee only to meet the same blank non-comprehension.

This was getting a little creepy, but Van showed nothing save normal impatience and gave no sign that the queerness of the proceedings alarmed him in the slightest. The Hindus were palpably fakes.

"If this is supposed to be a restaurant," Van said sarcastically, in English, "I suppose there's no objection to your setting the table and bringing me a menu?"

Neither of the men replied. Both bowed their heads and both disappeared into the darkness of the back room, and all grew silent again. There was a heavy air of brooding watchfulness in that place. It oppressed Van like a thick blanket and he found himself wondering if he had been altogether wise in entering what was so

obviously a trap, baited and set and ready.

He had little time to reflect upon these things, however, for both men came back, one carrying plates and cutlery, and the other a menu. Van studied the square of cardboard, noting the various Hindu dishes, rice and curry concoctions dear to the palate of the East Indian. He managed, however, to keep a close watch on both men.

It was not until the setting of the table had been completed that his eyes widened and he stared thoughtfully at the layout.

For the fake Hindus had set places for two people! It occurred to him that the men might possibly have figured that he was expecting another guest and had so provided. But it seemed a little strange at that.

The two waiters finished their deft touches at the table and withdrew back into the shadows. Van noted the room was growing imperceptibly darker and, turning, saw that one of the waiters was turning off the extra lights, leaving but one burning above his own table. Again he heard slippered footsteps in the hallway and the click of the door being unlocked. The other waiter slid quietly in the room and drew back the curtains of the windows facing on the street, lighting two more lanterns which cast a dim radiance outward through the glass.

There was no doubt in Van's mind that the stage was being set for someone. Outwardly unperturbed, he sat there, a tall, lean and sinewy figure of a man. He heard no sound from behind him in the rear of the restaurant, and it was only dimly that he sensed the pulse and roar of the city outside the walls, reminding him faintly of the distant and ceaseless murmur of waves on a rockbound coast.

It was then that his ears caught the slide and creak of a car coming to a stop outside, followed by the

slam of a car door. The outer door of the restaurant opened and he heard the clear musical notes of a feminine voice. There was something warm and appealing about the clear notes of that voice, making him think of song, or a cascade of jewels, or the beauty of falling water shot through by sunlight.

One part of his mind was occupied with the timbre of that voice, but another part of his mind was sounding a faint note of warning as it detected an unusual stir and rustle from the darkness of the restaurant to the rear. It was as though the darkness had suddenly become alive with menace, and there flashed in his memory a visit he had once made to a Ceylonese temple of the snake god and the darkness of its interior which had begun to stir into sluggishly uncoiling life.

There was a stir at the door. So dim was the light that Van could see little except a feminine figure, and then as she approached the table, he saw a sudden vision of slim loveliness and grace. Her appearance under the rays of the single lamp gave him an instant impression of very fine features, golden hair coiled like a helmet, a slender neck and a proudly carried head.

EVEN before she saw him, Van sensed something of tragedy and fear in her eyes.

"I'm so sorry to be late," she said, her voice coming rich and warm, but with an undercurrent of fear in it. "I am Patricia Hastings—you are the man who telephoned me stating that you had news of my father?"

Van was on his feet.

"I am not the man who telephoned you," he said, low-voiced. "Please don't show any fear or excitement—I am here to help you—there is something terribly wrong here—we must get out as quickly as possible—obey my orders without hesitation!"

She paled, but showed no other

token of fear as she nodded imperceptibly.

At that second there came a sudden noise from the rear of the building, a muffled shout followed by thudding sounds, as of blows being exchanged, and then the rush of feet. The two waiters in the shadows slipped out quietly toward the turmoil.

Van leaned across the table, a tense look on his face.

"Now," he said quietly, "you run for the door as rapidly as you can move while I hold these birds off!"

The girl gave him a quick understanding nod before racing for the hallway. At the same second, Van rose and caught his chair by its back, swinging it about above his head as he followed.

A shout came from the kitchen doorway in the rear. The shadows suddenly became alive with movement. There was a rush of feet. Shadowy forms converged on him from all sides. He swung the chair about his head just as the faint blur of Patricia Hastings' dress faded into the hallway.

Suddenly he was surrounded by venomously silent forms. Above the sound of their attack he heard a faintly muffled scream from the hallway.

THE screaming continued, though still muffled, and seemed to be ascending. It flashed into Van's mind that if Patricia Hastings had been captured after all, her abductors were taking her upstairs, meaning for some strategic reason to make a getaway from the room.

With the chair in his hand he leaped backward out of the circle of light, flinging the chair at the lone lantern. The room was plunged in darkness.

Van followed the chair with a table.

A voice blasted out above the resultant confusion. The ringing, au-

thoritative voice of the man called "the Tiger."

"Goldie!"

"Yes, Boss! How—when did *you* get here?"

"Goldie, don't be a fool all the time! I'm always where I need to be! The man we're after has gone out the back. Go after him!"

There was a rush of dark forms, and the room cleared. Van followed behind in the darkness, but he did not follow the gangsters outside. Instead he hurled himself up the narrow staircase which he hoped led to the roof.

He knew a second of grim inward amusement at the way he had fooled Goldie by yelling commands in the darkness in the voice of "the Tiger."

The next few minutes were ones of mad confusion. The stairway did lead to the roof. What was the Phantom's surprise, when he reached it, to see a blur of fighting forms among which was evidently one member of the New York Police Force! Evidently the tumult had attracted the attention of a plainclothes man who had ascended to the roof from the front.

That the man was a detective Van assumed from the fact that he had already captured one of the gangsters and had him manacled to his wrist. On the neighboring roof strange Hindu shapes had risen.

Van saw all these things in a flash and heard the blast of the detective's gun as he fired from around the corner of the chimney at some invisible target. Then he saw something else that required quick action if the detective's life was to be saved. The thug manacled to him was reaching down his free hand to pick up a bar of iron.

But before Van could act upon what he was seeing, someone who had probably seen it first had already acted. There was a *whiz* of something speeding through the air, and then a dagger was quivering in the

breast of the gangster! Where the dagger had come from Van did not know, but he knew that its source must have been some brown Hindu hand.

"Don't shoot!" he snapped to the detective, and came close. A flash of his domino badge made the detective gasp.

"I've no time to talk now," Van said quickly. "This is part of the Kali murder case! I'll be in touch with Inspector Gregg later. Report that Patricia Hastings has been kidnaped!"

VAN hastily descended. The noise of combat had faded away. Van found himself in the alleyway. A lighted window from a neighboring building cast a pool of yellow light by the gate.

Into this pool and out of it stepped the now familiar figure of the yogi, Bandranath Das, disappearing down the alley.

Van hurried to the alley gate, staring down its length.

Some curious small boys were grouped outside on the sidewalk.

"How long have you kids been here?" asked Van.

"We been here ever since the lady went in ten minutes ago!" said their leader. "She gave us a dime for helpin' her find the place—then a lot of furriners come and busted in!"

"Did you see the lady go out of this door?" asked Van.

"She didn't go outa this door, Mister!" said the youngster. "A cat couldn'ta got out this door without me seein' it!"

This was only confirmation of what Van already suspected! The Tiger gang had spirited Patricia Hastings down the hallway to the rear entrance and out through the alley!

He rushed back to the alley again. Aside from a prowling alley cat it was bare of any living thing. There were fresh tire marks in the alley mud.

The Tiger's gang had successfully put over their coup!

But what had the yogi to do with it? He had certainly not been pleased about the presence of the Tiger's people. Had he come to rescue the girl? Or had he come to kidnap her himself?

It was puzzling. There was one dim chance. Perhaps the girl had succeeded in escaping and had gone back to her hotel.

He drove to the Hotel Majestic.

The clerk on duty was informative. No, Miss Hastings had not returned—she had been there with her father for several weeks. No, he had not seen Mr. Hastings that day, nor for a couple of days, come to think of it—he might be out of town but he had not checked out. Mr. Hastings? Yes, he was the famous inventor Henry Sutton Hastings. No, he didn't know for sure, but he'd heard from the other boys that Mr. Hastings had invented some very important military appliance. Some colonels from Washington had been to see him—

Thanking the man, Van departed, his face showing no hint of the value to him of the information he had just received. Military invention—Satcha Inoye, the spy—kidnaping—the dim outlines of the picture were beginning to shape up into something more tangible now.

CHAPTER XV

A TANGLED SKEIN



QUITE a few things were clearer to Van now, but others were more puzzling.

The theory that a band of vengeful Hindu followers of Kali were responsible for the Kali dagger murders was out. In the first

place, the devotees of Kali did not murder by the dagger, and in the

second place the daggers had not been used for the murders, but only as a red herring to confuse the job of the police.

He had established a dim connection between the Norris-Scentley crowd and the Tiger. The fact that the Tiger used the Chemical Company warehouse for a hideout gave strength to that theory.

In addition he had discovered at the directors table that the Norris-Scentley crowd had some other deal on that might possibly be the cause of the Kali murders.

There was furthermore the appearance of Patricia Hastings in the picture, her father the famous inventor, reputed to be possessed of some valuable military device. Patricia Hastings' statement to him at the Bombay Restaurant that she "hoped he had news of her father" showed that she did not know where her father was. In addition the hotel clerk had stated that her father had not been present for two days or so. Ergo, her father, had disappeared and she did not know his whereabouts.

She was evidently worried and making inquiries—and it was probably her activities in seeking for news of her father that had forced the Tiger, in self-defense, to kidnap her. Or, possibly, he wished to use her as surety for her father's acquiescence in whatever the Tiger desired of him. What did the Tiger desire of him? In all probability the rights to the military invention, whatever it was, seeing that Satcha Inoye, the Tiger, was probably in the secret service of some foreign power as agent.

Van checked and rechecked these things and felt that so far he was on fairly firm ground.

It was when he came to the Yogi Bandranath Das that he became really puzzled. He had not forgotten that it was outside the yogi's house that he had been kidnaped and carried to the warehouse. Was there

some connection between the Tiger and the yogi?

The yogi had known of the Bombay Restaurant. He had tried to purchase the Daggers of Kali. He possessed a statue of Kali in his house. He had that sandalwood box containing the same paper on which the death notes had been written. He had been present shortly after Patricia Hastings' abduction.

There certainly were enough suspicious circumstances surrounding the yogi to justify Inspector Gregg in arresting him!

The yogi had called up Lucas on the day of the murder to "inquire about a friend who had been missing several hours."

Who could that friend have been? The inventor Hastings had been missing several hours at that time. The yogi kept tabs on the inventor's daughter and must have known the father. It struck Van as very likely that the missing friend was Hastings.

THE yogi knew Hastings, the Tiger knew Hastings. Did the Norris-Scentley crowd know Hastings? Van meant to find that out if humanly possible—that and several other things.

As he sat there a plan came to him, a plan that might or might not achieve several objectives. But it was worth trying.

The first thing he did was to call Inspector Gregg from the nearest drug store telephone booth.

"Hello, Tom—the Phantom talking. Have you removed the body of Hilden Barret yet from the scene of the murder? No? Good! Do this for me: On some pretext or other get hold of Dorkley Evans, Perrin Calder, Harrington Dowd and Mitchell Hamberly. Also the yogi, Bandranath Das. Send police squad cars after them and get them all to the scene of the crime. I'll be there within the half hour!"

He went back to his car and made

a quick change into his rôle of middle-aged business man, changing his features to what they had been when he had last seen the directors.

This done, he turned his car downtown to Tenth Street just off Fifth Avenue.

Inspector Gregg was already there.

"Praise be, I got them all," said Gregg. "They'll be here any minute now."

Even as he spoke, cars came to a halt outside, while there was the distant wail of police sirens from other cars rapidly approaching.

Van heard voices, at the door. Harrington Dowd, cold-eyed and indifferent, was first to appear. He was followed by Perrin Calder and young Dorkley Evans, both of them showing the effects of a few drinks and both inclined to be annoyed at this violation of their privacy. The last to come were Mitchell Hamberly and Bandranath Das.

Together with the inspector and the Phantom, they went down to that game room, its gay colors and cheerful bar rendered sinister by the presence of that huddled figure under its sheet.

At the Phantom's request, a policeman in attendance uncovered the body, bringing the wound into view.

There were murmurs on the part of the group. Young Evans was white-faced and sick looking, Perrin Calder sobered up visibly. The yogi, Harrington Dowd, and Mitchell Hamberly stared gravely at the body.

"Before asking these gentlemen some questions," said the Phantom, "I wished to show you something about that wound, Inspector. You noted that the wound is distended, that its lips have not closed up as would normally happen with a wound inflicted by a slender bladed dagger. . . ."

"Proving what?" interrupted Harrington Dowd in bored fashion.

"Proving that the Kali murders have not been committed with the

Daggers of Kali," said the Phantom quietly. A silence fell on the group of men as they digested this information.

"Then how in blazes were they committed?" asked Dorkley Evans.

"I don't know yet," said the Phantom, "but I have an idea—so much of an idea that I don't believe that there will be any more Kali Dagger murders!"

"I don't see why you can't be frank about the matter and tell us how you think the job was done!" said Perrin Calder in annoyed fashion.

THE Phantom faced them gravely. "If we get on the subject of frankness, gentlemen, I think that I am the one who has a kick coming!"

"Meaning what?" asked Harrington Dowd, after a short silence.

"Meaning for one thing that you gentlemen were not perfectly frank with me when you failed to tell me that you had a deal on with Henry Sutton Hastings, the inventor!"

It was a shrewd guess on the Phantom's part, a shot in the dark as it were. But it turned out to be a well-aimed shot!

"We didn't think it had any bearing on the case—"

"It didn't seem important—"

"It was a confidential matter—"

They broke out in a chorus of explanation. Dorkley Evans spoke up when they quieted down.

"I tried to tell you!" he said sullenly, "but they ruled me out."

"I take it," said the Phantom, "that you are negotiating for this military invention."

The only man who kept silent was the yogi, Bandranath Das. His eyes were inscrutable and his face kept its Oriental composure. When the talk had died down he fixed his eyes upon the Phantom.

"May I ask why I have been called into this gathering?"

Everyone stared at him.

"Yes," said the Phantom. "I asked that you be here as I wished to question you on your business dealings with these men. Would you mind telling me, for example, if you have sold curios or objects of Oriental art to any of them and which ones?"

The Hindu inclined his head gravely.

"Yes, I have sold various statuettes and cloisonne work to Mr. Hamberly, to Mr. Dowd, and I have sold some Oriental weapons to Mr. Perrin Calder."

"Are you connected in any business deals otherwise with any of the board members of Norris-Scentley?" asked the Phantom.

There was a moment's silence. The four men stared at the yogi.

"No," he said at last, "I have no business dealings with them otherwise than as I have stated."

"You would not know then," said the Phantom softly, "of the secret radio station in the warehouse of the Norris-Scentley Company downtown?"

The yogi looked surprised. On the other four this shot had a shattering effect. The Phantom, watching their faces intently, decided that one or two of them were consummate poker players.

For their faces all expressed the same degree of astonishment and disbelief. They broke out into a storm of protest and denial.

"It is a matter of little moment to me," he said, "whether you believe me or not. The radio station is there."

He really spoke truly when he said that he was not interested in their denials. He was interested in the after effects of this dose of information.

As he told Inspector Thomas Gregg after they had departed:

"Some one in that group received the shock of his life. The guilty man, whoever he is, is going to get frightened. And when a man is frightened he does foolish things. And when he

does foolish things we nab him. Eh, Tom?"

"You said it, Phantom!" exclaimed Gregg heartily.

CHAPTER XVI

THE "BARON"



RICHARD VAN LOAN'S black roadster was a combination arsenal, wardrobe and dressing room as well as a very thoroughly equipped short-wave receiving station.

Once in his own car, he drove to a secluded street, halted, and made some rapid changes in costume and facial makeup. The conservative, middle-aged business man who had entered the car changed into a younger man with a broad, rather Slavic type of face and dressed in a cheap suit of rather extreme type and careless tailoring. In other words, Van had changed himself into a very good facsimile of a young mechanic of foreign extraction, dressed for the evening, and none save the keenest eyes could have seen the remotest resemblance either to Richard Curtis Van Loan or the conservative middle-aged business man of his previous incarnation.

This task completed with the aid of the flat leather case that he carried inside his vest, he changed his watch and money. Of this latter he carried considerable, having cashed a check of a thousand dollars before starting on this Kali Dagger murder case, and he had ten one hundred dollar bills in the original wrapping from the bank.

The entire operation of changing face and clothing took him scarcely five minutes, so rapidly did he work, and he was on his way downtown heading toward that warehouse with its secret radio.

Enroute, he turned on his own radio and listened to the news broadcast. There was the usual grist of submarine and air raids, of neutrality talk, and quiet on the western front.

The last shipload of stranded Americans was crossing the Atlantic, some two thousand of them who now were nearing the North American coast on board the steamship *Parthenia*. Submarines were reported sighted off the Atlantic coast. The Pan American nations were cooperating harmoniously with the United States and each other with the exception of one of them which had incurred the disapproval of North and

heard no sound and entered the passageway, feeling his way in the darkness.

IT WAS not long until he heard the hum of the generator and reasoned that the radio was still operating. His theory as to the connection between the Norris-Scentley directors and the Tiger had not been proved as yet! But, he reflected, there had been very little time between his announcement of the radio station to the four directors and prompt arrival of himself here at the warehouse.

It was his reasoning that if the Tiger gang promptly dismantled the radio and fled from this hideout, that

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South Americans by selling a newly delivered submarine to some unstated non-American power.

Van came at last to a garage some four blocks from the Norris-Scentley warehouse, where he left his car and made the rest of the way on foot.

There was no sign of life around the warehouse as he approached it by that front entrance with its small office. The office door was locked, but he made short work of opening it and was soon in the darkness of the warehouse, making his way through the great stacks of bales and sacks.

In the darkness he headed for that narrow door and passageway leading to the radio room. After several tries he found it.

Listening intently in the gloom, he

it would be only through information furnished them by one of the Norris-Scentley directors, which would be direct proof of complicity.

Ahead of him, at the top of the staircase, he saw the reflection of a faint light, and, as he came nearer, he heard voices. Moving as cautiously as a cat in a strange alley, he crept up to the rear of that instrument board and crouched, listening intently.

"You mean to say we have to abandon thees so beautiful equipment!" one voice was saying—a mechanical sort of voice with a decided foreign accent.

"I ain't sayin' it!" said the other voice gruffly. "It's the Tiger what says it, and when the Tiger says anything it's safer to do exact what he

says. He says get word out to the Baron and to the sub-commander to change their wave length and call on the other station from now on—”

Van was holding his breath so as not to miss a word. The “Baron”—the “sub-commander”!

A sudden horrible suspicion flashed through him and left him chilled.

“But eet iss—how you say—dangerous,” said the foreign voice. “The sheep, the *Parthenia*—she cooms very close now—and the submarine, she cooms verree close to the *Parthenia*—maybe three, four hours more—”

“That ain’t up to you—the Tiger’ll take care o’ that. Send off those messages to the *Parthenia* and the sub-commander and quit stallin’ . . .”

The full significance of the words he was hearing struck Van with terrific force. Almost incredulous under the impact of the full horror of it, his mind was working mechanically, putting together this bit of information and that, until the picture in all its terrible starkness was clear in his mind.

TH**ERE** was the nickname of the “Baron”! Full-bodied from the recesses of Van’s mind came the memory of that name—the “Baron”—the title of one of the most relentless and clever secret agents in the world!

There was that strange radio message Van had heard on his first visit to this hidden station, the message giving latitude and longitude. There was the international situation, with one of the great powers known to be anxious to involve the United States in the European war, an involvement which would take America out of that foreign nations sphere of activities and give it a free hand. There was the South American nation which had earned the ill will of the Pan American powers by selling one of its newly delivered submarines to an unnamed foreign power. And there was the radio news broadcast of the two thousand American citizens approach-

ing the North Atlantic coast aboard the steamship *Parthenia*!

The “Baron” was aboard the *Parthenia* . . . radioing its position and course . . . the submarine was lurking in wait ready to send two thousand American men, women and children to their deaths in a welter of scalding steam, jagged steel and mangled bodies! No doubt the “Baron” had some means of escaping with his own life.

With his mind dwelling on the full horror of the thing and his brain seeking out some way to frustrate the plot before it was too late, Van forgot all regard for his own safety and overlooked entirely the danger of his position.

The cold steel muzzle of a pistol, pressed against his ear, recalled him very graphically to his present danger!

A powerful light was flashed upon him. A chuckle came out of the darkness.

“This is about where I figured you would be, Phantom!” came the rasping, dynamic voice of the Tiger. “You’ve changed your appearance, but it couldn’t be any one but you.”

Van realized that the Tiger had stalked his prey with a vengeance!

“Get those hands up and keep them up!” the Tiger’s voice was full of deadly menace. “Thanks to your pestiferous activities, Phantom, I haven’t much time to waste upon you. I regret that I have to put a sudden stop to those activities—put it down as the fortunes of war—”

The Tiger raised his voice. Men came from the radio room. To one of them, a slouching, stoop-shouldered gangster with a twisted mouth, the Tiger issued sharp and sinister orders.

“You, Tony—take this fellow down to the boiler room. Don’t take any chances with him, he’s dangerous! Take your sawed-off shotgun and rub him out! Dispose of his body in the big boiler. Quickly now. Report back

here when you've finished. We've got to be out of here and on our way in thirty minutes! Remember, Tony, don't take any chances with this fellow. He'll outsmart you if you don't watch your step! You know what will happen to you if you fail."

"He won't outsmart me!" growled Tony, as he poked his gun in Van's back. "Come on, punk!" he ordered, and drove Van forward, around the big instrument board and into the radio room.

THE radio operator, his earphones on, was transmitting orders to the mysterious "Baron," giving the wave length of the new station. Six or seven men were busy in the radio room, packing up portable equipment. They paid little attention to Van and his guard. One of them spat and said something about the "Long Island hideout." As Van was shoved out through the door of the radio room he heard the flailing voice of the Tiger behind him, speeding up the work.

Tony was grimly silent behind him, prodding him occasionally with the muzzle of that sawed-off shotgun. Nor did Van relish that weapon, one of the most deadly and certain weapons in existence at close range.

Van's captor drove him down the narrow iron steps and along the passageway to the right, toward a lighted room—the room into which Van had not ventured on his first visit to this place.

The room was in disorder. Several men were working there, hastily bundling up their personal belongings and various articles of equipment. They paid no heed to Van or his captor as Van was marched through the room and through a door on the far side.

It was clear to him now that he was approaching the boiler room of the warehouse, probably that boiler room that generated the power for the refrigerating plant. A wave of

heat came up from an open staircase that lay directly ahead.

Van's mind raced. There could not be many minutes before that shattering blast from Tony's sawed-off shotgun obliterated him into a bloody mess.

He began to talk.

"Tony," he said over his shoulder as they began to descend the steps, "how'd you like to pick up fifty grand?"

Tony's reply was a snarl and an emphatic poke with the gun.

"Fifty grand is a lot of money, Tony!" Van persisted. "Fifty grand in fifty smooth bundles of ten century notes each."

"Aw, shut up—whad'you mean, fifty grand!" snarled Tony. "A punk like you couldn't scare up fifty cents! Keep them hands up!"

"That's where you prove yourself a sap, Tony!" returned Van. They were on the bottom step now. The dim light of a globe showed the big boiler and furnace with the great stacks of fine coal in their bins. Van knew that his time was short.

"Aw, come on, let's get this job over with, punk!" said Tony. "I gotta be on my way—get goin'! Over there by the furnace, so's I won't have to lug your carcass so blame far after I've rubbed you out!"

TONY reinforced his order by another shove.

"Well, all I can say, Tony, is don't smear up the one grand I've got in my pocket. It would be kind of hard to spend it if it was all smeared up with blood and full of bullet holes!"

"I'll believe that when I see it!" jeered Tony, plainly skeptical.

"It isn't much trouble to see it!" argued Van. "It's right here in my vest pocket."

Van was counting on the sight of that bundle of one hundred dollar bills to arouse Tony's cupidity for more—it was his only chance. Tony might take the money and refuse to

believe in the existence of any more. There was also a chance that he could catch Tony off guard and deal him out with a swift blow.

But Tony was too wise for that.

He kept the gun muzzle pressed against the small of Van's back, holding the weapon like a pistol in his left hand while with his right he swiftly reached over Van's shoulder and extracted the bundle of notes from the inside pocket.

"Look them over, Tony," said Van. "There's more where that came from. Forty-nine more bundles just like that—all laid out neatly in a black briefcase, brought down here to ransom that Hastings girl your gang snatched today!"

The pressure of the gun muzzle lessened appreciably against Van's back. Then it suddenly tightened.

"Punk, a bird in the hand is worth two among the daisies. I'm ahead one grand. That suits me fine. Move along."

Tony pushed Van nearer the furnace. A baleful red glare showed from the roor not more than twenty feet away.

Van stiffened against the gun muzzle, expecting any second to feel a rending, tearing agony go through him.

"What a sap you are, Tony!" Van's voice was hard and contemptuous. "Here you've got a chance to cash in on fifty grand, hidden in a car not five minutes' walk from here—and instead of taking it, you blot me out and lose the chance of a lifetime—"

"How far from here did'ja say it was?" asked Tony suddenly.

"Not five minutes' walk—you could be there and back in ten minutes with no one the wiser and you fifty grand to the good!"

"Supposin' you tell me where it is, guy," suggested Tony craftily, "and I'll see that you don't get hurt!"

"Okay, that's a bargain!" agreed Van with seeming guilelessness. "It's in a sedan—parked near a—"

He stopped. Tony's eagerness was very obvious.

"But listen here, Tony, how do I know you're going to play fair? You've got to give me some kind of a break!"

Tony, with the vision of great wealth so near and this sap so patently ready to tell all he knew before he was rubbed out, grew almost poetic in his protestations of good intent.

"Why, look here, guy! I wouldn't doublecross nobody." He spoke in an injured tone as of one whose lily white character had been foully aspersed.

But as voluble as he was, Tony was too cautious to relax the pressure of that gun muzzle.

"You'd sell your own mother!" said Van contemptuously, steeling himself against what he momentarily expected would be a shattering burst of white-hot pain and oblivion.

TONY was cut to the quick by this unfair analysis of his character, so much so that he eased up a little on the gun muzzle the while he explained the true nobility of his character.

Van's eyes in the meantime were ranging about the cellar. Off to the left was a tier of glass carboys, filled with some colorless liquid that he was sure was ammonia for the refrigerating plant. A few feet ahead of where he stood, nearer the furnace, was the single electric light globe which illumined the place. It hung pendant from a cord and was about the height of Van's upraised hands.

Nearby was an iron rod used for breaking clinkers. All these things etched themselves on his mind as Tony tried to wheedle from him the secret of the location of that remaining money.

Van edged imperceptibly nearer that electric light globe.

"All right," he said at last, "I'll tell you—if you'll take that shell out of the chamber and promise me that you'll let me duck out of here."

He could almost see Tony grinning. While the shotgun was a single shot affair, it was after all only a second's job to load another shell into the chamber.

Tony could scarcely keep his mirth from showing in his speech. This was too easy!

"Why sure, guy, I'll take it out!" He broke the breech and showed the shell on the palm of his hand.

At that second a flailing voice came rasping down the staircase.

"What in blazes are you doing down there, Tony?" came the strident voice of the Tiger. "Get on with that job and get up here!"

"Comin', Boss!" Tony shouted back, and turned his face, now wrinkled with worry.

"The bet is off, punk!" he said sharply. "It ain't worth fifty grand



to me to git my own head blown off! Get goin' and let's get this over with."

He started to reload the gun.

"Fire a shot in the air, you sap!" said Van, "and he'll think you've carried out your orders!"

So authoritative and so commanding was Van's tone, that Tony paused again. After all, fifty grand was fifty grand. He closed the breech of the gun and, aiming along the floor, pulled the trigger.

At the instant that the gun roared Van leaped for that electric light globe and smashed it between his hands.

At the same second he leaped to the left, picking up that iron bar. As he heard the swift unloading and tinkle of the empty cartridge case and the snap of a new one being thrust

into the breech, Van flung the iron bar at those carboys of ammonia.

The crash of the iron bar and the tinkle of glass far to the right drew Tony's fire and again the gun roared forth.

AS THE echo died down, Van, using every iota of knowledge and skill he possessed in ventriloquism, emitted a sepulchral groan that came shuddering forth from the vicinity of the glass carboys.

Tony, pressing a fresh cartridge into the breech of his gun, hurried over to finish the "mortally wounded" victim off. The fumes of the ammonia made him gasp and cough, filled his eyes with tears and blinded him to that shadow behind him.

The devastating smash that came out of the darkness found Tony totally unprepared. Van's fist crashed like a battering ram against the point of his jaw.

Tony reeled only to meet another and a finishing blow that dropped him twitching and silent.

Someone shouted at the head of the stairs. Van shouted back, as he dragged Tony's form away from those fumes and across to where a small door led into another part of the cellar. There was a light globe here. Closing the door, Van worked swiftly.

In scarcely three minutes he reappeared, this time clad in Tony's turtle neck sweater and corduroy trousers, his mouth twisted in excellent imitation of Tony's and his shoulders sagging in the same fashion. Nor did he neglect to transfer that sheaf of hundred dollar bills back to proper ownership.

It was not a well done job, this quick disguise, the time being so short, but Van, knowing the confusion of moving going on above, hoped to get by with it.

At the last, picking up some ropes and cotton waste, he headed up the stairs to the Tiger's domain.

CHAPTER XVII
IN THE TIGER'S DEN



SCENE of immense activity greeted the Phantom's eyes, with every one working at feverish speed.

A biting, flailing voice greeted him as he entered the room.

"You took long enough to blot out

a regiment, Tony! Did you finish off that fellow?"

"Yep!" Van replied in Tony's snarling tones. "My gun hadda go and jam on me!"

The last few articles were hurriedly gathered in, the men began filing out of there.

Van followed them, his sawed-off shotgun over his arm.

Through a dimly lighted passage he had not seen before, they came up into an alley through a cellar entrance.

Two trucks waited there with another car which Van figured was the Tiger's.

The men piled into the trucks after loading their last few bundles. There was a roar of motors and the journey commenced.

Van had purposely been last so as to secure a seat at the rear of the closed truck where he could watch the road.

They made good time, rolling up-town and across the Queensboro Bridge, out through Queens, past Flushing, through Douglaston, Little Neck and Great Neck, where they turned off the main road and headed toward Kings Point. No one spoke to Tony. The gangsters dozed quietly while they rode.

Van had been through this section many times, a guest at numerous week-end house parties and knew every inch of the road. He recognized the thoroughfare as Harkness

Drive as the truck halted by a pair of big white gate posts, surmounted by lions *rampant*.

He knew those gate posts. He knew who owned the house.

It was the property of Harrington Dowd!

But there was little time given him to think on this matter.

"Everybody out!" came that flailing voice. "We can't run any more chances. Every man of you step up to me and whisper the password for the day before he goes in the gate!"

Van's heart skipped a beat or two. This was going to be complicated! He was one of the first out, jumping to the ground in the glare of a white beamed flashlight held steadily upon each man in turn. He achieved some delay by dropping his shotgun and fishing for it below the truck, his back to the light. One man and then another stepped up into the full glare of the white light and whispered a hoarse word. Van tried to hear it, but could not make it out. At last, so as not to excite suspicion, he shambled toward the light, the shotgun in hand.

The white beam beat steadily upon him.

"Here, you—you're not Tony!" came the rasping voice.

His hasty disguise had been pierced by the Tiger's keen eye!

VAN swung the sawed-off shotgun with all his force at that flashlight. There was a yell of alarm and pain as the thing smashed under the impact. But Van had already leaped into the darkness. There came a shot out of the void behind him and the roar of the Tiger's strident voice but Van had already lost himself under the shadows of the high walls, running swiftly and silently until the sound of the gang behind him came only as a faint echo and the clamor of pursuit, if pursuit there was, stilled itself.

The high wall circling the place seemed to yield few means of entry,

Van sought along the high, shadowy walls in and out of the brush and trees at their base.

It was after some minutes of progress that his search was at last rewarded. He found a small gate, evidently used by the gardener to carry out refuse, judging by the piles of leaves, branches and general garden débris scattered about outside.

The gate was set deep within the wall and locked with a simple latch from the inside.

It was no trick to force this and Van stepped inside, closing the gate behind him. He found himself on a graveled pathway that led through what was evidently a kitchen garden. Beyond its expanse, over a hedge, he saw the roof of a big, old-fashioned house looming unlighted in the darkness.

At that second, something hard and cold thrust itself against his ribs.

"So, my fine feathered friend!" said a half jocular, half menacing voice which Van recognized instantly as that of Goldie, the flat-faced, gold-toothed man of his previous experience. The man's bulk was a dim and menacing shadow in the gloom, but there was nothing dim about the sawed-off shotgun he held.

"If you don't want a handful of slugs tearin' through your guts, you'll come along quiet!" said the man.

For reply Van looked past the man's shoulder.

"Don't shoot him!" he commanded sharply. It was an old trick, ever new. The flat-faced man laughed harshly until he heard a voice behind him.

"Let me blow the top of his head off!" pleaded the voice, and at this the man with the shotgun turned involuntarily, nor did he notice the twitching muscles in Van's throat, and could not be expected to know that the Phantom could call ventriloquism to his aid upon occasion.

In fact, the flat-faced man knew very little of what happened, for, as

he turned, the sawed-off shotgun was suddenly jerked to one side, something akin to a battering ram exploded against the point of his jaw, and he passed very quietly into a dark oblivion.

The Phantom wiped his hands after unloading the weapon and throwing it into the tangle of plants behind a hot-bed. Rolling the unconscious form of his antagonist behind the shrubbery, he moved silently and swiftly toward the house. The trucks with the new arrivals disgorged their crews, who disappeared into the house.

KEEPING a sharp eye out for any further interference, Van approached the front driveway, halting in the shadow of a yew tree and studying the broad porch and the porte-cochere under which he saw two or three dark figures. The front entrance was guarded.

Moving from tree to tree and keeping within the shadows of the shrubbery, he circled back to the rear of the house, noting that there were lights in only one room on the ground floor.

A clump of evergreens stood outside of what was evidently the kitchen entrance. Beyond that, a yard or two, were sloping doors leading to the cellar. One of these doors was opened, and Van moved quietly down the cellar steps and entered the dark and silent cellar regions of the house.

Once inside, he stopped and listened, hearing nothing in the cellar, but noting a faint padding of footsteps above in the kitchen.

Moving cautiously forward in the darkness, he attempted to locate the stairs leading to the upper regions and was successful in finding them at last.

Up these he crept, every nerve strained and tense, stopping often to listen.

The door on the first floor was unlocked and he thrust it open gently and found himself looking into a rear

hallway which was dimly lighted by a single small electric globe.

He was just about to step into this hallway when a shadowy something stirred at its farther end and a man rose from a bench and stretched and yawned.

Van froze into immobility, watching the fellow through the partially opened door. For a full moment he stood there, trying to figure out some way of getting past the man without being seen.

There seemed to be no way, short of tackling the lone sentinel, with the resulting outcry that this would produce.

As he stood there making up his mind, he heard a sound that caused him to tighten up every nerve and muscle.

Someone was padding cautiously through the cellar below, approaching the stairway on which he stood.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SHADOW SHAPE



HOSE padding footsteps below were approaching nearer at every step. In a few seconds more, the man in the cellar would inevitably see Van's shadow against the lighted hallway above.

Van took a quick survey of his chances, staring at the figure of the man who blocked his forward movement. The fellow was still stretching and yawning, half turned from where Van stood and seemingly gazing in the other direction.

The padding footsteps below were almost at the foot of the staircase. Suddenly Van's eyes came to rest on an electric switch not four feet away, undoubtedly the switch that controlled that single dim light in the hallway.

It needed swift action and the

chance that the lone sentry would not spy him in time.

He took one long stride, gazing at the fellow. The man started to turn. Van leaped the intervening distance, snapped off the switch, leaving the hallway in darkness.

A startled grunt came from the man at the other end of the hall. Van heard him stumbling and cursing as he fumbled for the switch.

At that second Van sensed someone hurrying swiftly by him with a quick padding of soft-soled slippers.

The grumbled complaints of the sentry ended in a startled gasp and a queer choking cry which gurgled into nothingness. There followed a faint thud as of a body dropping to the floor.

Van, every sense alert, made for the point whence the sound had proceeded. As he neared the place, he halted, listening, but could hear nothing. Advancing another step, his foot came into contact with something yielding and inert on the floor. He reached down swiftly and felt the outlines of a body stretched out prone on the floor.

Van's skillful hands felt over the inert form but could find no wound. At last they came to the head and shoulders and recoiled.

For his fingers showed him that the head was bent at a crazy angle from his body. The man's neck had been broken!

Van rose upright, recalling the radio operator in the secret room in the warehouse who had died in the same swift and mysterious fashion. That strange unknown ally had struck again with the silence of a follower of Kali!

After a few second's tense listening, Van moved forward in the darkness and came to a door leading, evidently, to the main hallway.

He could hear no sound on the other side of the door, and cautiously opened it.

He found himself looking into the

main hallway. A single lamp near the door shed a dim glow and showed the base of a broad staircase and doors opening out into what were evidently drawing rooms and a dining room.

There seemed to be no one about, although he could hear the faint stir of people moving around in the upstairs region and what sounded like the dim murmur of voices by the front door.

PRESSING forward on his quest, he advanced a few steps, then came to a halt and stiffened into statue-like stillness. Just in time he had seen the faint movement of some-

house and yet the portieres over the entrance to the drawing room were moving ever so slightly. They swelled out and then fell back, leaving a shadowy outline of some formless thing crouched in front of it.

Wondering if his eyes were playing tricks upon him, Van peered intently at that shadowy form. As it came nearer to the rays of the overhead lamp, Van saw the restless movement of a pair of hands jerking something back and forth. The man at the doorway stirred as though to turn, and the shadowy figure approaching it was lost in the shadows. The sentry, however, renewed his scrutiny of whatever was taking

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one on guard inside the main door which was partially open. The man's back was to him and he was evidently staring out to the porch.

The sentry, if sentry he was, seemed to be all intent upon what was going on outside and paid no heed to the dimly lit entrance-hall behind him.

It was Van's intention to get to the upper regions where he was certain that Patricia Hastings and her father were imprisoned.

Weighing his chances, he decided to creep past that preoccupied sentry and make the staircase. Some instinct halted him before he started to put his plan into execution. There was an entrance to a drawing room to the left of where the sentry stood. There was no breeze stirring in the

place outside. The wraithlike shadow against the wall, its hands jerking something back and forth, came nearer and ever nearer until Van felt like warning the unconscious sentinel.

Before he could put any such a plan into execution, the wraithlike figure glided behind the man at the door, obscuring his form for a few seconds.

There came a queer gasp. The wraithlike figure leaped back into the shadows from whence it had come.

The form of the sentry tottered backwards in queer, stumbling fashion and then pitched forward, falling to the floor with a jarring thud.

So swiftly was the tragedy consummated that Van had scarce time to advance a step before the deed had

been accomplished. The wraithlike figure which had so mysteriously and so silently slain two men in the last few minutes seemed to have disappeared.

Van, however, was under no illusions. Death lurked in the shadows of this place, a death that had struck savagely and silently against his enemies. But it behooved him to keep on the alert to avoid being struck down as these others had been. For they had died at the hands of a follower of Kali. Of that there was no doubt, after seeing the jerk and snap of that length of silk. The followers of Kali were excellent stranglers.

Van crept forward, listening and watching, wondering how long it would be before someone would discover that inert form sprawled so crazily before the door. In any case he had little time and must move quickly. He advanced under the shadow of the great staircase until he was nearly at the foot of the stairs. Then he noted an entrance of a room to the right, a room that was undoubtedly a library from its location. In three swift strides he crossed in front of the stairway and into the library.

A DIM light showed on a desk in the corner. In its rays Van saw that the library was large and well stocked with books, most of them in leather and gold tooled bindings. The rugs were deep and soft and his tread was noiseless as he passed on through the library into a smaller room, a sort of den or study behind it. This room was rather more homely in character, being simply furnished with a flat topped desk, a comfortable chair beside it and a great globe showing continents and seas and steamship lanes.

The walls were lined with plain shelves filled with a heterogeneous lot of bric-a-brac among which Van noted some small Oriental statuettes in jade, in crystal, in rock salt and

in soapstone, products of the salesmanship of the yogi.

There seemed to be no exit from this smaller room until Van noted what seemed to be a closet behind the desk.

He tried the handle of this and found that it was locked, but this proved no bar to him for he quickly inserted a skeleton key and opened the door, finding himself gazing into blackness. Turning on the light switch, he saw that the closet was a larger room than he had imagined and was, in effect, a sort of carpenter shop and tool room, containing a lathe run by a small electric motor, a work-bench with vise and clamps and a comprehensive assortment of wood and metal working tools.

Shavings on the floor, sawdust and traces of metal filings proved that the room was more for use than ornament. The master of this house was evidently an amateur carpenter and metallurgist and in addition to that, a chemist as well, for on the far wall of the small room was a table loaded with test tubes, a Bunsen burner and a retort with racks above it containing bottles and tins of various chemicals.

Van studied each item in the room carefully and thoroughly, coming at last to the lathe.

Van stared at it a moment, then bent down to examine some traces of grayish white powder on the lathe. Taking up a pinch of this, he sniffed it and examined it more intently. At last he sought and found an envelope and took a generous pinch of the grayish powder, placed it in the envelope and sealed it before putting it in his pocket.

The house was strangely silent. No sound broke the stillness except the great clock at the far end of the library which melodiously chimed the half hour. The house itself seemed to be crouched and waiting, holding its breath.

Van went softly out of the work-

room, through the den and into the library. Here he paused to listen but heard no sound. He kept on his way, intending to seek upstairs for Steve Huston and the two Hastings, father and daughter.

That inert figure still lay undisturbed in front of the door.

It was high time he was getting upstairs before any one appeared to prevent him. He moved quietly into the hallway and had advanced up the first three or four steps when he noted that the front door was being pushed open against the still body which blocked it on the inside. A figure appeared in the opening.

Van, standing in the shadows of the staircase recognized the figure stumbling through with other men following.

IT WAS the by now familiar form of his particular Nemesis, the flat-faced, gold-toothed Goldie. There was a sizeable welt on Goldie's face and he was still groggy from the blow that Van had dealt him.

Stumbling over the inert body of the sentry, he emitted a startled yell.

"Somebody's croaked Baldy!" he shouted. Two or three men crowded past him, staring at the still form on the floor of the hallway.

At that second another yell came from the rear of the house, and a man came running through the hallway.

"Lefty Miller has been rubbed out! He's laid out cold back by the rear door!"

Van began to move quietly up the staircase, knowing that the hue and cry would be on at any second.

There was a light just above the second floor landing. It was when he tried to slip unobserved through this that someone below spied him.

"There he is! The guy that killed Baldy!"

Van saw a large doorway opposite him, leading into an unlighted room. Into this he dashed with the sound

of the men piling up the stairs after him.

He was half way across the large room, his feet muffled in the heavy rug, the sound of threatening voices in the hallway behind him growing nearer by the second, when he heard a slight clicking sound.

His eyes were suddenly blinded by the intense white light from two high power lamps backed by the reflectors.

Behind the lights he sensed rather than saw the dim forms of two or three people.

The doorway in the rear was filled with shouting men, bent on murder, each intent upon being the first to drag him down.

CHAPTER XIX

THE HINDU CHANT



VAN stood there, arms hanging loosely at his sides, measuring distance between the foremost of those advancing men and the two glaring white lights that beat so pitilessly upon him. As the foremost of the

mob lunged for him, he stepped backward and with a single sweep of his arm crashed the two lights to the floor, plunging the room into darkness.

As though the two motions were simultaneous, he leaped toward the windows of the room facing on the park.

Behind him he heard the mob crashing the desk, splintering the shades of the lamps as they milled about trying to find him in the darkness.

While they were thus occupied, he slid along the wall, making for the door, after he tried opening the windows which were locked firmly.

He was half way to the door when a sudden white beam of a powerful

flashlight stabbed through the milling group, touched the door and ranged back along the door, focusing upon him.

"There he is! Drag him down!" came an authoritative, dominating ringing voice, a voice which Van recognized instantly.

It was the voice of the man, Tiger!

There was an immediate concerted rush upon him. He swung at the nearest crouching figure and felt the man go down. Someone dived at his knees and he sidestepped and kicked. Three men had circled around behind him. He leaped at the nearest of these, picked him up bodily and hurled him at his fellows, who went down like ninepins. Dodging a vicious swing at his jaw, he caught another powerful blow on his chest and gave back before it, lessening the impact. A suddenly outstretched foot caught him and he stumbled backward. Something crashed against the side of his head, and he felt himself falling through what seemed to be illimitable space in a darkness that was rent through with flashes of colored light until all became dark and silent.

The black oblivion in which he was immersed began gradually to lighten. He seemed to be swimming upward from dark depths towards a light that shone dimly distant. The brighter the light grew, the more was he aware of an increasingly painful throbbing that sounded like the beat of some vast pulsating machinery. The light grew brighter until its radiance blinded him and he closed his eyes for a second. From far off he heard voices around him, and felt cold water dashed on his face.

"The punk is coming to!" said a harsh voice above him, and he opened his eyes. Through half-lowered lids he saw feet around him. Repressing a faint nausea that seemed likely to overwhelm him, he tried to regain control of his wits. Someone kicked him. The anger that flooded through

him further accelerated his recovery of comprehension.

He saw that he was still in the large room stretched out on the deep piled rug. The blinding lights on the desk had been refurbished and they were working once more. He could not see beyond them but sensed a shadowy form.

WITH a start of surprise he noted, near his range of vision, a pair of silken clad ankles bound firmly to the legs of the chair. Sweeping his eyes upward, he saw the pale face and haunting eyes of Patricia Hastings. The girl was bound firmly to a chair, her hands tied to its back. Near her was another chair, its occupant likewise bound. Peering upward, Van saw that it was a gray-haired bespectacled man whom he judged to be sixty years of age. There was a certain resemblance in the man's features and the shape of his nose to Patricia Hastings and Van sensed immediately that this must be her father, the inventor of the military device. His speculations on the reason for their presence were interrupted by the vibrant notes of a dominating voice.

"So you see, Hastings," the voice came from behind the lamps, "you have little choice in the matter. You have exactly one hour to make up your mind. Either you sign the paper authorizing that the working plans and blueprints be turned over to us, or I regret to state that your daughter will be put to death, quite slowly, and quite painfully before your eyes!"

A dead silence fell upon the room, broken by a groan from the gray-haired man, who slumped in his chair, a picture of helplessness and hopelessness.

"It is useless for you to consider any other alternative," continued that strangely dominant voice. "You are faced by a ruthless force that will not stop at taking one life or any

number of lives to achieve its purpose. To impress upon you that we mean business, you will have opportunity to study the methods of our vengeance at first hand. This fellow, bound and helpless on the floor, a man who is called the Phantom—this man who has had the effrontery to pit his pitiful talents against our great organization—will be put to death before your eyes and the eyes of your daughter. I regret that the details will be unpleasant. But this will serve as a lesson and a warning to you as to what will happen when the time comes for torture and death to strike down your own daughter!"

The girl moaned slightly and her eyes sought those of the man on the floor near her feet. It was evident that she did not recognize him but she stared, questingly at his face, a little startled at the quiet courage that shone from Van's eyes.

As for Van, he was grimly determined to stop the horror that was about to be perpetrated—just how he did not know as yet. He hoped that Steve Huston was somewhere about—and then that hope flickered and died out as he saw a bound form in the shadows on the far side of the two chairs that held the captives.

It was Steve Huston, an ugly gash on his head, his eyes half closed.

As Van's eyes grew more accustomed to the light he glanced to right and left. He was being guarded by a man on either side, pistol in hand. The man on his right he did not recognize, but on his left was the familiar flat-face of his acquaintance, Goldie. Goldie was grinning at him, his profusion of gold teeth shining in the glare of the light, his eyes stagnant as a pool of dirty water lighted from beneath by some flare of sardonic cruelty.

IT WAS to be a lone fight for the Phantom, without pity, without mercy, and without help!

"My compliments to you, Phan-

tom!" came that strangely dynamic, dominating voice that Van had learned to associate with the ruthless leader of this strange gang. "Yes," continued the voice, "I am not one to deny ability to a worthy antagonist. You have withstood our power longer than any of our enemies. If our task was not nearly completed and our duty nearly done, I would take measures to enlist you in our service. But seeing that there is no need for you and that your further existence is dangerous to us, I must regretfully condemn you to death."

"That's very noble of you, I'm sure," returned Van lightly, staring into the impenetrable shadow behind that light. If he could only pierce the vanity of this strange being or rouse his anger, he might learn something. "Yes, that's quite worthy of you. You, of course, are certain that your noble plans are all going to succeed?"

"Phantom, I give you credit for being clever!" came the voice. "You can neither rouse my anger, nor disturb my vanity. What is done was well planned. Not only months but years have gone into its preparation and with all due regard to you, Phantom, with your little bag of tricks, useful against petty criminals, you are too small to cope with the mighty forces you have seen fit to set yourself against!"

"In other words, you credit me with being a criminal expert but deny me the title of expert in international affairs? You may be right, at that," returned Van reasonably. "For example, I can see some justification in your attempting to secure the latest thing in military devices for the nation you serve. What I cannot see is your justification for sending two thousand innocent Americans to the bottom of the sea!"

"Naturally, you cannot see," returned that vibrant, dominating voice. "The mighty destiny of nations is a thing beyond your compre-

hension. It is impossible for you to see that the destiny of a great nation is involved in my activities and that the lives and fortunes of several hundred million of people will benefit by my skill!" The man's voice held a fanatic ring.

"That's expressing it pretty well, Satcha Inoye!" said Van. "But it has always puzzled me as to how much you are a patriot for honor and how much for profit—"

"I see you know my true identity," said the Tiger. "Therefore it is doubly necessary that you die very soon!"

"Yes, I understand, but what I am getting at is this deal with Hastings," said Van. "Of course you killed off poor Lucas because he was dealing with Hastings and had nearly closed a deal with the American and British Governments excluding your nation—"

"He had to die—he was in the path of empire!" said the Tiger.

"And I suppose you killed off Colton Fairlee and Hilden Barret because they were in with Lucas?"

THE Tiger's silence gave assent. Van continued:

"Then came the hitch. Someone, I suppose, told the other members of the board about the invention and the deal with the murdered men, and Hastings was about to start negotiations with them—so you had to kidnap Hastings. Is that right?"

"I am listening, Phantom. It won't make much difference to you one way or the other in a very little while!"

"And of course, Hastings wanted to produce the device himself and sell it, whereas your government demanded complete plans and working drawings. Therefore you are handling Hastings roughly. That is true, is it not?"

"You may believe it if you like!" came the noncommittal reply.

"I am very curious to know who told the other board members, after the deaths of Lucas, Fairlee and Bar-

ret. Would you tell me, Satcha Inoye, seeing that, as you say, the knowledge will do me no good in a little while?"

"It was that dog of a Hindu, the Yogi Bandranath Das!" said the Tiger, explosively.

"Oh!" said Van, softly. "I see! And was the yogi representing himself or—"

"Naturally not!" broke in the Tiger's strident voice. "He was also representing a powerful government!"

"Sort of a competitor, I take it. That's why you planted the rice paper in his library, and worked up the Kali Dagger angle knowing that suspicion would fall upon him owing to his race and through his efforts to purchase the daggers. But tell me something more, Satcha Inoye. Your main task was to embroil the American nation in the European war, was it not? Yes? I thought so. So the Kali Dagger murders were after all, a sort of screen for the big job?"

"And the big job, as you call it, is not yet finished!" broke in the Tiger's voice. "Even now it approaches its conclusion. It is the fortune of war, Phantom, but now you must go to your death. Goldie will take you down and get everything in readiness. It is unfortunate that I must also use your death and the manner of your death to further my plans, but it is unavoidable. But before I send you to your death, I shall prove to you how futile your efforts have been!"

Satcha Inoye gave a low-voiced order.

There came a faint click and a radio loud speaker was on. For a moment there was only the surge and crackle of static. Then a flat, mechanical voice began to speak.

"Station 2N74 calling—station 2N74—waiting in readiness—crew at torpedo stations—objective five miles east on port bow—station 2N74 standing by for final orders—"

THE vibrant voice of the Tiger came out of the shadows again:

"Do you need further proof, Phantom?" There was a note of triumph in the vibrant voice. "You can go to your death like the brave man I esteem you to be, Phantom, in full knowledge of the failure of your puny efforts to halt the destiny of nations! Al, take word upstairs to the radio operator. Tell him to send word to the sub-commander to fire when in range of his objective! Goldie, it looks as if the job is yours to blot out the Phantom.

"Take him down to the usual place and get things ready. When you're ready, send up word and I will have these two brought down as witnesses! Get busy, the time is short!"

Scarcely had the echo of the man's voice died down than Van was jerked to his feet in no gentle fashion. His hands were bound before him and he was half led, half dragged out of the room. His last glimpse of the place showed him the haunting eyes of the girl fixed upon him in horror and dread.

He and his captors went down the stairs to the hallway whence the body of the slain sentry had already been removed. Over the shoulders of his guard he glanced at those portieres which shielded the drawing room from view on the far side.

Van glanced at the portieres fronting the hallway.

There was no breeze in that hallway but the portieres moved.

All of a sudden Van began a semi-delirious sort of chant, a queer jumble of words in some foreign tongue that none of his captors understood. Least of all did they understand that he was chanting in Hindustanee, chanting the invocation to Kali, calling upon the goddess for aid, invoking the power of Kali to protect a follower of Kali who was on his way to his death! It was the same chant he had learned in Benares. The same chant that had come out of the dark-

ness in the freezing room in the warehouse.

It was a weird singsong chant to be heard in that strange place, and his captors put it down to the blow on the head he had received and the delirium caused thereby.

He found himself being jerked along down those same cellar steps by which he had entered. He was kicked and struck to accelerate his progress.

After reaching the cellar itself, his captors dragged him across the floor to the far side toward what seemed to be a line of shelves containing empty fruit jars and jelly glasses. One of them pulled out a small iron rod concealed behind the glasses and an entire section of the shelving swung smoothly outward on oiled hinges.

The same man flicked on a light switch disclosing a square, low-ceiled cement wall chamber, some twenty feet in length, and the same in breadth. There was little in the chamber save a row of sacks with the word "cement" printed on each, a shovel and other tools and two long, wooden boxes.

There was one other object at which Van stared speculatively.

That was a heavy wooden chopping block with a butcher's meat cleaver resting on its solid surface.

CHAPTER XX

THE BROWN HAND



OLDIE was enjoying himself hugely. His peculiarly stagnant looking eyes shone with the lust of the killer who kills for the joy of murder.

He bustled about the chamber, fingering that heavy meat cleaver and giving various orders.

"Stick a gat in that guy's ribs,

Bill," he ordered. "He's a slippery customer. But I kinda guess we'll remove some of his slipperiness, eh, Bill." The flat-faced man chuckled in that jocular fashion which was a menace in itself.

Van noted that two of the men were dragging out sacks of cement and pouring them into one of the wooden frames which bore a sinister resemblance to a coffin.

Whatever the manner of death they were arranging for him, it was plain that his remains were to be hardened into cement and dropped into Long Island Sound, sunk without trace.

His face was indifferent, however, as he watched the men bustling about their task. The flat-faced man was not quite satisfied as to the sharpness of the cleaver. From somewhere he brought a sharpener of some abrasive material and went to work on the edge.

"You see, my fine-feathered friend," he stared at Van with those flat, stagnant eyes, glowing with a strange killer's lust, "life ain't all beer and pretzels. It's kinda tough on a fine, upstandin' fella like you to be separated from a few fingers and toes at a time, followed maybe by a hand or a foot, so long as you can stand it. But the big idea is to make the old geezer upstairs play ball."

"That's just what I'd like to get," interrupted Van calmly—"the big idea. Why are these blue prints and working plans so necessary to your boss that he has to commit murder to get them?"

"Now you're askin' questions, old pal, old bean," returned Goldie flip-pantly, "and you know the old say-in': 'ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies'! At the same time, seein' what's left of you a few minutes from now will be encased in a nice, big solid cement fencepost, there ain't no harm in tellin' you. I should think a smart guy like what the Phantom is supposed to be would know anyways

—you're mixin' that cement too dry," interrupted Goldie, calling to one of the men who was working with water and cement, mixing it in the wooden box, and then, turning back to Van: "It's like this, old pal. The people behind the boss have gotta have them plans. They ain't satisfied with hiring the old geezer to manufacture the stuff. And the old geezer is holdin' him up for plenty. But the boss is a wise guy, see? He ain't puttin' out any million bucks or so to get hold a some plans he can get quietly by bumpin' off a coupla guys includin' you as a horrible example. You see, old pal, old kid?"

Van saw. The picture as seen through Goldie's eyes was interesting. His quick eye saw something else as well.

THAT well-oiled door was swinging imperceptibly outward on its hinges. Van turned his gaze away and in swiftly appraising fashion took in every detail of the room, the men and their position. The fellow called Bill stood at Van's back, his automatic pistol touching Van's spine from time to time as a reminder. The first thing Van did was to work himself around so that his side presented less of a target. In the meantime, Goldie had finished his sharpening of the cleaver and placed it upon the big chopping block and was now testing the consistency of the cement which partially filled the wooden box.

Van shot another glance at that door in time to see a brown hand appear on the inner side, feeling for something.

"Well, I guess everything's set!" said Goldie, with the air of a good workman well satisfied with progress so far. "You Bill, gimme your gat and beat it up and tell the Tiger that the show is ready to go on and the grandstand seats is waitin'."

* * * * *

The Tiger had watched Van being dragged away with hard, baleful eyes.

Now his voice entered the silence of the room again.

"That is one source of annoyance soon removed!" he said, as the blinding light was turned from the vacant spot where Van had stood to sweep over the bound figures in the chairs. "You see, my friends," continued the voice, "how little it avails to battle against the irresistible might of the forces I represent!"

The light shone on the face of Steve Huston, his forehead smeared with blood but his eyes indomitable. It swung next into the face of Hastings, the elderly inventor, whose time-worn eyes blinked dejectedly in the glare of the light. Next it shone on the white and anguished features of Patricia Hastings, who closed her eyes in abject misery.

"You see, Hastings, what is in store for you if you do not accept your fate? When this greater thing which is now to take place is completed, the lesser thing which is you and your daughter will be attended to! Listen now, and you will see in what fashion we move to achieve our ends—you will see the death which blots out the Phantom. But before that you will hear my orders sent to the commander of the submarine who lies submerged in the track of that great American steamer with its two thousand American citizens aboard."

The man's voice rose on a note of excitement.

"You will hear the report from my commander of his mission accomplished and will know that your stupid nation will be punished! Listen, and you will hear history in the making!"

There came an awful silence. The slow seconds dragged into eternities. Five minutes passed.

THE room grew tense. From the radio speaker there continued the hum and surge and crackle of static. It was dominated suddenly by a stronger note.

"Station 2N74 calling—station 2N74—objective approaching on port bow—is now within range—request final orders before it is too late—"

The vibrant notes of the Tiger's voice broke out impatiently.

"You, Lefty, hurry upstairs and tell that fool radio operator to get my orders off!"

There was a hurried beat of footsteps at the door and someone sped into the passageway. Seconds ticked into slow minutes.

At last, after what seemed a century, there came another intensification of sound from the radio speaker. This was in a different voice, a stronger, deeper voice! Steve Huston raised his head, unbelieving! The voice rang out:

"Calling station 2N74—calling station 2N74—previous orders rescinded—do *not* under any circumstances carry them out—change course to southward, reporting position every half hour—"

A roar of fury came into the vibrant notes of the voice of the Tiger. There was a rush of hurried footsteps.

There came several crackling sounds through the radio, sounds made by changing the wave length, and then the voice boomed forth again, this time in a resonant, triumphant tone that filled the room with an exultant roar:

"The Phantom calling—the Phantom calling all coastguard stations—the Phantom calling all naval vessels—the steamship *Parthenia* in danger from foreign submarine—the Phantom warning steamship *Parthenia* to change course—the Phantom warning all coast guard and U. S. Naval vessels to find submarine now proceeding southward from *Parthenia* position—" the triumphant voice rang on and on.

There came a sudden rush of men struggling to get through the doorway and up the stairs to the radio room.

DOWN in the cellar, that brown hand had continued its search inside the door.

Van, outwardly calm but inwardly coiled like a steel spring, watched it tensely. The brown hand was on the electric light switch.

At that second the man called Bill handed his pistol toward Goldie.

While the weapon was extended half way, the light went out.

Van crouched. Leaning forward, with one swift motion he cut the cords about his wrists on that sharp meat cleaver on the chopping-block.

There was a curse above him. Van located the sound and rose like an unleashed bolt from a catapult. His fist swung in the darkness and connected with the point of a jaw. There was a groan and the sound of someone falling and the clatter of a weapon on the cement floor.

Van retrieved the pistol like a cat pouncing upon a mouse and swung it at a form which towered over him. Near the door rose the queer gurgling sound and Van knew well what that portended.

His recent captors were stumbling around in the darkness, cursing and striving to find the electric light switch. There was a splutter of a match as one of them strove to cast some light upon the scene.

Before even the tiny flame had time to flare up, Van struck savagely and remorselessly.

Leaping over the prostrate form of the man he had just downed, Van raced in the direction of the door.

Behind him he heard a groan and cursing. Some two of the men were on their feet, floundering over the bodies of their fallen companions and striving to find their way to the light switch.

Van was at the door now. His foot collided with something soft and yielding. The strange, wraithlike figure had added his score to the total of casualties!

In another second Van had pushed

the door open and closed it behind him, slamming it hard, having a good idea that it could not be opened from the inside.

A dim bulb glowed far down the length of the cellar and a faint radiance sifted from the stairway above. Of the wraithlike follower of Kali whose lean brown hand had aided him so effectively, Van could see nothing.

All seemed quiet enough upstairs. It was evident that the sound of that short, sudden conflict had failed to reach the upper regions.

Behind him, Van heard hammering upon the heavy door concealed by the shelving. Before him lay the task of halting that horrible crime that was about to be perpetrated against two thousand innocent American men, women and children. The rescue of Steve Huston, and the two Hastings would have to wait on that one overwhelming necessity.

The Tiger had told the messenger to go *upstairs* to the radio room. That meant that it was on the third floor of the house.

These large country houses always had staircases in the rear. He sped for the rear staircase, leaping up two steps at a time. The way was clear so far as he could see—he was up the second floor and surging up to the third.

A LIGHTED room lay ahead of him off the third floor landing. Someone was coming up the front stairs!

Van crouched back in the shadow of a doorway until the figure came into view. It was one of the gangsters, the man sent by the Tiger to hurry the radio operator into sending his final message.

The messenger halted as something moved in the shadows. In the next second he was struck by something dark and formless and his world exploded about him. Van rose from the recumbent form, listening to discover

whether he had been heard. The house was silent.

In the lighted room a man sat with earphones to his head, his back to the door as he adjusted the dials of the radio apparatus.

Preoccupied with his task, the man did not turn at Van's sudden entry and it is doubtful whether he even felt the blow from the pistol butt that sent him into oblivion.

In another few seconds Van's voice was ringing out over the heaving wastes of the North Atlantic to be gathered in and clamor forth in the conning tower of that strange submarine. With a quick change of wave length from Van's skillful fingers, his voice again blasted forth into the ether, ringing out the warning to the *Parthenia*, to the navy—the voice of the Phantom, urgent, commanding and authoritative!

Not until his warnings were sent did he tear off his earphones, in time to hear the shouts and hurry of footsteps below. He leaped to his feet and with the chair he had been seated upon smashed into the radio apparatus, wrecking it irretrievably.

From this he raced through the door. The foremost of the gangsters were half way up the front stairs.

Van turned to the staircase, seizing a heavy oaken bench that rested against the wall. He hurled it down at the press of men below and saw them go tumbling backward from its impact. Then he switched off the hall light and raced back to the rear staircase, speeding down the stairs silently and with all the speed of a race horse to the second floor.

As he had figured, the gangsters were concentrating on the front stairs. None of them saw him slip into the room just deserted by the Tiger and his men.

Hastings and his daughter and Steve Huston were still there, bound.

It was a second's work to cut the cords that bound each of them.

They followed him, staggering and

weak and stiff from their bonds. Pistol in hand he came out again into the hallway.

A shout went up at sight of him. Men began to rush down from above. Other men were pouring up from the rear staircase.

Van waved his charges back into the room and stood, pistol in hand.

A sudden sharp clear whistle came from below in the main hallway, followed by a warning shout.

Suddenly, without any further attention being paid to Van, the gangsters fled down the main staircase, leaping three and four steps at a time in their anxiety to be gone.

VAN hurried forward to the staircase and stared down.

The hallway below was filled with a writhing mass of humanity, of which lean brown men were in the majority.

The brown men were fighting silently and viciously. The gangsters, like cornered rats, were struggling to get out.

Back of the brown men Van saw the familiar face of the yogi, Bhandranath Das.

Making sure that there were no enemies behind him, Van hurried down to the scene of the fight, arriving as the last of the gangsters was overcome.

"The Phantom!" Van introduced himself, flashing his diamond badge before the eyes of the yogi. "Have you got the Tiger?"

"He got away," returned the Hindu. "Where are the Hastings? Safe? Thank God for that!"

"Your government nearly lost out on the Hastings invention," said Van composedly.

"Yes, I know," nodded the yogi, watching while his followers skillfully disarmed and bound the last of the gangsters.

"Thanks very much for the cooperation," said Van.

"Not at all. It was as much to our

interest as to yours to keep the Japanese from getting that invention and messing things up."

"Your man with the skilled length of silk has been giving me a hand as well," said Van.

The yogi looked uncomfortable and worried at this.

"Saddho Lal is an unregenerate reformed follower of Kali. His zeal sometimes outruns his discretion. I trust he had not—ah—been indiscreet?"

Van turned as Miss Hastings, her father and Steve Huston came down the stairs.

"I don't know whom to thank," said Hastings, his voice trembling with the strain of his recent experiences. "but I am eternally grateful—"

"Mr. Hastings," said Van, "was it somebody from the Norris-Scentley crowd who invited you to dine at the Bombay Restaurant the day you were kidnaped?"

"Yes. I don't understand what has happened at all. Three men formed a syndicate to buy the American rights to my fire control and ranging device, three members of whom each was to put up a quarter of a million dollars—and then they were murdered. In the meantime I secured permission from the American government to negotiate the rights to Great Britain—and then came this kidnaping and this queer fellow they call the Tiger. It's been most amazing! I don't understand it at all!"

Van stared at Bandranath Das contemplatively.

"You called up to get in touch with Mr. Hastings the day Lucas was murdered," he said. "You followed up at the Bombay Restaurant to rescue Miss Hastings when her hotel told you she had gone there. Right? So far so good. Our next job is to run down the Tiger—I think I know who he is. If you'll all meet me at the offices of the Norris-Scentley Com-

pany in two hours from now, I'll show him to you!"

CHAPTER XXI

THE PHANTOM DELIVERS



IN THE next two hours Van did several things. The first of these was to listen in on his powerful short-wave radio set. Like balm to his soul came a radio message from the *Parthenia* stating that it had

changed its course, was running without lights and was hurrying into harbor on a zigzag course.

Another message came from the commander of a U.S. destroyer who had spied the submarine running on the surface and had signalled it to stand by. The submarine had not replied to the signal but instead had submerged and fired a torpedo at the destroyer. Under these circumstances the commander felt justified in dropping depth bombs. Three of these charges had resulted in a sudden uprush of oil on the surface of the waters and it was certain that the submarine had been sunk.

Van had also changed his appearance again, returning once more to the guise of the prosperous, middle-aged business man who had been at the offices of the chemical company before.

The third thing was to test that little envelope with its scrapings of white powder he had taken from the turning lathe in the house on Long Island.

Promptly at the end of the two hours, he appeared at the board room of the Norris-Scentley Chemical Company. There were many people there, including policemen, three government agents, and several intelligence officers from the Army and Navy.

These sat back in the room, but the table was surrounded. Mitchell Hamberly, the president, sat in his accustomed seat, flanked by Harrington Dowd, the tall vice-president, his face cold and unsmiling. Next to him was Perrin Calder, shaved this time and dressed in his usual debonair fashion but showing the effects of the past few days. Seated next to him was young Dorkley Evans, his rather dissipated face gloomy looking.

There was also the Hindu, Bandranath Das, and somewhere near at hand, behind him, were two inscrutable-eyed men of the same race.

Nearby, on a couch, sat Steve Huston, a bandage around his head, and with him were the elderly Mr. Hastings and his beautiful daughter.

Frank Havens who was in the background, had already handed Van a sheaf of notes.

None of the gangsters were present, but Van knew that they were all safely under lock and key, with the exception of their leader, that mysterious man known as "The Tiger."

A HUSH came over the assemblage as the Phantom rose to speak. Men stared at the prosperous-looking, conservative, middle-aged business man and many of them found it difficult to believe that this mild mannered person was the redoubtable Phantom himself. Nor did Van's voice, when he started speaking, tend to dispel their doubts, for his tone was mildness itself.

"Gentlemen," he said quietly, "before going into this case I'd like to clear up one or two minor points." He turned toward Harrington Dowd, the cold-eyed and indifferent vice-president.

"In looking over some chance scribblings made by you at our last meeting here, I came across some pictures of a submarine torpedoing a ship. Can you explain how you happened to draw that particular picture?"

"I don't know," returned Dowd

calmly, "except that the subject was somewhat on my mind, my only brother having been killed in the first ship torpedoed in this war!"

"I see," returned the Phantom quietly. "Then how do you explain the Tiger's having used your country estate as a hideout?"

"You'll have to ask my real estate agent that question," returned Dowd calmly enough. "Taxes being what they are, I'm glad enough to get a tenant. This particular tenant came well recommended some six months ago and has always paid his rent promptly, so far as I know. I left the entire matter up to my agent and have never seen the tenants."

"That sounds reasonable," admitted Van, his eyes quietly sweeping around the circle of faces, noting in passing that the fervid little brown-skinned Suddho Lal stood near the yogi. Before Van could speak again, Frank Havens' voice interrupted:

"How in blazes were these queer Kali Dagger murders committed in locked rooms where no one could have entered?"

"It was the manner of these murders that made me immediately suspicious," explained Van. "Had the murders actually been done by the followers of Kali, they would have been committed with the silken garrote and not by the dagger. But the murders were not even committed by the daggers. In each case the victim was shot by a powerful air-gun aimed through whatever small window or grating was handy. One of the daggers of Kali, already stained with dried blood, was tossed in through the same opening to keep up the mystery.

"But those wounds were not made by bullets!" protested some one.

"Not by lead and nickel bullets," agreed Van, "but by bullets carved from rock salt, rock salt which would melt within a few minutes after entering a human body!"

"I see," nodded one of the police.

"The bullets were made the same diameter as the Daggers of Kali?"

Van nodded and went on:

"Gentlemen, the story behind these murders, these kidnapings, and this attempt to slaughter two thousand Americans at sea, comes down to a question of international power politics. The man who carried on these ruthless activities was born in Kiev, Russia, of a Japanese father and a Russian mother . . ." and Van went on to tell of the background of Satcha Inoye and his success as a narcotic smuggler.

"THESE activities," continued Van, glancing at the notes which Frank Havens had handed him, "brought him into contact with the greatest narcotic syndicate in the world, backed by the Japanese Government. His abilities led to his entering the secret service of that government. So much wealth did he acquire that he bought a heavy interest in the then struggling Norris-Scentley combine, changed his name, acquired a false set of credentials, and became a respectable member of society.

"He never severed his relations with the Japanese secret service. They required from him the plans for this fire control and ranging device, and something much greater—the task of embroiling America in the European war.

"Mr. Hastings, the inventor of the device, was dealing successfully with Lucas, Fairlee and Barret, who had formed a small syndicate to handle the rights and were dealing with the American and British Governments, the British agent being, as I now know, Bandranath Das. So marvelous is this device that Satcha Inoye was impelled to go to any lengths, including murder, to prevent the American and British navies from securing it and to secure it for the Japanese Navy. The manner of these murders was so planned as to

throw suspicions on Bandranath Das, hence the Kali Dagger angle. The three members of the small syndicate were killed.

"So far so good, from Inoye's viewpoint. But now there came a hitch. Mr. Hastings was horrified by the murders. On being approached by the Tiger, Inoye, he refused to sell his invention to Japan, either outright or in any other manner, as he felt it would be unpatriotic. To complicate the situation for Inoye, Bandranath Das sought the cooperation of other members of the board of Norris-Scentley to facilitate the sale to America and Great Britain.

"Inoye then had Hastings kidnaped and taken to the country house he had rented through a dummy from Harrington Dowd. It was there I found the salt on his turning lathe and the rock salt statuettes and discovered the manner of the Kali murders. It was there he had rigged up an alternative radio station and was about to consummate the torpedoing of the *Parthenia*.

"Gentlemen, meet Mr. Satcha Inoye, alias the Tiger, alias Mr. Mitchell Hamberly, President of the Norris-Scentley Chemical Company!"

Mitchell Hamberly was on his feet as men gasped. His face was drawn and haggard but there was a bleak and bitter smile upon his lips.

"You are cleverer than I thought, Phantom!" His voice had lost none of the arrogant tone. "Cleverer than I gave you credit for—too clever to live Phantom!"

MEN sat frozen in their places as a small black automatic appeared in Hamberly's hand.

"No, Phantom, you will not live to see your triumph—and I will not be taken alive!"

He raised the pistol remorselessly and steadily until it pointed at Van's heart.

On his part, the Phantom looked at the man wearily and then glanced

behind Hamberly where the brown shape of Suddho Lal, cat footed, had crept unobserved, flicking a length of silk back and forth in his hands.

"I can well see," said the Phantom, "that you will not be taken alive!"

"Before we both join our ancestors, Phantom," said Hamberly, "I am curious to know how you connected

Japanese handshake is peculiarly flaccid and limp—look out!"

There was a sudden vicious flash of movement, as quick as the darting thrust of a cobra's head—a length of silk had uncoiled with a jerking snap—a sudden choking, gurgling gasp from Mitchell Hamberly and his pistol exploded harmlessly in the ceiling

When Death Stalks the Border, the World's Most Famous Detective Takes the Trail of Ruthless Slaughter and International Intrigue in



THE PHANTOM AND THE UNIFORMED KILLERS



*A Thrill-Packed Complete Book-Length
Mystery Novel*

By ROBERT WALLACE

FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Inoye, my real self, with the Mitchell Hamberly I was supposed to be!"

Van glanced again at that brown shape creeping closer and ever closer to Hamberly.

"It was simple enough, especially after you had unconsciously drawn a conventionalized chrysanthemum, the Order of the Chrysanthemum, which your government had promised you, on your scratch pad," explained Van. "Also, Satcha Inoye, you should never have shaken hands with me, for the

as he tottered and fell to the floor, his neck twisted at a crazy angle.

There was a flash of brown and the little Hindu, Suddho Lal, stood poised for a moment on the window sill, full twenty stories above the street.

"Your servant is sorry, *Sahib*," he called to Bandranath Das, "but this man of evil has offended Kali—and Kali has reclaimed her own!"

And with that, Suddho Lal flung himself outward and downward and disappeared from the horrified view

of all those in the board room as though he had never been.

Afterward when the excitement had died down, men began to press around the Phantom, to shake his hand and congratulate him on his swift, certain unraveling of the case and to express to him their gratitude as fellow Americans for averting death to their countrymen and danger to the nation.

But the Phantom was anxious to resume once more his own personality, that of Richard Curtis Van Loan, the careless, spendthrift playboy, the delight of headwaiters and orchestra leaders, knowing full well that when the call came again, he would again be the man of steel nerves and swift, unerring judgment, ready to use his abilities like a sharp sword against the forces of evil.



Next Month's Novel: THE PHANTOM AND THE
UNIFORMED KILLERS—Featuring
Richard Curtis Van Loan in Action!

At last I've found a winning blade!
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Under Death's Thumb

By JACKSON GREGORY, Jr.

Author of "Cash on the Line," "Twin Murders," etc.

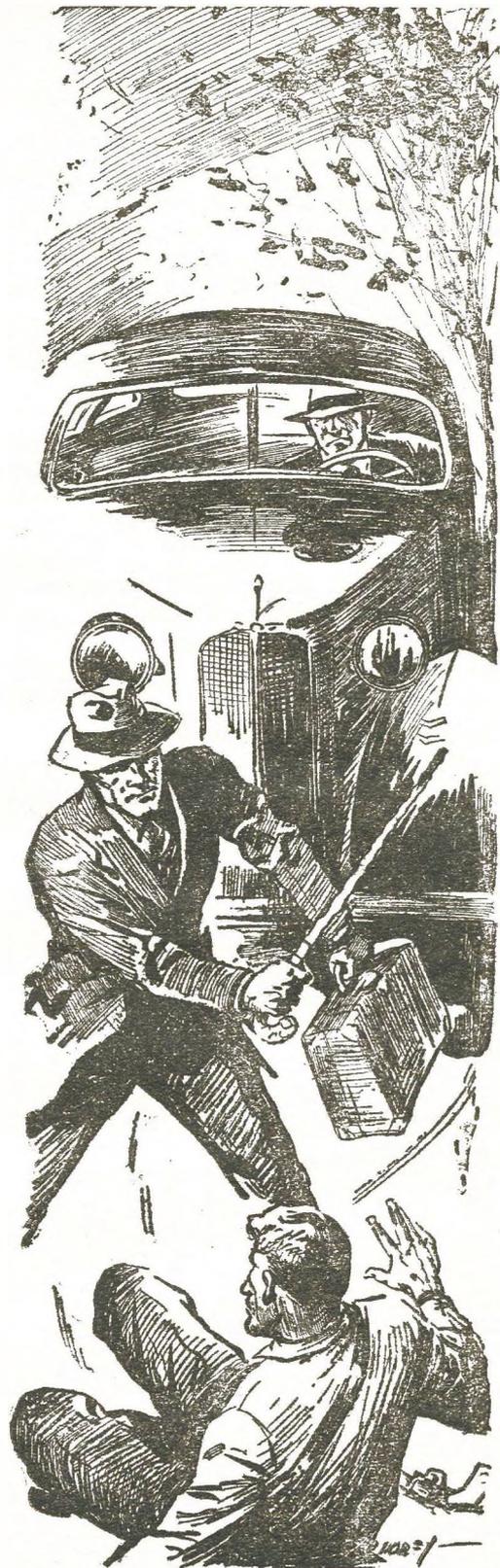
Red Killifer, Crack Los Angeles Detective, Pits Himself Against a Vicious Criminal Fiend!

THE TRAIN stopped just long enough for Red Killifer to swing down to the black dirt beside the tracks. Then it labored ahead, the engine *chuffing* heavily on the up-grade. Killifer watched it until the tracks led it from sight around the bulge of the hill.

"And this is Amboy!"

He turned, his eyes raking across the faded yellow station and telegraph office to the town below. It was sprawled along the tiny flanks of the hill, overflowed a dozen scattered houses into the flat of the valley below. Its one paved street of cracked asphalt paralleled the tracks here, dipped diagonally downward a little farther along to pass between the two-story buildings that made up the town's business district.

Red Killifer started down that road, his legs swinging his tight-knit body along in a quick stride. In his right hand he carried a battered alli-



Killifer sent the blond man sprawling

gator grip, in his left a cane. The cane was a massive, knobby thing of polished ebony wood. As he walked, he whipped it accurately at bits of gravel that lay on the pavement, sent them spinning off into the grass at the road's side.

Before he had gone a hundred yards, a car shot toward him from the village. It was a sleek sedan, and the slanting sun reflected brilliantly from the glossy black surface of its body. As Killifer stepped from the road to let it pass, it squatted down on its springs and its tires screamed on the asphalt in response to the brakes.

It stopped close to him. The driver leaned out of his window, a massively muscled man with shaggy black eyebrows and a sensuous mouth. His eyes moved in a slow, surly fashion up and down Killifer's body.

"You're Red Killifer?" he asked. It was more a statement than a question.

A SMILE appeared on Killifer's angular, lean-jawed face. That was a habit of his, smiling. He smiled when another man would laugh—or curse!

His smile was inscrutable, but he was both puzzled and angry.

His presence here in Nevada was supposed to be a secret! He, and Nevada's attorney-general, and two or three others were the only persons who were to have known of it. Certainly not anyone here in Amboy!

He reached up with his cane, tipped back his gray felt so that an unruly shock of red hair tumbled down over his forehead.

"Let's see—you're one of Aubourmann's bully boys," he said thoughtfully. "By the ugly face, I'd say the name is Jock Moss!"

The man showed no resentment. He reached his arm out through the window, twisted open the back door.

"Okay, Killifer, get in."

"Thanks." Red nodded pleasantly. "It isn't far. I think I'll walk."

The second man in the car climbed out. He walked slowly around the front. He was in shirtsleeves, and a heavy revolver showed plainly in a shoulder holster. Young and blond and a giant in size, he carried himself with an insolent swagger.

His lips tilted into a contemptuous grin when he stopped in front of Killifer.

"Who asked what you think?" he said. "Get in the car!"

"Well!" Killifer's smile broadened. "You boys are just too nice to me for words. I—" Then Killifer thrust his cane between the blond man's legs. At the same time he swung his heavy grip in a short arc. It thudded into the middle of the man's barrel chest, sent him backward. The blond went down in a stiff, awkward fall, sprawling in the powdery dust at the side of the road.

"No! Don't do that." Killifer flicked his cane as the blond, his face, flushed with anger, dragged at the gun in his holster. The tip of the cane cracked loud on the bones of his wrist, and brought a sharp cry from his lips.

Red Killifer shook his head, smiling sadly. "You shouldn't play with things like that, sonny."

He slipped the point of his cane through the trigger guard of the fallen revolver, gave it a sharp flip so that it sailed off into the manzanita twenty feet away. Then, tossing his bag ahead of him, Red climbed into the car.

"Pleasure before business," he said. "So I guess maybe I can change my mind. Let's go, Jock."

"Come on, Bub," said Moss dryly to his discomfited henchman, and headed the car back toward the village.

"Don't tell me *this* is where Aubourmann lives!" Killifer stared out of the car at the unpainted, miserable

shack in front of which Moss stopped. It was on the main street on a big lot of its own, a ramshackle thing sprawled between the town's onc bank and the glittering *Casino Luck*. A picket fence that had once shut it off from the board sidewalk lay in disheartened ruin. The path to the cracked front door was a track through weeds.

"Anything wrong with it?" Jock Moss asked.

RED SMILED, shook his head, and climbed out of the car. The three of them went down the path, the blond Bub leading, then Killifer, then Moss. The bare boards of the porch creaked under their weight. Bub jerked open the screen door.

"Go on in," he growled.

Killifer whistled softly as he set his grip down inside the door. He had never seen a place quite like this. The walls were rough planks, splintery and unpainted. There was a rug on the floor that had once been white and fluffy, but was now a matted, muddy gray. The furniture was one wooden desk in the middle of the room with two straight-backed chairs at it.

And there were the statues!

The Attorney-General, talking to Killifer about Aubourmann, had stated: "The man is a warped genius!" Red thought of those words as he stared at the statues fashioned by Aubourmann's hands.

The one closest to the door was of an antelope caught in the fierce coils of a huge boa. Muscles in the stricken animal's neck stood out like taut cords. Its mouth was agape. Killifer imagined he could almost hear it bleating in agony.

On the window sill to the right was perched another statue—a white plaster eagle with its talons fastened in a rabbit, its hooked beak tearing ravenously at the tiny creature's flesh.

Every statue there revealed the same cruelly sadistic streak of artistic genius. Killifer's smile was a little crooked.

"And Aubourmann is the guy I'm to get!" he thought.

Jock Moss strode across the room, blurting over his shoulder: "Wait here, Killifer." He went through the door at the far side of the room, but before he closed it behind him Red caught a glimpse of a work bench. Littered with rags and fragments of plaster, it was only two feet from the floor!

Bub came in, stood like a surly giant with his back to the screen door, watching as Killifer moved about the room. Red paused to stare at a spider web in one corner, and he could picture Aubourmann tossing a fly into the web, and then gloating when the spider rushed out to devour it.

Behind the open front door was another statue that drew Killifer over to it. It was a gigantic gorilla that held the broken body of a child in its hands. Its hunched shoulders were stooped forward as its slavering mouth and bare fangs stretched down for the infant.

"Good Lord!" Killifer had a perfectly normal instinct to smash these statues with swift hard blows of his cane. He studied the brutal figure of the huge ape with wonder. "The man can't think of a thing but cruelty and death!"

And then a voice spoke behind him.

"You like my little playthings?"

Turning, Killifer saw only the door to the work room, open now with Jock Moss standing in it. No one else at first, not until he looked down!

COMING across the floor like a misshapen spider was Aubourmann. He had no legs, his body ending in a full paunch and stumpleless hips. He "pendulumed" forward on his hands, swinging his thick torso

between them like a bag. His hair was fluffy and snow white; his face, unlined and smooth, was as classically beautiful as a woman's.

Aubourmann crossed to the desk, reached first one hand and then the other to its top. His long, powerful fingers gripped its edge, he gave his body a peculiar sideward lurch, and swung himself up into the chair. When he had settled himself into position so that his deformity was hidden beneath the desk, he looked like a kind and serenely beautiful old man.

His fingers tapped a little tune on the desk, nodded at Killifer.

"Welcome, Mr. Killifer. Welcome to Amboy!" His quick, black eyes took in everything, including the empty holster under the blond henchman's arm-pit.

"Will you pardon Bub, Mr. Killifer? He's just a foolish child with his gun—and then I hadn't told him that there would be no need to use it where you were concerned."

Bub muttered something, his face suddenly white. "Hell, Boss, I—" he blurted.

"That's all right, Bub. Mr. Killifer isn't interested in your troubles." Aubourmann's voice was gentle and patient, but Red detected a merciless cat-and-mouse cruelty in its undertones. "You and Jock wait in the car," he said. Then he waved his hand at the second chair. "Won't you be seated, Mr. Killifer?"

Red sat down in the chair, tilted back comfortably and tapped at the toe of his right shoe with his cane. Staring across the desk, he spoke frankly.

"Mr. Aubourmann, you astound me!"

The man smiled deprecatingly. "My work you mean? That's really nothing—just one way for a crippled old man to while away lonesome hours."

"Your work"—Red's eyes traveled

around the room—"doesn't astound me. It makes me sick! The thing that has me confounded is—how the hell did you know I was coming here?"

Aubourmann spread his hands. "You must forgive an old busybody like me, Mr. Killifer. I always have one ear open for gossip."

Red grinned sourly. "*Gossip!* I'd hardly call it that!"

"I have men in my pay all over Nevada. They watch for things that might interest me, and they thought that the arrival here of a famous detective like yourself might be just such a thing."

There was a fly darting and buzzing annoyingly around Killifer's head. He watched it idly for a moment before he flicked his cane at it. The fly shot stunned onto the desk. It lay there a moment with its feet in the air. Then it began to spin on its wings.

Aubourmann's hand shot out, his broad thumb squashed the fly into a brown smear. Red Killifer sighed as he lowered the front legs of his chair to the floor.

"I suppose," he said, "that you know perfectly well why I'm here."

AUBOURMANN nodded. "Yes, Mr. Killifer—perfectly well."

"Hmmm!" Red studied the man's delicate features. "Then why the devil did you want to see me?"

"Let's put facts squarely on the table, Mr. Killifer." Aubourmann rubbed the flats of his hands across the desk. "We are quite alone, so the truth will do no harm if it goes no further. As you know, *I am Amboy.*"

"As everybody knows!" Red grunted.

"It is a nice little town," the man said benignly. "It affords me considerable pleasure—and does no one any harm."

"We don't agree on that!" the detective said bluntly. "There are a

dozen gambling joints in your nice little town. That's all right in itself; that's perfectly legal. But what Nevada doesn't like—and what I'm going to remedy—every wheel and every dice cage is crooked, and every dealer is an out and out thief!"

"Crooked? Thief?" Aubourmann chuckled. "Really now, Mr. Killifer!"

Red smiled. "The facts, Mr. Aubourmann! Weren't we going to put them squarely on the table? You pay your best faro dealers fifty dollars a night when any of the muckers out of the mines around here could deal faro for you—*honestly*."

"For five years now," the legless man said softly, "Nevada has been trying to put me out of business. Forgive me if I say that they are no closer to doing it today than they were five years ago!"

"For more than five years," Red said, "you have run your crooked wheels and let your hirelings go to jail for you when they were raided because no one has been able to prove that you own the joints. But this time"—Red Killifer leaned forward abruptly—"you are the one that's going to jail! Even, Aubourmann, if I have to frame some sort of charge on you!"

"Red Killifer, the smiling, hard-boiled cop from Los Angeles." Aubourmann chuckled sardonically. "At last he has run into a case too big for him, and he doesn't know it!"

"Well, Aubourmann!" Red stood up, tapped the desk top with his cane. "There are the facts, spread out on the table. I like the looks of them. I like the thought that one of these days they will be filed under the same prison number that you will be wearing across your chest."

"Not *all* the facts are there, Mr. Killifer." From one pocket, the older man took an envelope. There were five one-thousand-dollar bills in it. He laid them edge to edge on the desk. Out of a second pocket he took

a tiny, exquisitely fashioned marble coffin with gold handles.

"Take your choice, Red Killifer," he said.

His meaning was plain. Red smiled and picked up the casket.

"Thank you," he said. "Good day."

WHEN Red Killifer strode into the Amboy Hotel, the one occupant of the lobby stood up. He was a heavy man, his body round with fat, his face chubby with it. Suspenders made two black lines up the blue of his sweat-stained shirt. Pinned to the left suspender was a silver star. Strapped around his belly was a cartridge belt and holstered .45.

Killifer's eyes twinkled. "Dressed up in his war togs," he reflected, "and all for me!" More amused than worried about anything the fat man might plan, he strode over to the desk.

"Room with bath," he told the clerk. "I'll probably be here some time, so you can fix me up with a north exposure. I like to sleep late mornings."

He was signing the register when the fat man came to his side and tapped him on the shoulder.

"I'm the constable, Mister."

"Yes?" Red said.

"It's ag'in the law fer a man to pack a gun in this town, Mister."

Red nodded. "That's a very sensible law, Constable."

The fat man shifted his feet uneasily. "I got a complaint about a red-headed stranger who was carryin' one. That sounds like you, Mister."

"Well, now, if you mean this—" Killifer's hand whipped to his hip-pocket holster, came out with a snub-nosed .38 nestled in it. Smiling, he nuzzled the revolver's two-inch barrel into the man's abdomen. "I do usually carry this."

The constable's body went rigid as he stared down at the gun. He cleared

his throat. "You better put that back, Mister!"

Red did, slipping it back into its holster.

"Of course, I have a permit for it," he said significantly.

"I was warned you'd be handin' out a story like that!"

The fat man's face was shiny now with sweat. He obviously didn't like what he was doing. Killifer studying him, decided that the man was honest enough. He just didn't have the fiber to be anything but a pawn to Aubourmann.

The constable's hand dropped to the butt of his gun. "I guess you better come along with me, Mister, while I check up on your permit."

"And that," said the detective, grinning broadly, "would probably take a week or more while I made myself at home in your jail." He shook his head. "No, Constable! You'll have to go back and tell that spider of a boss that he's got to think of something better than that."

The constable backed away a pace. His pudgy hand started upward, drawing the gun. And Red Killifer's cane whipped out! It rapped *hard* across the fat man's knuckles so that he squealed in pain and dropped the gun.

Again the cane swung. It caught the gun, batted it across the lobby where it clattered under a couch.

"Good day, Constable." Red picked up his suitcase. "And by the way, in case you're thinking of coming back with a posse—*don't!* My aim is just as good as my permit to carry the gun. If I have to shoot it out with you, the whole state of Nevada has its seal of approval on every one of my bullets!"

HIS ROOM was on the second floor and overlooking Amboy's main street. He stood for a time looking out the window, watching the few people that moved about below him.

Directly opposite was the *Club Monte*. That was the town's biggest gambling spot, and in there, at his own table, was where Tommy Ryan dealt black-jack.

When Killifer had unpacked, it was five-thirty. He went into the bathroom, turned the hot water spouting into the tub. He grimaced again at the vicious cruelty of the statues in Aubourmann's shack, and then struck his fist savagely into the water as he thought of the damnable self-confidence of the man himself.

The fat constable puzzled Red. It didn't fit, he thought, with Aubourmann's character to make so obvious an attempt to get rid of him.

"There's something else behind that! Something more than a weak try to put me in the can for a week!"

Tommy Ryan! The detective grinned pleasantly as he thought of him. Tommy was Red's ace-in-the-hole. Three months before, when the Attorney-General had written asking if Killifer would take on the job of busting into Aubourmann's vice ring, Red had dispatched Tommy here to get a job, to work into the organization.

And he had done it! Tonight at seven-thirty behind the *Club Monte*, Tommy was to meet Red secretly, tell him what he had found out. That it was something, the big detective had no doubt. It was a letter from Tommy himself, hinting that he had ample to bust Aubourmann, that had brought Killifer hurrying here.

A sound, just a whisper of a *creak*, reached his ears. It was his bedroom door closing!

Regardless of the water that cascaded with him, he lunged out of the tub. He raced into the bedroom. No one was there. His dresser was just as he had left it. Nothing in the drawers had been touched, nor his clothes in the closet—

Suddenly he stopped. A slow smile touched his lips, but his eyes were as

hard and brittle as slate. He had tossed his cane to the foot of the bed when he came in the room. It was gone now!

At a quarter past seven Red Killifer was striding rapidly down the desolate dirt road that wound through the pines above Amboy. He had walked a circular route for several miles, stopping occasionally to crouch in shadows for a few moments, long enough to make certain no one was following him.

Thunder-heads made the road dark and filled the air with a smell that promised showers. As he reapproached the town Killifer kept close to the bank and barbed wire fence to the left where there was slim chance of watching eyes noticing his movements. This road ran along the back of the business buildings—past the back of the *Club Monte*.

He arrived behind the gambling spot several minutes before Tommy was due. It was nearly as dark there as it had been under the pines. The only light was a muggy yellow that seeped through the one frosted, cob-webbed window at the back of the club. It was high up on the wall and had bars across it.

THE BIG detective squatted on his heels, waiting. The sounds that came from the club were made up of a subdued murmur of voices punctuated by the sharp rattle of dice or the noisy *click-click* of a big wheel. A wind was coming up and it rustled the leaves in the pear orchard across the road from the club.

Red was idly rolling an unlighted cigarette back and forth between his fingers. Suddenly the cigarette burst, spewed its shreds of tobacco into the dirt as his fingers clenched. He had heard a rustle of grass out in the orchard. Following it had come a low, pain-laden moan!

In a matter of seconds Red was over the barbed wire fence, moving

in a low crouch through the orchard grass. He stopped now until the moan, no more than a faint gasp of agony, came for a second time. It was over to the right, there at the base of the first tree.

He made out the dark blur of a body on the ground. A man lying on his side with his knees pulled up to his head. Red bent over him, a flaring match cupped in his hands.

It was Tommy Ryan.

The dancing flame threw light on his face. The big detective winced as he stared down. Tommy's features were literally wrecked! They had been bludgeoned out of shape, the flesh split with blows, the bones of his cheek and nose shattered into sharp, bloody spikes. A second match showed where on the black earth a darker stain had seeped from the crushed side of Tommy's head. Killifer eased Tommy onto his back, and the man groaned, choked, seemed to be grasping for his last breath of life. His eyes opened wide, the balls a blank white in the match light.

"Red . . . Red . . ." he whispered.

"Sure, kid." Killifer was smiling softly now. "It looks like you walked into something, boy. But we'll have you—"

"Red. . . ." Tommy's hand groped out, fastened weakly on Killifer's shirt front. His head rolled, twitching from side to side before he could get the words out.

"Big . . . Big Hank, Red. . . . Big Hank Boste is in. . . ." Then Tommy smiled through his crushed lips. He thought he had told his message and, thinking that, he smiled and died.

Red Killifer unfastened the hand that was clenched on his shirt, lowered it softly to the ground. The match burned down to his fingers, went out. After a number of seconds he stirred, a thought forming blackly in his mind.

With another match, he groped out past Tommy's body, searching for—

Yes! There it was at the base of the tree. Red Killifer's cane lying on the earth, matted hair and gouts of moist blood sticking to it!

He was grimly wiping it on Tommy's coat when a voice from the road sang out.

"There he is!"

And the cold white of a flashlight silhouetted him.

"That's him!" It was the blond giant's voice. "I seen him sneakin' up the alley with that cane of his!"

RED STRAIGHTENED slowly to face the beam as it weaved through the fence, came toward him. Somewhere behind it Jock Moss growled.

"For hell's sake, look! He's killed the dealer!"

The constable was there, too. He was the one carrying the flash, and now his hand, bulging around the .45, was shoved forward into the beam as he called shrilly:

"All right, Killifer! Get your hands up!"

And now the detective understood two things. He knew that the constable *was* honest, even if weak, and that in a thing like murder, Aubourmann wanted him to believe that Killifer was guilty. That was why he had been sent around to the hotel—so that he would recognize this cane as belonging to the big detective.

Red's shoulders slumped in apparent despair. There was no smile on his face, as he raised his arms, and his fingers seemed to shake. The cane dangled limply in his right hand, hanging down over his shoulder.

The light came closer.

"Drop that cane!" the constable snapped.

And Killifer sprang. As he shot forward, the .45 snarled at him, belching out wild lead and orange streaks of powder. Then the cane hissed as it cut through the air. One blow shattered the flashlight, swept

on to drive the .45 to the ground. The constable screamed.

Then Red was into the midst of the three of them like a fury. His second blow with the cane brought the constable to his knees. The fat man collapsed, grunting for breath.

Bub was a dark shadow over to the right. Killifer's gun came out of his hip pocket now, began speaking like a whip cracking. The blond giant yelled once, spun backward into the fence, hung there limply from one barb.

Jock Moss loomed suddenly in front of Red. He was shooting, a quick triggering of an automatic. A line of fire streaked across the detective's ribs as one slug seared him. Then Red whipped his cane down on Moss' gun arm. Jock's hoarse shriek of pain was silenced when the cane slashed again to the side of his head.

Before the people who streamed out of the *Club Monte* in response to the shooting had reached the fence, Killifer was gone. He had stayed only long enough to draw one deep breath before he stooped, heaved the constable to his shoulder. Then, weaving slightly under his fat burden, he lumbered into the darkness of the orchard.

KILLIFER repeated patiently: "I didn't kill Ryan. Can't you get it into your head, man? That was Aubourmann's job."

They were squatted on the slope above the town, hidden and surrounded by a tangle of bush brush. The constable breathed heavily, half stupefied by fear.

"I seen blood on that cane of yours," he croaked hoarsely.

Red grunted in disgust. "All right! Skip it! Who is Boste—Big Hank Boste?"

"Boste? He's the boss around here—next under Aubourmann."

"Yeah?" Red dug a furrow in the earth with his cane. "Then why,

haven't I seen him? Every other man of Aubourmann's seems to have taken a crack at me."

"I guess he ain't back in town yet," the constable said. "He's been outa town a coupla weeks."

"Sure!" In the darkness, Red's smile was sardonic. Out of town! An alibi of course. And Bub and Jock Moss would have alibis too. And Aubourmann—legless—didn't need one! "What kind of a guy is Boste?"

"Him?" There was a resentment that was close to hatred in the constable's voice. "Like all of Aubourmann's killers, he's mean and big and ugly. If anything he's bigger and

"You've been squirming under Aubourmann's thumb, not able to do anything, for long enough. You've earned the right to watch this."

There was thunder in the sky behind the mountains and big warm drops of rain splatted on the ground as the two of them strode from the street to Aubourmann's shabby house. There were lights inside behind the window's tattered blind. As he approached, Red could hear Aubourmann's voice, a low murmur so that words were indistinguishable, yet its tone was clearly one of bitter anger.

Red slammed open the door.

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THE GHOST

NOW ON SALE

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AT ALL STANDS

dumber than the rest! I ain't never been able to see how he got hisself into the top spot under the boss."

"You don't seem to like the outfit."

"Like 'em!" The constable's voice was a whimper of impotent hatred. "Some day I'll see 'em get what they've got coming, all of them! Aubourmann, and that lousy big rat from Florida and—"

"Florida!" Red's voice rang with a sharp intensity. "Who's from Florida?"

"Hank Boste. Why?"

"Yeah!" The detective whipped at the thorny branches around him with his cane. For two or three minutes he said nothing. Then:

"Florida!" He stood up. "That's it! Sure as hell, that's it!"

He was grinning now, broad'y, with pleasure.

"Stand up, Constable," he said.

stepped in. From his right fist the muzzle of the .38 frowned out, sweeping the room in a threatening arc.

Interrupted in the middle of a word, Aubourmann there in his chair at the desk closed his mouth slowly, and his curved, red lips gathered in a pucker. His eyes showed nothing as they measured Killifer.

JOCK MOSS sprang to his feet from the other chair. His hand darted toward his coat pocket, and stopped halfway there as Red's gun tilted quickly toward him. There was an ugly swelling from the cane on the side of Jock's head. It ran in a purple line from his left eye back above his ear.

Red's cane was tucked under his left arm. Now, striding over to the desk, he reached in his pocket.

"I'm returning this!" His voice

was metallic. He tossed the tiny marble casket to the desk. "It's you that needs it now!"

With an angry sweep of his hand, Aubourmann sent it spinning to the floor.

"You, Mathers!" He scowled past Killifer at the constable. "Why haven't you arrested this man?"

Red smiled. "He and a couple of your murderers tried that once! Now he's come for you. I was wrong, Aubourmann! You're not going to have a number on your chest. It's a dose of lethal gas you'll be getting."

THE legless man was working himself into a fury. His hands twitched on the table.

"You murdering fool," he rasped, "the sheriff is on his way here from Las Vegas. He'll be able to take care of you if that fat creature behind you couldn't!"

"Tommy Ryan was a swell guy," Red said grimly. "You had him killed because somehow you found out what he knew. And I found out, too, Aubourmann! What Tommy might have been guessing at, I *know*!"

"What lie are you making up now?" Aubourmann jeered.

"You've been so very cautious, Aubourmann! It made you so smug that you thought you could never be touched. You owned Amboy, but nobody could prove it. Nobody could show that the crooked wheels were under your control. And then—*your past caught up with you.*"

Aubourmann sat frozen in his chair. No expression on his face now, no movement in his hands.

"Ten years ago," Killifer rapped out, "a car ran you down and your legs were amputated." The detective smiled grimly. "Yes, I took the trouble to check on you before I came here. I found that the driver of that car was subsequently murdered—and you were suspected of the killing. But the cops couldn't demonstrate

how you, legless, could have killed him.

"That was in Florida, Aubourmann. And Hank Boste, brutal, too stupid to be the kind of lieutenant for you to choose, was your right-hand man, and Boste came from Florida!"

A thick voice spoke in the open doorway behind Killifer.

"Should I give it to him now, Boss?"

The detective turned very slowly. Bub was there leaning in the door, Bub with his face screwed tight with hate. Stripped from the waist up, his left shoulder was clumsily bandaged. From the back of the house, he had slipped around here to the front, a double-barreled shotgun gripped savagely in his hands.

The .38 in Killifer's hand slipped to the floor. Aubourmann laughed.

"Not yet, Bub. You, Jock, pick up his gun and use it when the time comes on that snivelling Mather." Then to Red, "All right, Mr. Killifer, I'd like to hear a *little* more of your story."

Red shrugged. "Don't you know it already? Big Hank Boste blackmailing you because he knew how you had done that murder down in Florida. Boste blackmailing you, and getting out of hand so you had to kill him.

"You know anatomy," Red went on, spacing his words. "And I know some, too, Aubourmann, enough to realize what apposition of the thumb means!"

Aubourmann crashed his hands down on the table.

"Bub!" he shrieked. "Kill him, Bub!"

Red was tensed for this moment, expecting it. Instantly he pitched his body to the side. Even so, he might have taken part of the blast from the shotgun had it not been for Mathers.

The fat constable, squealing like a frightened rabbit, plunged blindly

for the door. He tried to dart under the rising barrel of the shotgun. His legs fouled with Bub's, and he tripped heavily against the big man.

Bub went backward. The blast of his gun ripped twin holes in the ceiling, and then the two of them crashed out the door.

Killifer had fallen to his side. Now he whipped his cane back, hurling it through the air like a hard-slung javelin. Jock Moss, crouched but watching where the blond giant and Mather had shot through the doorway took the point of it on his temple. He fell limply, crumpling in a grotesque heap.

Striking toward the fallen man, Red scooped up his revolver. Aubourmann was on the floor now, lurching in a frenzy of fear on his hands toward the back room. Instinctively Red leveled his gun—then shuddered. He couldn't shoot the creature.

Instead he ran to the porch. The constable was there. He stood stupidly, his eyes fixed on Bub's inert form where it sprawled half-on, half-off the porch.

"I hit him." The constable spoke unbelievably. "I hit him and knocked him cold."

Red smiled briefly, not pointing out the sharp granite rock under Bub's fallen head.

"Come on, Mather," he began. Aubour—"

A shot, the sharp bark of a small

automatic, stopped his words. The door to the back room was closed, and the shot had come from in there. Red ran to the door, tried it. It was bolted.

"Did he—was that Aubourmann?" the constable stammered.

Red holstered his revolver. He walked over to Jock and picked up his cane.

"He couldn't take it," he said. "That's what made him what he was—he couldn't take it."

"But *why*?" Mathers was bewildered. "*Why*?"

Red Killifer smiled.

"Man," he said, "is the only animal that can touch the tip of each finger with the tip of its thumb."

"Huh?"

"When I was in here the first time I couldn't figure why Aubourmann would have made that mistake in the hands of the gorilla. But now—"

"You mean—" Mathers stared in horror at the huge beast behind the door where it clutched the plaster child.

Red nodded. "He *had* to make it that way. Those are Boste's hands. Big Hank Boste's body is inside that ape!"

Red Killifer tucked his cane under his arm. He started for the door. Out on the porch, he paused to call back:

"You're the constable, Mathers. I guess you've got the job of opening up that gorilla."



The Psychological Eye of Amateur Detective Hobart Huff Pierces to the Heart of a Murder Mystery!



Reaching out, he seized the cowering man by the neck

AVENGED BY TELEVISION

By RAY CUMMINGS

Author of "Shadow World," "Murder by Mail," etc.

THE brief preface to the murder of Wanda Hall, television dancer, came one evening in the spring of 1939 when I was visiting the studios of the American Television Company, at Oak Hill, New Jersey. By chance my friend Hobart

Huff was there. Both of us, of course, were wholly unaware that murder was brewing in that television studio—that the murderer himself and his pathetically beautiful little victim were there, under our eyes.

Hobart Huff was an unusual char-

acter. Certainly no one could have looked less like a detective. In early childhood he had suffered infantile paralysis. He was in his forties now. Seated in his wheel-chair, from the waist up he was a magnificent physical specimen — broad-shouldered, deep-chested, with a rugged face and handsome features. His legs, though, wrapped always in a plaid robe, were shriveled and small as a child's.

This night, with his wheel-chair among the small group of guests in the television studio, he was flushed, beaming with interest in the array of technical mechanisms around us; flushed, too, with his interest in the youth and beauty of the dancer, little Wanda Hall, who with her partner, young George McIlray, was making her debut on the air.

"Romantic damn thing, this television," Huff said. "And look at that girl! Isn't she a little beauty?"

Wanda Hall was seated at a table across the big studio, being made up by a rather effeminate-looking, dandified fellow named Harold Penrose, whom I afterward met. He was smearing the queer-colored cosmetics necessary to television upon her face, neck and arms. She was indeed a little beauty, this Wanda Hall—slim, small, dark-haired; perhaps no more than eighteen, with a face and manner that displayed refinement and culture, an alert intelligence as well as beauty.

"She's engaged to that fellow McIlray," Huff added. "She'll go far in television. Beauty, brains and talent. And she's about as sweet a little thing as you'll ever want to meet. I'll get her over here and introduce you presently."

He could have been a proud and enthusiastic father.

We were among a group of Kleig lights. A young technician was working here, a big, lanky fellow whose looks suggested Lincoln in his youth. He overheard Huff, and he smiled and nodded appreciatively.

Then the studio lights dimmed. The Kleig lights glared. The orchestra murmured under the announcer's voice and we were on the air. "Romantic damned thing" indeed, the flinging of this colorful scene out into the night, hurling it with the speed of light to be picked up and reconstructed in a million distant homes.

When the broadcast was ended, young McIlray, a sleek, dark-haired, gracefully handsome fellow, brought Wanda Hall over to Huff.

"Mr. Huff has been praising you very highly," I told Wanda when Huff had introduced me. "But now that I've met you, I think it was a masterpiece of understatement."

"What a nice thing for you to say!" she exclaimed impulsively.

Her smile of genuine pleasure, her frank handclasp, won me all in that minute, just as without doubt she had won everyone around the studios—just as she was destined, quite obviously, to win millions through the magic of television. . . .

BUT it was only three or four days later when Huff telephoned me with the shocking news that Wanda Hall had been murdered.

"Killed about nine o'clock last night, in that same studio where we saw her dance," he said. I had never heard his voice so grim. "And it looks as though the murderer is one of those young men who were there that night. I'm putting them to a test, here at my home. If one of them is guilty, I'm going to drag the truth out of him! I thought you might want to come up and watch."

Huff's laboratory was in his home in upper New York City, near the Hudson River. From my midtown hotel, it was a brief trip. I got there about ten o'clock in the evening and Huff answered my ring himself. A special ramp had been built into his two-story home, and he rolled himself down to greet me.

"I meant to tell you," he said swift-

ly as he closed the door after me. "These three suspects are not to know that we have found the body. I'm telling everyone only that Wanda Hall is missing—that we fear violence."

He preceded me up the incline. At the door of his second floor living room he introduced me to a guest who chanced to be visiting him this weekend—Dr. Steele, Professor of Psychology in one of Wisconsin's leading universities. He was a tall, distinguished-looking man, with a wavy mass of iron-gray hair.

"He's helping me," Huff said. "Come on in."

His other guests were a group of New York policemen and detectives, among whom he seated me. Then I saw young George McIlray, Wanda Hall's fiancé and dancing partner, seated apart. He was as sleek, and handsome as he had been before, but he was pale and tense now. He lighted a cigarette with fingers that visibly were trembling.

"We're waiting for Captain Williams of Oak Hill," Huff said. "He is coming with Harold Penrose and young Peter Johnson, the other two young men whom I want to test." He glanced at Wanda's fiancé. "You don't mind helping me with this, do you, McIlray?"

"No, of course I don't," young McIlray stammered. A flush laid a wave of color over the young dancer's pallor. "Why, I'm in love with Wanda! We're engaged! It's driving me mad—wondering what's happened to her. I'm afraid that it's murder—just as you are. I'm worried as hell!"

Huff rolled his chair around to face me and the others.

"Wanda told friends she was going to the studio last night," he explained. "She and McIlray here had permission to practice their dance routines there, using a phonograph, on the nights when no broadcasting was being done. McIlray says he arrived there about nine o'clock, and—"

"I did," the young dancer inter-

rupted tensely. "The whole place was dark except one light upstairs. I thought Wanda had arrived ahead of me when I found the side entrance door ajar."

"So he went up," Huff resumed. "No one was there. And in the dimly lighted dance studio he saw blood on the floor. He telephoned the Oak Hill police immediately." Huff paused, then he added grimly: "For clues—well, there were blood smears on the floor, a chair was overturned, and one of Wanda's shoes was lying there—a stout walking shoe in which doubtless she had arrived. Her handbag, with her purse, cosmetics and a pair of tap and ballet shoes in it was there on the floor. Near it, was a fragment of her torn blouse, blood-smeared. The door of a small adjoining room was open. It is used by draughtsmen in making their technical drawings from which blueprints are made. In front of a locked desk in that room, a stool and drawing board easel were overturned. What that signifies is not apparent. But those other clues seem to mean certainly that Wanda Hall met with violence."

THE picture which Huff's words evoked of that dim studio was a gruesome contrast to its brilliant lights and gay music, that was still in my memory, with Wanda and McIlray dancing before the cameras.

Here in Huff's living room I had noticed that against one wall three small console radios were ranged side by side. Huff now gestured toward them.

"The American Television Company is cooperating tonight with an impromptu broadcast," he said. "What you'll witness is not an advertised program. It's just for us. Scenes will be acted out, over there in the Oak Hill studios, and televised to us."

Huff's doorbell rang.

"That should be Captain Williams, with the other two men whom I'm going to test," he added hastily. "I

can only tell you now that it has been well known in the studios that all three of these men—Penrose, Johnson, and George McIlray here—have for some time been in love with Wanda Hall. They are the only men who have ever been of importance to her. All three of them had access to the studios last night. You have heard what McIlray says he did. The other two maintain that they were not there at all. But, as it happens, neither can prove it.”

The living room door opened, and Captain Williams of the Oak Hill police ushered in his two companions. I recognized them both at once—Harold Penrose, the television make-up artist, the effeminate-looking blond fellow with the sleek, shiny hair and a clipped little mustache, whom I had seen before. A small flower was in his buttonhole; an odor of pomade wafted from him. Peter Johnson was the lanky, heavy-browed, Lincolnlike fellow who had been operating the Kleig lights during the broadcast.

“I say, this is absurd,” the dandified Penrose protested as Huff introduced him to us. “Do I understand I have been brought here to be accused of hurting Wanda?”

“Only unofficially,” Huff said soothingly. “You are suspected, but naturally you won’t refuse to help me prove your innocence. You won’t either, will you Johnson?”

“If I did, you an’ this damn Captain Williams would tell me that’s evidence of my guilt,” the big Peter Johnson retorted.

McIlray was staring numbly at the two newcomers. But all of the rest of us were studying him as well as them. Was one of these three guilty? If so, which one?

“There’s no secret about this,” Huff said with sudden crispness. “The innocent men can’t possibly be harmed. And I’m expecting, certainly I’m hoping, that the guilty man

(Continued on page 102)



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(Continued from page 101)

will betray himself—that his guilty memories will be apparent to Dr. Steele and me. . . . We'll start now, Doctor. Will you phone the studio that we're ready?"

I could feel the electric tenseness springing among us as the gray-haired Dr. Steele crossed the softly lit living room and went into a small room adjoining. He left the door open so that all of us could see him as he sat at a telephone, calling the television company, some ten miles away in New Jersey.

Huff had rolled his chair in front of the three radios.

"These are this year's model of the A. T. C. commercial set," he explained.

He lifted the top of one of them. On the under side of it was a mirror, ten inches wide by seven and a half high. Looking into it, the flattened end of a large onion-shaped tube was visible—the cathode-ray tube on which the televised scenes would appear.

"We will receive tonight only pictures, not sound," Huff added.

Dr. Steele was now putting a screen between each of the television sets. At his murmured instructions the three suspects sat nervously before the receivers, each with a taboret, paper and pencil at hand. The screens separated them so that they could not see each other.

"VERY good," Huff said. "A little less light, Dr. Steele. . . ." Then he addressed the three young men crisply.

"We don't know just what happened in the building of the American Television Company last evening," he said. "But we believe that one of you knows all about it. Over there now we have actors who will enact some impromptu scenes in different parts of the big building. The scenes will incorporate what we think might have happened and where it hap-

pened. It will include some specific guilty evidence which we have. The innocent men do not know anything about that—but the guilty one certainly does!"

A man sitting beside me tried to whisper something, but I silenced him. I knew to what that guilty evidence related. It was that poor Wanda's murdered body had been found.

"This evidence which I'm hiding from you," Huff was continuing, "will appear in some of these scenes. But perhaps it will be so vague, so indistinct that only the guilty man will recognize it. Do you understand me?"

"I don't understand what we're supposed to do," Peter Johnson said flatly.

"There will be a thirty second blank interval between each televised scene," Huff explained. "I want you each to make penciled notes. All three of you are thoroughly familiar with the interior of the building. Concerning each scene, you are to write just two things—the locale of the scene, and what you think the actors are doing. As though you were writing brief notes for a scenario."

The three little television screens presently were luminescent. The coating of the cathode-ray tube glowed fluorescent as the interior electrons bombarded it, a fluorescence now separating into light and shade and motion. The test to trap a murderer had begun.

It was a series of brief, shadowy scenes, some lasting only a few seconds, others half a minute or more, with a half minute interval of blankness between each of them. I could see at once that they were all apparently disconnected in motivation—shadowy figures of a man and girl, but mostly of the man alone.

Nearly all the scenes seemed interiors. They were made against a blurred and sometimes nearly form-

less background, most of them with a silhouette of man's figure doing some specific simple thing.

We were all breathless and silent. The three young men were scribbling their explanatory notes now. A dozen little scenes—a brief intermission of a few minutes—then a dozen more.

Far across the moonlit Hudson beyond Huff's windows the huge transmitter was flinging them out, invisible hurtling pictures made visible by the magic of science here in Huff's room for a criminal to try and interpret. And we all realized the criminal's secret terror—his need to react so normally innocent that two skilled psychologists could not identify the confusion of his terrified mind which had no time now for careful thought.

Instantly he must respond, with what he actually was seeing in the swift-moving little scenes so mingling with his guilty memories that he could not be sure which was which!

Then at last the three screens went dark. In their chairs the young men sat tensely motionless, with their voluminous notes on the taborets before them.

Huff gathered up the memorandums.

"I'll ask you all to remain quiet," he told us. "Dr. Steele and I will have to study these for awhile. We'll go into the adjoining room."

A GAIN the door to the small other room remained open. In the dim living room we sat tense, blankly staring. The other room was brightly lighted. Huff rolled his chair to the table, which held the telephone. A sheaf of typewritten pages lay there.

For ten minutes or so Huff and the grave-faced Dr. Steele were visible, murmuring together, comparing the three penciled lists of the suspects with each other, and with the typewritten list which evidently was a

(Continued on page 104)



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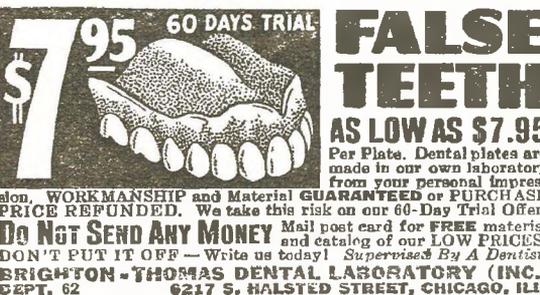
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(Continued from page 103)

description of what the televised scenes had actually shown. In the living room we tried to be quiet, with only the shifting of chairs as some of us changed our positions, or occasionally whispered tensely to each other.

In the intensified silence, Dr. Steele's grim voice as he presently called the television studio was clearly audible. Then he spoke more softly so that no one could hear what he said. But he was grimly excited. The light in the other room illuminated his face, showed his flashing eyes as he spoke swiftly into the telephone.

Huff had been scribbling notes on a slip of paper. He gathered up all the papers now.

"Keep the line open, Dr. Steele," he said. "Let me know what transpires at the studio."

"What in hell does that mean?" Peter Johnson demanded of young McIlray.

But McIlray only shook his head; and Harold Penrose sat silently regarding his fellow suspects, his manicured fingers nervously fiddling with the flower in his buttonhole.

Then Huff, with all his papers on his lapboard, rolled his chair back into the living room.

"I think I can explain a good deal of this now," he told us quietly.

"You know who's guilty?" Captain Williams burst out.

Huff's raised hand silenced the chorus of exclamations that rippled around the room.

"I'm going to let you all judge that," he said. "First, I want to tell you now the exact evidence on which we have been working. Wanda Hall was murdered! The police found the body in the American Television building last night. Found it where, quite evidently, the murderer had hidden it! And jewelry that she was known to have been wearing, was gone."

The disclosure brought another burst of exclamations. Penrose and the burly Johnson stiffened, with murmurs of horror. And a cry burst from young George McIlray.

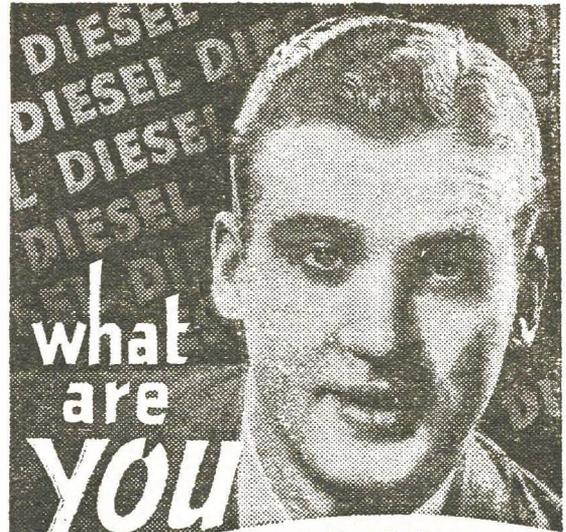
"My God," he exclaimed. "That's what I feared! Poor Wanda!"

"Naturally it is a shock," Huff said. "You McIlray, being engaged to her." I saw that Huff's eyes were flashing now as he gazed from one to the other of the three young men. "This is a murder case," he added, an edge of menace in his voice now. "The body at first wasn't found, though we searched thoroughly. Then Captain Williams came upon a key lying in the hall, near the studio room where the murder occurred. Dried blood was on it. It looked like a trunk key. There is a trunk room in the basement. The key fitted one of the big costume trunks. Wanda's body was found stuffed into it."

Huff raised the typewritten sheet from his lapboard.

"Now here, gentlemen," he went on, "is a list describing the twenty-four action scenes which were televised to us. Dr. Steele and I have been judging the responses made by the three young men. Many of the answers, of course, are inconclusive. Some perhaps, indicate abnormality by coincidence. Others indicate only that the scene was too blurred for anyone correctly to interpret it. But beyond all that, certain abnormalities did appear. An abnormality occurring once—that naturally, mathematically means little. A second occurrence of the same abnormality, made by the same suspect—that means considerably more. And when made three or four times, it goes beyond the mathematical probability of pure coincidence."

AGAIN Huff paused. The three men who had been tested were staring numbly at him, all of them
(Continued on page 106)



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(Continued from page 105)

speechless with terror. Then Huff's gaze went through the open doorway to where Dr. Steele still sat at the telephone.

"Nothing yet, Doctor?" he called. "No. Not yet."

"I have made three lists," Huff went on, "embodying only the significantly abnormal responses. Five scenes are involved. The other nineteen I have discarded as yielding nothing. I'm going to read you the lists, and let you judge for yourselves which is the guilty one."

Huff slowly read from the paper I saw which looked like this:

SUSPECT A

Hall near stairs	Man fumbles at desk
Man drops key	In locker room
In trunk room	Man stands listening
Man unlocks trunk	On the roof
Draughting room	Man creeping forward

SUSPECT B

Upper hallway	Unlocks desk drawer
Man drops small key	Locker and washroom
In the basement	Villain pondering
He kneels at trunk	The roof
In the draughting room	Man furtively moving

SUSPECT C

A room alcove	Opens table drawer
Man drops penknife	Hall coat room
In a dressing room	Man standing tense
Man unlocks drawer	Outside in yard
Manager's office	Murderer escaping

Huff paused when he had read the list, then added with a snap:

"Which is the abnormal, the guilty list?"

"The last one! Suspect C!" Several of us chorused it.

"And it has one specific characteristic," Huff agreed. "An avoidance! This murderer had guilty knowledge. He knew we were after it, and he was afraid he would reveal it. The scenes and the action were blurred, shadowy but we made sure, nevertheless, that they were clear enough to be identified. The murderer did not realize that point. In the haste and stress he was under, he instinctively thought his guilty memories were prompting him. And so he avoided disclosing his guilt, and the avoidance identifies him."

Huff's raised hand forestalled interruption, and he went rapidly on:

"What did he avoid? The hall and the dropping of the key; the trunk room, where the body was hidden; and the draughting room, where something happened, we are not sure just what. And he avoids the locker room. He calls it a hall coat room, which he doubtless felt would look like a reasonable mistake. What guilty memory did he have of the locker and washroom? He washed his bloody hands there, let's say, and was afraid he might have left evidence of it. He hid something in one of the lockers, perhaps?"

"No he didn't," Dr. Steele called from the telephone. "They've already searched the locker room. Every locker has been broken open. There's nothing suspicious in any of them." Dr. Steele had hung up the telephone receiver. "They're going to call me if anything develops," he added.

"Well, that's that," Huff said. "But it seems evident that the murderer had something to hide, aside from the body. The knife with which he stabbed her, for instance. And her jewels, which later he would retrieve. And perhaps some other evidence, incriminating to himself. Something which connects with the locker room.

"I can make a guess what it is, of course. But guessing is not proof. Where would he hide it? The big television building was thoroughly searched last night, but we realize now that only a cursory examination has been made of the roof. This man with the guilty knowledge calls it, 'Outside in the yard.' Why did mention of the roof bother him? A man furtively moving on the roof, and he calls it 'Murderer escaping in the yard'."

Dr. Steele broke in on him abruptly.

"They're searching the roof now," he said. "They said they'd call me."

"But why would he hide things separately from the corpse?" one of the

(Continued on page 108)

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(Continued from page 107)

New York policemen demanded. "He didn't expect the corpse to be found." "But he did expect it to be found," Huff retorted. "You overlook the queerness of the evidence at the murder scene. A murderer hides the corpse, but leaves bloodstains, blouse and handbag, and a shoe which couldn't fall off the girl, so that probably he took it off himself. He hid the body in a trunk. Not his own trunk, which he might later cart away. Oh no! He put it in someone else's trunk. And he dropped the key where we could find it—a blood-stained key so we'd be sure and realize it was connected with the crime, making us search and find the body and accuse the owner of the trunk. Well, the owner of that trunk is here! He took the television test. Your trunk, McIlray!"

"My trunk? Good God!" The young dancing partner of the murdered girl leaped to his feet. "I didn't know that! I swear it! And I didn't write that guilty list! You know who wrote it! Why don't you name him? I didn't kill Wanda!"

"Of course you didn't," Huff agreed. "And this murderer is telling himself now that when I name him he's going to protest he knows nothing, that my psychological deductions won't hold in court, that the jurors can be persuaded that his answers were accidentally abnormal. He's decided to bluff it through. So what's the use of accusing him?"

Huff's voice was sardonic, but I could see that he was tense, worried. Doubtless he knew that what he said was perfectly true. He needed more concrete evidence. And I knew that he was hoping, praying that word would come from the studios now that such evidence had been found.

"In that draughting room," Huff was continuing grimly, "there were some secret drawings and formulae

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for a new type of cathode-ray tube. It hasn't been patented yet. It seems obvious that this fellow hated the girl because she had refused him for George McIlray. That same anger and jealousy made him want McIlray to be blamed for the murder. And we believe that he was prying into that desk—it shows evidence of that—in order to copy those drawings and formulae. And the arriving girl caught him at it. She can't tell us about that now, and so he's confident that he can bluff it through."

It had seemed to me that Huff had avoided even glancing at the two remaining suspects. But he turned and gazed grimly at them now. Both were on their feet—the effeminate Harold Penrose numbly staring, and the big Peter Johnson, the television technician, flushed and panting, with big fists clenched at his sides.

And suddenly the sharp ringing of the telephone in the adjoining room made us all stiffen. I could feel my heart pounding against my ribs. Huff waved Dr. Steele aside, rolled his chair rapidly through the doorway, seized the instrument and for a moment tensely listened.

"Oh, I'm very glad!" he said as he hung up.

He came rolling swiftly back, his eyes gleaming with triumph, his face stamped with relief.

"They found the hiding place," he said. "A loose brick in one of the chimney tops. Behind it, they found the dagger which killed her. And her jewels. And the murderer's shirt, its white cuffs stained with her blood. That's why he went to the locker room. To open his locker, don another shirt which he had there.

"His fingerprints may be on the knife handle—we don't know yet. But the silk shirt, with his monogrammed, blood-stained handkerchief still in its pocket, identifies him with good old police evidence. The kind that juries like! And he's the same man, of course, who wrote our guilty list."

(Concluded on page 110)



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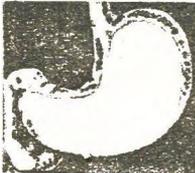
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(Concluded from page 109)

With amazing rapidity Huff had darted his wheel-chair forward, scattering us who were crowding near him. Reaching out, he seized the cowering Harold Penrose by the neck, almost lifting him from the floor.

It was the first time I had ever seen Huff like this. All the aspect of analytical scientist was gone from him. His lips were pressed together; his eyes blazed; his sun-tanned face was suddenly mottled red with his unleashed fury.

He had forgotten that he was a detective; forgotten he was a cripple. For that moment he was just a man enraged—and I knew that he was thinking of little Wanda Hall as she had stood smilingly before us, so gracefully acknowledging our compliments—thinking of her as though he were her father.

For a moment now I really thought that he might strangle Penrose. Then he got control of himself, flung the dandified make-up artist away, and sat back in his wheel-chair, dusting his hands as though to free them from pollution.

"That's all, gentlemen," he said, as his glance swept us. "Thank you for coming. I'm glad we were successful." Then his voice softened. "Poor little Wanda! The new industry of television seemed destined to bring her such great laurels. And all it could do was avenge her."

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THE PHANTOM SPEAKS

BORDER sunlight lay hot and glaring upon the downtown streets of El Paso. Flags of two nations festooned every lamp post on the International Bridge and along the parade route to the great Plaza, which was bedecked in festive array for an event of international importance.

Countless eyes were strained toward the Santa Fe Bridge, from whence a Mexican dignitary of high office, Senor Alfredo Romez, would enter the United States on a peace mission, the signing of an important trade pact.

Moving slowly and with clockwork precision, the official procession approached and moved onward to the Plaza and its packed grandstands. The Mexican population of El Paso stood up and cheered wildly.

And then suddenly, in full view of that immense throng of spectators, death struck!

A Murder Coup

The two motorcycle cops in the immediate rear of Senor Romez' limousine went into action. Simultaneously their right hands dropped to open holsters supported by shining Sam Browne belts. There was the gleam of hot sunlight on the leveled muzzles of blue-steel, then both .45s crashed out in a murderous blast—a death blast that was destined to echo across a continent before nightfall.

Soft-nosed leaden slugs went screaming through the silent afternoon with unerring aim. They struck Senor Alfredo Romez directly behind and above each ear, crunching through bone with terrific impact!

Then—a sickening mixture of tear gas fumes and black smoke rose like a heavy blanket—and the assassins escaped!

(Continued on page 112)

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(Continued from page 111)

The carefully executed details of this amazing murder coup were only part of a devilish campaign. With stunning celerity two further acts of unprovoked aggression by uniformed Americans followed on the heels of the assassination of the Mexican official. Wholesale, conscienceless slaughter of innocent Mexicans!

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The Phantom Steps In

It was into this strained breach that I stepped, as you will see in next month's issue of THE PHANTOM DETECTIVE. And the case of THE PHANTOM AND THE UNIFORMED KILLERS will stand out vividly in my mind as one of the most hazardous in my whole career!

I have never been involved in a more baffling mystery. The solution eluded me constantly because new factors kept cropping up to make things more complex. And the answer was really simple, as I found out at the end of the trail!

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astonish you! From start to finish, **THE PHANTOM AND THE UNIFORMED KILLERS** will hold you breathless!

Surprises at Every Turn

There are surprises awaiting you at every turn in the road as you accompany me through to the baffling mazes of this astounding mystery.

Although I am accustomed to danger, the sweat comes to my brow even now as I look back on the exciting incidents chronicled in **THE PHANTOM AND THE UNIFORMED KILLERS**, the action-packed complete book-length novel by Robert Wallace coming in next month's issue of **THE PHANTOM DETECTIVE!**

Be on hand for a feast of thrills!

Our Mailbag

In addition to **THE PHANTOM AND THE UNIFORMED KILLERS**, next month's issue will contain other pulse-stirring stories of the war on crime. While waiting, please drop me a letter or postcard and tell me what you think of this issue of **THE PHANTOM DETECTIVE**.

Here are some excerpts from a few of the hundreds of letters recently received:

I have been reading your magazine for about five years and I think it is improving constantly. Each issue is better than the last.—*Paul Ross, Tuscarora, Pennsylvania.*

Just a few lines to let you know what I think of your magazine. It is the best I ever read. I was thrilled by **DEATH UNDER CONTRACT**. I have read over twenty of your novels with pleasure.—*D. Pouiter, London.*

Here are a few lines to give you some honest praise for such hair-raising adventures. I like the magazine and I am waiting impatiently for the next story. I hope it rates with the last one I read.—*Wilma Lamphear, Houghton, Mich.*

I was thrilled up to the last page with **THE PHANTOM COMES THROUGH**. It was a good, clean, exciting novel as all the rest are. Keep up the good work.—*Dominick Testaguzza, Scranton, Pa.*

I am proud to belong to **FRIENDS OF THE PHANTOM**. I enjoy all your novels and I like the wholesome, clean character of your magazine.—*John Brightley, Houston, Tex.*

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Thank you! So long—until next month.

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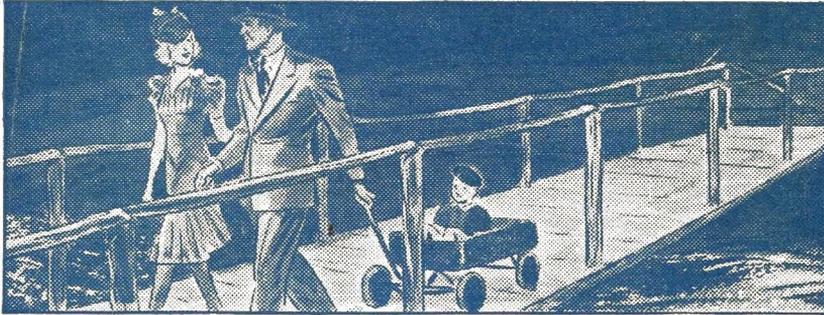
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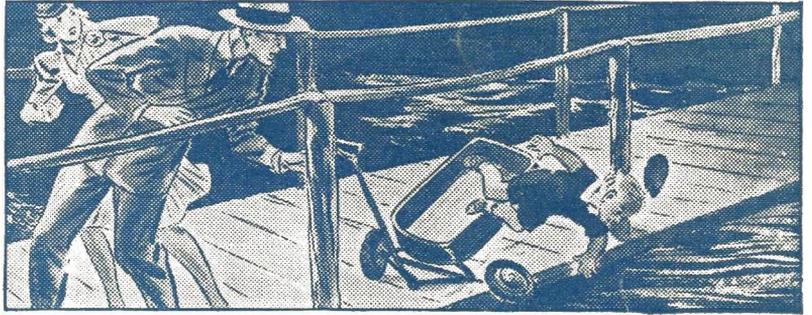


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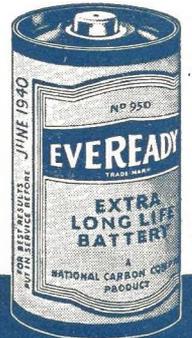


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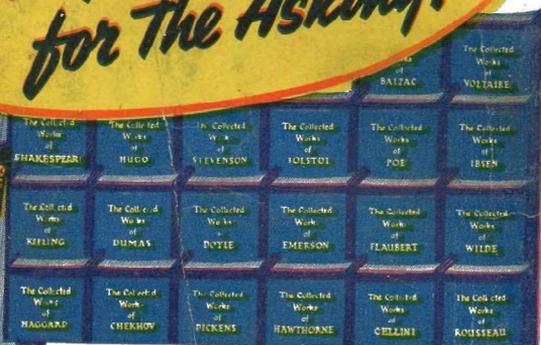
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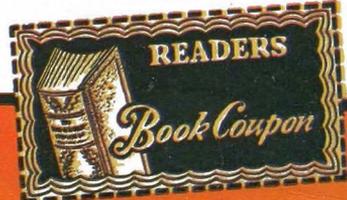
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