

THRILLING MYSTERY

10¢

WINTER
ISSUE

Dead MAN'S HAND
An Exciting Complete Novel
By WILLIAM CAMPBELL GAULT

THE CASE OF THE EVIL EYE
A Green Ghost Novelet
By G. T. FLEMING-ROBERTS

BUY WAR BONDS
AND STAMPS
FOR VICTORY!

BEST ACTION
DETECTIVE STORIES

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION



BLACKOUT IN THE OPERATING ROOM!



A true story of the war, as told by **SISTER ISABEL NIXON, Head Nurse of St. Thomas Hospital, London**, to a war correspondent.

The centuries-old London hospital has three distinctions. It is London's most bombed hospital (undoubtedly because of its proximity to the Houses of Parliament just across the Thames). It has not during this war lost an air raid victim. And it was the home of Florence Nightingale. Headnurses still wear the same uniform and lace-edged frilled bonnets pioneer Nightingale wore during the Crimean campaign.



1 "It happened during a lull, after many hours of continuous bombing. We were operating on casualties brought to the underground emergency theatre. There was a terrific explosion nearby, then such a frightening blackness as could only come in an operating room



2 That single stray bomb had shattered the two outside electric plants. It would take time to rig up the emergency plant. Meanwhile we had a victim on the operating table, in danger of bleeding to death. I told all the nurses and medical students to get their flashlights



3 "We grouped around the table, giving the surgeon the light he needed to save his patient . . . Because of the highly inflammable ether we couldn't have used a hurricane lamp. This was one of many, many cases where only flashlights with proper batteries could have been used to save life."

It's not your dealer's fault if he happens to be out of "Eveready" flashlight batteries. Most of those we can make are going to the armed forces; nearly all the remainder are taken on priority by the war industries.

A free copy of "You and the War," the official guide-book to all home defense activities, will be sent to you on request. Civilian Defense needs your help; this book will tell you how to give it. Address: National Carbon Company, Dept. FX, 30 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y.

NATIONAL CARBON COMPANY, INC.
30 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y.
Unit of Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation



The word "Eveready" is a registered trademark of National Carbon Company, Inc.

FRESH BATTERIES LAST LONGER . . .

Look for the **DATE-LINE**



don't Worry about Rupture

• Why put up with days . . . months . . . YEARS of discomfort, worry and fear? Learn now about this perfected invention for all forms of reducible rupture. Surely you keenly desire—you eagerly CRAVE to enjoy life's normal activities and pleasures once again. To work . . . to play . . . to live . . . to love . . . with the haunting Fear of Rupture banished from your thoughts! Literally thousands of rupture sufferers have entered this Kingdom of Paradise Regained. Why not you? Some wise man said, "Nothing is impossible in this world"—and it is true, for where others fail is where we have had our greatest success in many cases! Even doctors—thousands of them—have ordered for themselves and their patients. Unless your case is absolutely hopeless, do not despair. The coupon below brings our Free Rupture Book in plain envelope. Send the coupon now,

Patented AIR-CUSHION Support Gives Nature a Chance to CLOSE the OPENING

Think of it! Here's a surprising yet simple-acting invention that permits Nature to close the opening—that holds the rupture securely but gently, day and night, at work and at play! Thousands of grateful letters express heartfelt thanks for results beyond the expectation of the writers. What is this invention—How does it work? Will it help me? Get the complete, fascinating facts on the Brooks Automatic Air Cushion Appliance—send now for free Rupture Book.

Cheap—Sanitary—Comfortable

Rich or poor—ANYONE can afford to buy this remarkable, LOW-PRICED rupture invention! But look out for imitations and counterfeits. The Genuine Brooks Air-Cushion Truss is never sold in stores or by agents. Your Brooks is made up, after your order is received, to fit your particular case. You buy direct at the low "maker-to-user" price. The perfected Brooks is sanitary, lightweight, inconspicuous. Has no hard pads to gouge painfully into the flesh, no stiff protruding springs, no metal girdle to rust or corrode. It brings heavenly comfort and security—while the Automatic Air Cushion continually works, in its own, unique way, to help Nature get results! Learn what this patented invention can mean to you—send coupon quick!



C. E. BROOKS, Inventor

SENT ON TRIAL!

No . . . don't order a Brooks now—FIRST get the complete revealing explanation of this world-famous rupture invention. THEN decide whether you want the comfort—the freedom from fear and worry—the security—the same amazing results thousands of men, women and children have reported. They found our invention the answer to their prayers! Why can't you? And you risk nothing as the complete appliance is SENT ON TRIAL. Surely you owe it to yourself to investigate this no-risk trial. Send for the facts now—today—hurry! All correspondence strictly confidential.

FREE! Latest Rupture Book Explains All!

Send You In Plain Envelope. Just Clip and Send Coupon →

Brooks Appliance Co., 182K State St., Marshall, Mich.



PROOF!

Read These Reports on Reducible Rupture Cases.

(In our files at Marshall, Michigan, we have over 33,000 grateful letters which have come to us entirely unsolicited and without any sort of payment.)

Likes Brooks Best

"I bought one of your Rupture Appliances in 1933, wore it day and night for one year and laid it aside last December. The rupture hasn't bothered me since. I used several others without success until I got a Brooks."—J. B. McCarter, Route 2, Box 104, Oregon City, Ore.

"Runs and Plays"

"My son has not worn the Appliance for over a year. He wore one for ten years and I am very glad to know that he has laid it aside. He is twelve years old, runs and plays hard like all boys and is never bothered about the rupture."—Mrs. M. George, Route 1, Box 103, Cumberland, Md.

Mail This Coupon NOW!

BROOKS APPLIANCE CO.
182K State St., Marshall, Mich.

Without obligation, please send your FREE Book on Rupture, Proof of Results, and TRIAL OFFER—all in plain envelope.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____

State whether for Man Woman or Child

TO OUR READERS: Our new attractive space-saving typography conserves paper in conformity with government rationing—and there is NO REDUCTION in reading matter.

THRILLING MYSTERY

VOL. XXI, No. 2

EVERY STORY BRAND NEW

Winter Issue

A Gripping Complete Novel

DEAD MAN'S HAND

By WILLIAM CAMPBELL GAULT



When Drake Garrett, Gambler, Finds a Corpse in His Closet, It's the Signal for a Desperate Battle to Smash a Murder Frame and Bring Diabolical Criminals to the Bar of Justice! - - - - - 15

A Green Ghost Novelet

THE CASE OF THE EVIL EYE - - - - - G. T. Fleming-Roberts 46

Magician-Sleuth George Chance Tackles the Baffling "Hex" Mystery of a Prize-Ring Murder—and Matches Wits with a Fiendishly Ingenious Killer!

Thrilling Short Stories

THE CAT AND THE FIDDLE - - - - - Owen Fox Jerome 40

Gentle, Mild Mr. Remington Is Transformed Into a Detective

RATS ARE SMART - - - - - Robert Wallace 67

A Short Short Story Complete on One Page

WITHOUT ERROR - - - - - Ray Cummings 68

John Chase Made Sure He Removed All Evidence, but—

THE CORPSE THAT PLAYED DEAD - - - - - A. Boyd Correll 78

Murder Closes Down on a Hollywood Lot

and

MYSTERY-SCOPES - - - - - Chakra 6

Special FREE Crystal-Scope Reading Offer! Coupon on Page 96

AN INVESTMENT IN VICTORY - - - - - Elliot Paul 77

A War Bond Message for All Americans

THRILLING MYSTERY, published quarterly by Better Publications, Inc., at 11 East 39th St., New York 16, N. Y. Subscription (12 issues) \$1.25; single copies, 41c. Foreign postage extra. Entered as second class matter July 12, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1943, by Better Publications, Inc. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelope, and are submitted at the author's risk. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If a name of any living person or existing institution is used it is a coincidence. December, 1943, issue

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

I Will Train You at Home For

Vital Jobs Now Open in RADIO



Many Jobs Now Open Pay \$50 a Week

Would you like a civilian job vital to the war effort that has a bright future after the war? Would you like to be in line for promotions in rank and pay if you're called into Military Service? Then get my FREE 64-page book. Find out how I train you at home to be a Radio Technician or Radio Operator.

Big Demand Now For Well-Trained Radio Technicians, Operators

Radio has jumped from a great part-time business to a booming war industry. The Radio repair business is booming because no new Radios are being made. Radio Technicians and Operators are needed—hundreds of them—for vital jobs at good wages. Broadcasting Stations, Aviation Radio and Police Radio, and other Radio branches are scrambling for Operators and Technicians. Radio Manufacturers, now working on Government orders for Radio equipment, employ trained men. The Government, too, needs hundreds of competent civilian and enlisted Radio men and women. Think of the NEW jobs that Television, Frequency Modulation, Electronics, and other Radio developments will open after the war.

Extra Pay in Army, Navy, Too

There's a real need in Army, Navy for trained Radio men. If you have completed a course in Radio you stand a good chance of being assigned to communications work. The National Radio Institute has trained many men who now hold specialist's ratings. Over 1,700 Service Men are enrolled with N. R. I.

Many Beginners Soon Make \$5, \$10 a Week EXTRA in Spare Time

The day you enroll for my Course I start sending you EXTRA MONEY. JOHN HIGGINS that soon show how to earn EXTRA money fixing Radios. Many make \$5, \$10 a week EXTRA in spare time while still learning. I send you SIX big bits of real Radio parts. You LEARN Radio fundamentals from my Lessons. PRACTICE what you learn by building typical circuits like those illustrated on this page—PROVE what you learn by interesting tests on the circuits you build.

Now is the Time to Act!

You have a real opportunity—if you act NOW! No take the first step at once. Get my FREE 64 page book. Just mail Coupon in an envelope or paste on penny postal—J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 3N09, National Radio Institute, Washington 9, D. C.

Vital Radio Jobs Like These Go To Men I Trained

\$200 a Month in Own Business—For several years I have been in business for myself making around \$200 a month. I have N. R. I. to thank for my start. —A. FROESNER, 100 W. Texas Ave., Goose Creek, Texas.



\$10 a Week in Spare Time—I repaired some Radios when I was on my lunch lesson. I made \$100 in a year and a half, and have made an average of \$10 a week—just spare time. —JOHN JERRY, 1137 Kalamath St., Denver, Colorado.



Lieutenant in Signal Corps—I cannot divulge any information as to my type of work but I can say that N. R. I. training is certainly coming in mighty handy these days. —RICHARD W. ANDERSON. (Address omitted for military reasons.)



Chief Operator Broadcasting Station—Before I completed your lessons I obtained my Radio Broadcast Operator's license and immediately joined station WM PC where I am now Chief Operator. —HOLLIS F. BAYES, 227 Madison St., Lapeer, Michigan.



You Build These and Other Radio Circuits With Kits I Supply!

By the time you've completed 60 sets of Experiments with Radio parts I supply—have made hundreds of measurements and adjustments—you'll have had valuable PRACTICAL experience.

You build this SUPERBETTER-ODYNE CIRCUIT containing a preselector, oscillator mixer first detector, I. F. stage, diode-detector, a. c. stage, audio stage. Being in local and distant stations on this circuit.



You build this MEASURING INSTRUMENT yourself early in the Course. Use it in practical Radio work to make EXTRA money. Vacuum tube multimeter, measures A. C., D. C. and R. F. volts, D. C. currents, resistance, receiver output.

Building this A. M. SIGNAL GENERATOR will give you valuable experience. Provides amplitude-modulated signals for test and experimental purposes.



FREE BOOK HAS SHOWN HUNDREDS HOW TO MAKE GOOD MONEY

Mr. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 3N09, National Radio Institute, Washington 9, D. C.

Mail me FREE, without obligation, your 64 page book "Win Radio Rewards in Radio." (No salesman will call. Please write plainly.)

Name..... Age.....

Address.....

City..... State.....



MYSTERYSCOPES

By **CHAKRA**

Famous Mystic

Strange stories will always be popular, especially when these strange stories are true. The person who has a number of odd and mystifying stories at his fingertip will always be the center of attraction in any conversation.

The purpose of this department is to furnish such entertainment. It presents true stories of strange happenings gathered from all corners of the earth and authenticated by reliable persons.

Your CRYSTAL-SCOPE Reading Free!

Send in Coupon on Page 96

The Phantom Musician

AT a recent convention of Police Chiefs, held in New York City, one of the delegates, a Police Captain from Ohio, John Wallerman, told of solving a crime with the aid of a ghost. The other officers laughed, until Wallerman told his true story:

I was a patrolman at the time. Old Max Heber, the local pawnbroker, was murdered one night by a crook who had stolen a valuable violin which Max had taken for security from a mysterious stranger. It had been a valuable instrument, studded with gems and mother of pearl. The stranger had said it was a family heirloom and that he would return in several weeks to redeem it.

I was at Max's bedside when he passed away. He couldn't give a very good description of his killer, but we were able to locate the man who had pawned the violin. He was prostrated and said that only two men knew of the violin's value.

We tracked down one of the men, but he had an alibi. But we couldn't locate the other fellow. All we knew that he had been last seen on a certain street and probably lived somewhere in that vicinity. I was assigned to that section of town.

Days passed. Then one night about twelve o'clock, I heard a violin being played in one of the small houses. There were no lights in the house. Finally, I knocked on the door and waited.

There was no answer. But the violin kept

playing. Believing that the player must be deaf, I took a skeleton key and opened the door. With my flashlight I looked into the one main room.

As my light flashed, the music stopped. But there was no one there. I spotted the violin on the mantelpiece. Believing it was the missing violin, I took it to headquarters. It was identified by the owner. And a few hours later, we arrested the killer when he returned to his home.

But the mystery of the violin being played by some invisible hands, still worried me. Finally, I told the enigma to the owner of the remarkable instrument. He looked up at me with a strange smile on his face. Then he said: "I wonder, officer—if it was the ghost of my grandfather who made the violin? He told us that if it ever left our possession, he would turn over in his grave."

Protector in the Night

A STRANGE story is reported by Thomas Calway of Illinois. Some weeks ago, his brother William, who had been a detective with the local police force, died in an automobile accident. Thomas had loved William dearly, for Thomas had been a frail man ever since boyhood and had always looked up to William as his strong protector.

Several days after the funeral, Thomas was

(Continued on page 8)

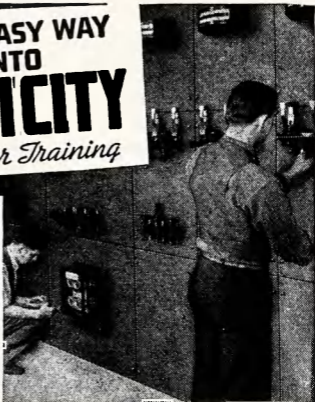


AMAZINGLY EASY WAY TO GET INTO ELECTRICITY

I'll Finance Your Training



★ **ELECTRICITY** is one of the most important factors in our war effort. Thousands of trained electricians are needed NOW. And after the war, Electricity will continue to be tremendously important! Why be satisfied with a no-future job when I make it SO EASY to prepare for a good war-time and peace-time job with a REAL FUTURE?



FIRST IN WAR! **ELECTRICITY** FIRST IN PEACE!

Learn By Doing in 12 Weeks

Get into the fascinating, fast-growing, well-paid field of Electricity—a field that offers you opportunities and a future—in good times or bad times—a field that is a permanent necessity in war or peace. Here is your chance to prepare yourself for a lasting permanent future.

Here at Coyne, in 12 weeks, you can train for your Big Opportunity. "Learn-by-doing"

SPECIAL OFFER! RADIO and ELECTRONICS

New Course Now Included! No extra cost!



—train on real electrical machinery. Not a correspondence course. Here you learn airplane ignition, wind armatures, learn power plant operation, do house and factory wiring, etc.

Coyne training is easy to learn. You don't need previous experience or advanced education. You don't need much money to get my training. I have many plans to help the fellow who needs training but hasn't much money. Mail coupon for all the facts.



**LIFETIME
JOB
SERVICE**
*Free to Coyne
Graduates!*

**GET YOUR TRAINING
NOW ... PAY FOR
IT LATER!**

Coyne Training is EASY, PRACTICAL! You LEARN BY DOING on real, actual machinery and apparatus. Don't let lack of money stop you. You can get training first—then pay for it in easy monthly payments after you graduate. If you need part-time work to help out with living expenses, I'll help you get it.

INSURE YOUR FUTURE! *Send for Book!*

Coyne is 45 years old and has seen War and Peace—times of prosperity and times of national depression. During all these times Coyne has trained men for good pay jobs. Coyne training is tested and proven. Mail coupon and let me send you the big free Coyne book and my complete story about how I help you get the training you need for a good Electrical job. This does not obligate you in any way. Just mail coupon.

H. C. LEWIS, President, COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
500 S. Paulina St. Dept. 93-34 Chicago 12, Illinois

H. C. LEWIS, President
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL, Dept. 93-34
500 S. Paulina St., Chicago 12, Illinois

Send me your Free Book and tell me about your plans to help me—including Pay-Tuition-after-Graduation offer and Radio-Electronics Training at no extra cost.

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
CITY.....STATE.....

MYSTERY-SCOPES

(Continued from page 6)

returning home, walking through the park. It was late and only a small street lamp offset the extreme dark of the night.

Suddenly a huge man loomed up in front of Thomas. The stranger asked:

"What time is it, mister?"

Something about the man made Thomas afraid, but he took out his watch with a prayer on his lips. As Calway gave the time, he looked up at the face of the stranger whose glance went first to the right of Calway in a strange manner, and then returned to Calway. Then the stranger said, "Thanks, mister," turned and walked away.

Thomas Calway was glad to get home. He tried to tell himself it was all his imagination of fear. The stranger wasn't a crook after all.

But the next day, Calway thought differently. The afternoon paper told of a holdup and murder in the park. The victim, before he died, had described his killer.

Calway shuddered. He knew it was the same man who had asked for the time. But why hadn't he held up Calway?

Through Calway's description and identification, the killer was apprehended. At the police station confronted by Calway, he confessed.

Then he was asked why he hadn't robbed Calway.

The man answered sullenly: "I intended to—but that big fellow beside you made me change my mind."

Calway believes his dead brother was still his protector even after death.

The Cup of Chocolate

THIS story comes from a sister of an American soldier. She verifies it through her family doctor. Here are her own words:

When my brother John went to war several months ago, it had a terrible effect on my mother. My father had been killed in the last war shortly after my brother had been born, and mother feared that her son would meet the same fate.

She began to fade and could not eat. I was constantly at her side, and the doctor came most every day to try and benefit my mother in some way. But all she would talk about was John over there in the foxholes. Her mind was weakening.

On the afternoon of May 22nd this year, the doctor and I were sitting on the porch talking about mother's condition, when we heard her in the kitchen. Then in a few moments, we heard her go back to the living room talking to herself. She frequently did that so we thought nothing of it.

After a while we went in the living room, and I noticed a cup and saucer on the table near the couch. As I walked over to it, mother said to me:

"John was here—I gave him a cup of chocolate. He couldn't stay but said he would come back tomorrow and take me on a journey."

The doctor nodded to me not to say anything, and we both looked at the cup. It was partly empty and there were lip-marks on it.

The doctor examined it carefully. Then he whispered:

"This is strange—these are not the marks of your mother's mouth."

We couldn't understand it of course, but thought that the cup might have been standing in the kitchen and mother had brought it in, in her vague mental state. One of the neighbor's children might have drunk out of the cup, because mother often made chocolate for them.

So we comforted mother, the doctor giving her some medicine, which she took gladly, because she was very happy about her vision.

But the next day, the strangeness struck with all its power. Mother was stricken with a heart attack and died within a few moments. Her last words were:

"John, I'm ready."

But the most astounding thing of all was—three weeks later we received word that John had been killed in the South Pacific and had died on May 22nd, the very day that mother had told us of the strange visitation and the cup of chocolate.

Child of Vision

LITTLE Billie Brokaw of Washington State was always claiming he knew what was going to happen. His parents and brothers and sisters made fun of him, although at times they admitted he was a pretty good guesser.

Recently he fell sick. The doctor thought at first the nine-year-old boy had pneumonia, but the delirium was a bit different. Finally, the doctor awaited the crisis and one evening reported that if Billie lived through the night, he would get well.

But about ten o'clock a thunder shower came up. The thunder and lightning were intense. Relatives feared that the vibrations might be bad for their brother, so they came into his room in their nightclothes and waited till the storm passed.

Just when they thought the storm was over, came a clap of thunder that shook the house from top to bottom. Little Billie jumped up from his slumber. He saw his brothers and sisters around him. His first response was:

"Get your clothes on—grandmother is coming—Uncle John is dead. . . ."

And then he lay down again and fell into a coma.

Instinctively the other children obeyed—and in a few moments, the grandmother staggered into the room—her house, a short distance away, had been struck by lightning. When the relatives rushed to put out the fire, they found that Uncle John had been killed by the bolt, just as Billie had foretold.

The next morning, Billie came through the crisis—and since that day he has been perfectly normal. He no longer has any strange psychic powers.

The Lost Mine of Death

THIS story can be verified by Court Records in British Columbia, Canada.

Some time ago, a young Indian came to
(Continued on page 10)

They Never Knew It Was SO EASY To Play

Thousands Learn Musical Instruments By Amazingly Simple Method

**No Teacher, No Musical Knowledge
Required. In a Short Time You
Start Playing Real Tunes!
750,000 Now Enrolled**

THINK of the fun YOU are missing! The popularity, friendship, good times! Why? Because you think it's hard to learn music. You have an idea that it's a slow, tedious task, with lots of boring drills and exercises.

That's not the twentieth-century way! Surely you've heard the news! How people all over the world have learned to play by a method so simple a child can understand it—so fascinating that it's like playing a game. Imagine! You learn without a teacher—in your spare time at home—at a cost of only a few cents a day! You learn by the famous print-and-picture method—every position, every move before your eyes in big, clear illustrations. You CAN'T go wrong! And best of all, you start playing real tunes almost at once, from the very first lesson.

No needless, old-fashioned "scales" and exercises. No confused, perplexing study. You learn to play by playing. It's thrilling, exciting, inspiring! No wonder hundreds of thousands of people have taken up music this easy way. No wonder enthusiastic letters like those reproduced here pour in from all over the world.

Sound interesting? Well, just name the instrument you'd like to play and we'll prove you CAN! If interested, mail the coupon or write.

**U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC
29412 Brunswick Bldg.,
New York 10, N. Y.**



Learned Quickly at Home. "I didn't dream I could actually learn to play without a teacher. Now when I play for people they hardly believe that I learned to play so well in so short a time!" —H. C. S., Calif.

"That's Gold in Them Them Hitlilly Songs." Crave for mountain music, "swing" and other popular forms has brought fame and fortune to many who started playing for the fun of it. Thousands have discovered unexpected pleasure and profit in music, thanks to the unique method that makes it amazingly easy to learn.

**Send for FREE Booklet and
Print and Picture Sample**

See for yourself how this wonderful self-instruction method works. Sit down, in the privacy of your own home, with the interesting illustrated booklet, "How to Learn Music at Home" and the free Print & Picture Sample. No salesman will call—decide for yourself whether you want to play this easy way.



Invited to Parties. "Be-
fore I took your course
I didn't know one note
of music. Then three
months later I started
to play for dances. I've
been invited to many
parties. The course is
easy and interesting."
—M. Vancouver.

Well Worth Money.
"The course is fully
self-explanatory. When
it is finished with it
there is little one need
doubt. It is well worth
the money and I fully
believe you have the
best course in the
market today." —R. E.
G., Clarkston, W. Va.

Surprised Friends.
"People who hear me
play don't understand
how I do it." They ask
me if I have had lessons
from a teacher. To
my surprise they find
I haven't. I'm glad to
share the student of your
method." —M. H. Altied,
Kans.

**U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC
29412 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y.**

I am interested in music study, particularly in the instrumental illustrated below. Please send me your free booklet, "How to Learn Music at Home" and the free Print & Picture Sample.

Piano	Trumpet, Cornet	Piccolo
Guitar	Reed Organ	Modern
Hawaiian Guitar	Tenor Banjo	Elementary
Violin	Ukulele	Harmony
Piano Accordion	Drums and Traps	Mandolin
Plain Accordion	Trombone	Practical Finger
Saxophone	Flute	Control

Name Have You
(PLEASE PRINT) This Instr. I.....

Address

City State

Note: If you are under 16 yrs. of age, parent must sign coupon.

*Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by Professional models

SAVE 2¢—Stick coupon on penny postcard.

SAYS MAN CAN NOW USE POWER OF 1000 MINDS

A strange man in Los Angeles, known as "The Voice of Two Worlds," reveals the story of a remarkable system that often leads to almost unbelievable improvement in power of mind, achievement of brilliant business and professional success and new happiness. Many report improvement in health. Others tell of increased bodily strength, magnetic personality, courage and poise.

The man, a well-known explorer and geographer, tells how he found these strange methods in far-off and mysterious Tibet, often called the land of miracles by the few travelers permitted to visit it. He discloses how he learned rare wisdom and long hidden practices, closely guarded for three thousand years by the sages, which enabled many to perform amazing feats. He maintains that these immense powers are latent in all of us, and that methods for using them are now simplified so they can be used by almost any person with ordinary intelligence.

He maintains that man, instead of being limited by a one-man-power mind, has within him the mind power of a thousand men or more

as well as the energy power of the universe which can be used in his daily affairs. He states that this sleeping giant of mind power, when awakened, can make him capable of surprising accomplishments, from the prolonging of youth, to success in many fields.

The author states the time has come for this long hidden system to be disclosed to the Western world, and offers to send his amazing 9000-word treatise—which reveals many startling results—to sincere readers of this publication, free of cost or obligation. For your free copy, address the Institute of Mentalphysics, 213 South Hobart Blvd., Dept. 521-F, Los Angeles 4, Calif. Readers are urged to write promptly, as only a limited number of the free treatises have been printed.



(Advertisement)

EYE-GLASSES as LOW as **\$2.95** Complete

Try **by MAIL** Now **Newest Styles!**

SEND NO MONEY! MAIL YOUR OWN PHOTO AT HOME. WE WILL SEND YOU A PAIR OF LATEST FASHIONED EYE-GLASSES.

16 DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE OF SATISFACTION
If you're not 100% satisfied with glasses we make you return every cent you pay us. Refunds 48 Hrs. ONLY.

Write TODAY for **FREE** color-cards, scientific test chart. **Mr. Service I. L. S. EYE-GLASSER CO., 1557 Milwaukee Ave., Dept. C-42 Chicago, Ill.**

INVENTORS

PROTECT your idea with a Patent. Secure "Patent Guide" and "Secret of Invention" form—Free. No charge for preliminary information. Write today!

CLARENCE A. D'BRIN and HARVEY S. JACOBSON
 Registered Patent Attorneys
 38-M Adams Building, Washington, D. C.

ANY PHOTO ENLARGED

Size 8 x 10 inches or smaller if desired. Same price for full length or bust form, groups, landscapes, set animals, etc., or enlargements of any part of group picture. Original returned with your enlargement.

47¢ **3 for \$1.00**

SEND NO MONEY Just mail photo (any size) and receive your beautiful enlargement, guaranteed fadeless. Pay postman 47¢ plus postage—or send 48¢ with order and we pay postage. Big 18x24-inch enlargement sent C.O.D. 75¢ plus postage or send 80¢ and we pay postage. Take advantage of this amazing offer now. Send your photo today. Now 17¢ size wanted.

STANDARD ART STUDIOS, 100 East Ohio St., Dept. 405-W, Chicago

MYSTERY-SCOPES

(Continued from page 8)

New Westminster, B.C., with a bag of gold nuggets. He would not reveal the location of his mine, but said he would return for more gold, when the present supply gave out.

Then he disappeared, and a few days later, high in the hills, was found a dead squaw. The woman was identified as the squaw who had been seen with the rich young Indian.

Later, when he returned with more gold, he was apprehended and finally he confessed he had killed the squaw because she knew where his mine was.

He boasted that he had killed every squaw that had cooked for him on his various trips. And even on the gallows he proclaimed that no man would ever find his gold and live.

"The gods will choke him," he shouted. But John Littlemore, a veteran prospector felt that he could find the mine by the location of the dead squaw; so he started out on his perilous journey. He claimed that the Indian had probably carried the dead squaw for one day's journey, or had killed her on the night of the first day's trip.

Time passed, but Littlemore never came back. People wondered what had become of him. But recently, surveyors for a proposed railroad to connect British Columbia with the newly opened Alaska highway, came upon John Littlemore's body. The cold had preserved the body pretty well, and upon examination a gold nugget was found wedged in his windpipe. He had evidently died of

PIPE CLEANERS *NOT* ESSENTIAL WITH MEDICO FILTERED SMOKING



The mouthpiece stays clean at all times, thanks to the patented 66 Baffle Filter which retains flakes—slugs—and absorbs moisture. When filter is discolored, it has done its job. Discard it and put in a fresh one—costs only ONE CENT. If moisture from tobacco causes slight accumulation in bottom of bowl, simply insert pick or awl through shank to insure free draft. Medico Filtered Smoking is clean—sanitary—mild, and unbelievably improves taste and aroma of your favorite tobacco.



GENUINE FILTERS FOR MEDICO PACKED ONLY IN THIS RED & BLACK BOX

Frank MEDICO—STILL ONE DOLLAR WITH BOX OF FILTERS FREE!

\$1.00

strangulation. He probably had been carrying the nugget in his mouth as prospectors were sometimes known to do, when in danger of being robbed.

What do you think?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Dear Chakra: I have heard several reports that soldiers have seen strange visions of light through the palm trees in the Solomon Islands, which cannot be accounted for by natural explanation. Is it true that the Solomons are haunted islands as sailors have reported for years?—*Merrill Halstead.*

Dear Mr. Halstead: More than likely these reports of lights in the Solomons are due to a certain fungus parasite which occasionally causes flame to burst forth from Imperial palm trees.

Dear Chakra: Has the identity of the famous "phantom soldier" of North Africa ever been established? Newspapers have frequently reported his appearance.—*Mel Malley.*

Dear Mr. Malley: He is supposed to be Corporal Marshall Dickerson of the French Foreign Legion—an American soldier of fortune born in White Post, Virginia. His body has never been found. He claimed he would always be a soldier of fortune, death notwithstanding.

Dear Chakra: I have been told that there is a bridge somewhere, that whenever any man named O'Rourke passes over it, he dies, due to a curse made by an enemy of the O'Rourke family. Is this true and where is the bridge?—*John O'Rourke.*

(Concluded on page 96)

BACK THE ATTACK WITH WAR BONDS

Learn this Profitable Profession in 90 Days at Home



Independence—Now and Future

Hundreds of men and women of all ages, 18-50 make \$10.00 to \$20.00 in a single day giving scientific Swedish Massage and Hydro-Therapy treatments. There is a big demand from Hospitals, Sanitariums, Clubs, Doctors and private patients as well as opportunities for establishing your own office.

Learn this interesting money-making profession in your own home by mail, through our home study course. Same instructors as in our NATIONALLY KNOWN resident school. A diploma is awarded upon completion of the course. Course can be completed in 3 to 4 months. High School training is not necessary. Many earn big money while learning. Begin this home study course at once and become independent. Write today.



Anatomy Charts & Booklet FREE

Enroll now and we will include uniform cost, medical dictionary, patented reducing roller and Hydro-Therapy supplies without extra cost. Be prepared to help meet the growing demand for massage during and after the war. Send coupon now for Anatomy Charts and booklet of photographs and letters from successful graduates. These will all be sent postpaid—FREE.

THE College of Swedish Massage
Dept. 863, 108 East Ohio Street, Chicago 11

You may send me FREE and postpaid, Anatomy Charts, booklet containing photographs and letters from graduates, and complete details of your offer.

Name
Address
City State



Mister—you're getting paid in DYNAMITE!

OUR PAY ENVELOPE today is dynamite.

The wrong way to handle it is for us to wink at prices that look too steep . . . telling ourselves we can afford to splurge.

We *can't* afford to—whether we're business men, farmers, or workers. And here's why:

Splurging will boost prices. First on one thing, then all along the line.

Then, wages will have to go up to meet higher prices. And higher wages will push prices up some more . . . faster and faster.

The reason this can happen is that, this year, we Americans will have 45 billion dollars more income than there are goods and services to buy at present prices.

That's the dynamite!

The RIGHT way to handle it . . . and why

Our Government is doing a lot of things to keep the cost of living from snowballing.

But the real control is in *our* hands. Yours. Mine.

KEEP PRICES DOWN!

It won't be fun. It will mean sacrifice and penny-pinching. But after all, the sacrifice of tightening our belts and doing without is a small sacrifice compared with giving your life or your blood in battle!

Here's what YOU must do

Buy only what you absolutely need.

Don't ASK higher prices—for your own labor, your own services, or goods you sell.

Buy rationed goods only by exchanging stamps.

Don't pay a cent above ceiling prices.

Take a grin-and-bear-it attitude on taxes. They must get heavier.

Pay off your debts. Don't make new ones.

Start a savings account. Buy and keep up adequate life insurance.

Buy more War Bonds.

If we do these things, we and our Government won't have to fight a postwar battle against collapsing prices and paralyzed business.

Use it up
Wear it out
Make it do
Or do without



Boys! Girls! Ladies!

PREMIUMS OR CASH GIVEN



Send No Money Now
Mail Coupon

Watches, dishes, games, blankets, air rifles, school boxes, and other premiums easily yours! **SIMPLY GIVE** colorful art pictures with White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE for chaps, mild burns, sold to friends, 25¢ a box (with picture) and remit amounts called for under premium wanted in catalog. Watches sent postage paid, 48th year. Be first. Write or mail coupon for first trial order salve sent on trust to start. THE WILSON CHEMICAL CO., INC., DEPT 31-A, TYRONE, PENNSYLVANIA.



PREMIUMS OR CASH GIVEN

Dishes, record players, games, blankets, air rifles, school boxes, and other premiums easily yours!



Mail Coupon

Boys! Girls! Ladies!
Send No Money Now

SIMPLY GIVE colorful art pictures with White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE for chaps, mild burns, sold to friends, 25¢ a box (with picture) and remit amounts called for under premium wanted in catalog. Dishes and player sent express collect, 48th year. Be first. Write or mail coupon for first trial order salve sent on trust to start. THE WILSON CHEMICAL CO., INC., Dept. 31-B, TYRONE, PA.



PREMIUMS OR CASH GIVEN

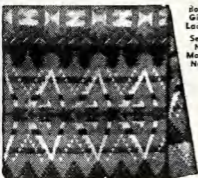
Games, typewriters, watches, dishes, blankets, air rifles, school boxes, and other premiums easily yours! **SIMPLY GIVE** colorful art pictures with White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE for chaps, mild burns, sold to friends, 25¢ a box (with picture) and remit amounts called for under premium wanted in catalog. This



This Case Too

Boys! Girls! Ladies!
SEND NO MONEY NOW

typewriter sent express collect 48th year. Be first. Write or mail coupon for first trial order salve sent on trust to start. THE WILSON CHEMICAL CO., INC., DEPT 31 C, TYRONE, PENNSYLVANIA.



Boys! Girls! Ladies!
Send No Money Now



Sold thru Agents & Drug Stores

Boys! Girls! Ladies! Send No Money Now



PREMIUMS or CASH GIVEN

Watches, school boxes, other premiums easily yours! **GIVE** pictures with White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE for chaps, sold at 25¢ a box (with picture) and remit amount called for under premium wanted in Catalog. Mail coupon for first trial order salve sent on trust to start. THE WILSON CHEM. CO., Inc., Dept. 31-E, Tyrone, Pa.

PREMIUMS or CASH GIVEN

Blankets, watches, dishes, games, air rifles, school boxes, and other premiums easily yours! **SIMPLY GIVE** pictures with White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE for mild burns, sold 25¢ a box (with picture) and remit amounts called for in catalog. All blankets sent postage paid. Write or mail coupon for first trial order salve sent on trust to start. THE WILSON CHEM. CO., Inc., Dept. 31-D, Tyrone, Pa.

MAIL COUPON NOW

WILSON CHEM. CO., INC., Dept. T6-31, Tyrone, Pa.

Gentlemen—Please send me on trial to start twelve colorful art pictures with twelve boxes white CLOVERINE Brand SALVE to sell at 25¢ a box (with picture). I will remit amounts within 30 days, select a premium or keep cash (as I wish) as fully explained under premium wanted in catalog sent with order, postage paid.

Name.....
RD..... Box..... St.....
Town..... State.....

PRINT YOUR LAST NAME ONLY IN SPACES BELOW

Fill in coupon on postal card or mail in an envelope today.

Note:—We pay postage on all premiums weighing three pounds or less; others sent express collect. W. C. Company.

UNSUSPECTED POWER



The Mysterious Influence In The Air You Breathe!

THE SOUL OF THE UNIVERSE is in the air you breathe. Deposited in your blood—with each inhalation you take—is the intelligence that directs the course of the planets through the misty reaches of space, and the strange phenomenon of life itself.

What is it that causes your heart to beat, your lungs to expand and contract? What mind directs the calls of your being, each in their purpose—some to create bone, others tissue and hair? What consciousness pervades these vibratory globules of life and gives them awareness of their Cosmic function?

Are you one of the millions who have looked beyond yourself for some external Divine Power or agency? Have you searched in vain for some outer sign or word of Divine assurance when in doubt or in need? Now learn of the unsuspected power that exists in every simple breath—and that becomes part of you. The ancient Egyptians believed that the essence of life was borne on the wings of the air. The Bible pro-

claims that with the first breath man becomes not just an animated being—but a "living soul." Try this experiment, and prove a Vital Life Force exists in the air. When you are in pain or despondent take a deep breath. Hold it as long as comfortable—then notice the momentary relief.

This Amazing Free Book

Would you seriously like to know how to draw upon this Intelligence of the Cosmic, with which the air is permeated? You can use it to awaken the creative powers of your mind, and for making life an experience of achievement. Use the coupon below for a free copy of the book, "The Mastery of Life." It tells how in the privacy of your home you may learn to use these simple, useful, natural laws.

----- USE THIS GIFT COUPON -----
Scribe Y. A. A. The Rosicrucians (AMORC)
Rosicrucian Park, San Jose, California
I am sincerely interested in learning how to use the mysterious influences of the universe in the betterment of my life. Please send me a free copy of the book, "The Mastery of Life."

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Rosicrucians are NOT a religious organization

THE ROSICRUCIANS (AMORC) SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, U. S. A.



Flame lanced into the room, and Petey Vertano reeled and fell

DEAD MAN'S HAND

By WILLIAM CAMPBELL GAULT

*When Drake Garrett, Gambler, Finds a Corpse in His Closet,
It's the Signal for a Desperate Battle to Smash a Murder
Frame and Bring Diabolical Criminals to the Bar of Justice!*

CHAPTER I

Hidden Corpse

WITH skilled fingers Drake Garrett dealt two cards to Tom Vaughn, and one to Nelson. He paused at Jim Fellows. Jim seemed to be hesitating, and Drake sensed that he was going to try a bluff.

"I'll play these," said Fellows, finally. Garrett smiled inwardly, and dealt himself two cards. His eyes circled the table, the intent faces, as he picked them up. Tom Vaughn tossed his cards away. So did Nelson. But not Jim.

Drake Garrett looked at his cards. He had three kings. He looked at Jim. Fellows pushed in a pile of blue chips.

Garrett studied the pile, put in a match-

A GRIPPING COMPLETE MYSTERY NOVEL

ing pile—and then another.

Jim Fellows looked up sharply. Drake knew, then, that Jim had intended to run one. Fellows had two pairs, Garrett sensed. And he had opened. He wouldn't back down. Nor would he raise. Fellows did exactly what Garrett knew he would. He called.

Garrett laid down his three kings.

Jim Fellows swore softly, and showed his openers, a pair of aces. Then he threw his cards down on the table, and they fell face up. He had had a pair of eights with his aces.

"Aces and eights," Garrett said. "Dead man's hand. Better be careful, tonight, Jim." He was raking in the chips.

Jim Fellows' eyes looked hungry as they watched the chips being pulled in. "I'm cleaned out," he said. "I've had enough."

Vaughn looked at his watch. "So have I."

"If you're going my way, I'll go along with you, Jim." As Nelson spoke he rose to his feet.

Fellows shook his head. "I've got to meet a man."

"At three in the morning?" Nelson asked pleasantly.

"That's right," Fellows snapped. "Anything wrong with that?"

Jim Fellows had lost a wad, tonight. Nelson said no more, though his face tightened. Vaughn smiled tolerantly. Drake Garrett was aware of the tension.

"Lose too much, Jim?" he asked Fellows. "Want some back? Call it a loan?"

Fellows seemed to hesitate, and then his head shook rigidly. "No, thanks. Not now, anyway."

HE left then, and Vaughn and Nelson followed a little later. Drake Garrett stood at the window, and looked out into the misty night. He felt restless and uncomfortable, annoyed. It was a feeling that was with him often, these past months.

Below, the headlights of cabs glowed yellow in the fog. A waiter came in with his bill, and Garrett turned from the window.

"You were lucky again tonight, Mr. Garrett?" said the waiter.

Drake nodded. He paid the bill. "What do you know of Jim Fellows?"

The waiter looked doubtful. "Of

course, sir, he's a member of the club, and it wouldn't be my place to—"

"I'm not snooping," Garrett interrupted him. "But I don't want to take money from a man who can't afford it."

The waiter replied hesitantly. "Well, it's just gossip, of course, but I understand he's had some business reverses, and—"

Garrett nodded. "That's enough. Thanks." He included a generous tip when he paid the bill.

After the waiter left, Drake put on his topcoat and went down the front steps to the lounge. There was a cab at the stand in front, and he considered taking it straight home. But habit was strong in him.

He went over to Mike Arlen's, for his nightly bowl of beef stew.

"You're about the only steady I've had tonight," said Mike. "Most of the sensible people stayed home."

Garrett grimaced.

"Poker?" Mike Arlen asked.

Garrett nodded.

"Poker or bridge, that's about all you know, isn't it?"

"Just about," Garrett admitted. "Though there's no reason why I have to listen to your insults. I ought to clap you on the jaw."

"Hah," Mike said, "and what would you do for beef stew, then?"

"That's the only reason you're in one piece," Garrett said. "Now, don't heckle me any more." He had a copy of the morning paper, and he spread this out to read while he consumed his stew.

The war news was good, for a change. Garrett had been in the last war, had gone in at sixteen, lying about his age. And because he had been gassed in that war, the powers-that-be wanted no truck with him in the current one. It had been a blow to his ego, that decision, and may have accounted for his restlessness, and for his constant gambling.

After a while, Garrett looked up from his paper. He looked at Mike Arlen. "What can you do if they don't want you?"

"The Army?" Mike asked.

Garrett nodded.

"You can buy war bonds and save scrap, and work in a defense factory."

"I mean, what can you do that's dangerous, that's got some kick to it?" Garrett added. "I'm buying plenty of bonds."

"You're in a very bad way, my friend," said Dietrich



"I wouldn't know," Mike Arlen said. "I'm an old man."

"You're an old woman," Garrett corrected him. He put a coin down on the counter, and walked out.

The fog had not lifted, and it was turning colder. He realized that it was not the kind of weather he should be out in, but he knew he could not sleep if he did go home right away. His home wasn't too far, so he decided to walk all the way.

It was after four when he entered the lobby of his apartment. He felt weary now. His legs were weak as he walked up the two flights to his floor.

As he opened the door, the faint smell of whisky came to his nostrils. He could not understand that. The apartment was dark. He switched on the light in the hall, and walked its length to the coat closet at the end.

His hand groped for a hanger, found one, and he took it out. Carefully, he hung his topcoat over it, and replaced the hanger in the closet. He reached up to put his hat on a shelf, but there were already too many hats on the shelf. It rolled off and fell to the floor.

GARETT leaned down to retrieve it, and his hand came in contact with something that should not have been there.

It came in contact with a man's face!

For a few seconds Garrett stood stupidly irresolute, and then he flicked on the closet light. The lower ends of the coats in there covered the man's face, and most of the upper part of his body.

Garrett's mind, after its momentary lapse, was working swiftly now. And some intuition warned him. It was the most fortunate hunch he had ever experienced.

He went directly to the phone and called the police.

Next he went back to remove the coats. He knew he should not move the body until after the police had examined it. He was piling the coats on a nearby chair when the doorbell rang.

Again, Garrett hesitated. Then he went to the button under his apartment phone, and pressed it to open the door downstairs. From there it was but a few steps to his bedroom, and Drake went into the bedroom before going to answer the bell.

When he went to open the door, he had an automatic in his hand.

The man framed in the doorway was not tall, but he was extremely broad. His eyes were shrewd-looking. Those eyes were on the automatic in Garrett's hand.

Garrett lowered the gun. "I didn't expect you so soon," he said. "You're a detective, aren't you?"

The man nodded. "Boyle's the name. You expecting a detective?" He stepped into the room. There were two other men with him.

"Naturally," Garrett said. "I just phoned a minute ago. Isn't that why you're here?"

Boyle shook his broad head, and his eyes were thoughtful. "No. We got a call, from somebody else." His eyes left the gambler, to rest on the pile of coats on the chair. "You're Garrett, Drake Garrett?"

"That's right."

"Somebody phoned us, and said you had a corpse up here, Mr. Garrett."

Garrett spoke slowly. "I think I have. When I went to put my coat away, I saw the body of a man in that closet. I don't know whether he's dead or not."

Boyle motioned to the other two men, and they went to the closet, but Boyle still stood in front of Garrett.

"You say you just called the police?"

Garrett nodded.

"After we rang, Mr. Garrett? After you knew you were trapped?"

Garrett did not answer that. He was tired, and shocked, and in no mood to argue with a stubborn detective.

"If you're accusing me of murder, get out your warrant," he said. "If you're not, I'd appreciate a little courtesy. I've had a bad night."

"You're a card player," Boyle said. "Bridge and poker, that right?"

"That's right."

"You know that's against the law, of course."

"So I've heard. Your own police commissioner is quite a bridge fan. I've played with him often, for small stakes. No doubt he knew it was against the law, too."

The bell rang again at this moment, and Drake pressed the button. This second arrival was the coroner, and Boyle went with him to examine the body.

Drake Garrett went into the living

room and relaxed in a huge chair. His weariness, despite the shock of finding the body, was growing, and he kept his eyes open with an effort. Then, on the coffee table in front of the davenport, he spied something that caused him to sit upright.

There was a definite ring of moisture on the glass top of that table, as though a drink, a cold drink, had been resting there.

Garett went in to relay this information to Boyle, just as a couple of internes came through the door.

Boyle came in and studied the ring. He looked disturbed, as though he had decided on Garrett as his prime suspect, and this cooperation annoyed him.

"What do you make of it?" the detective asked at last.

"Somebody was drinking here, naturally."

BOYLE flushed a little at that "naturally." "But why, Hawkshaw? And who? And when?"

"I'm no detective," said Garrett. "I don't know why or who. But it must have been within the last half hour or so. And it might have been the murderer."

Boyle smiled without humor.

"You can come and look at the body, now," he said. "The man was poisoned. Coniin, they think it was. That's soluble in alcohol. Maybe that's what was in that drink."

Drake followed the detective to the hall. They had pulled the man out of the closet and stretched him on the floor. Drake took one look at the man's face, and then he closed his eyes.

"You know him?" It was Boyle's voice.

"I do. His name is Fellows, Jim Fellows. I was playing poker with him tonight."

Drake thought of that hand Fellows had lost on, aces and eights. Dead man's hand. Drake had dealt him that hand.

"Friend of yours, eh?" Boyle's tone was harsh.

"An acquaintance."

"Did he win much of your money?"

"I won, tonight."

"Oh," Boyle said. "You won. He came here, threatened you, and you killed him. Then, when you saw our car outside, you phoned the police."

Drake shook his head. "I can tell you every place I've been up to the time I came home."

Boyle nodded slowly. "I suppose it was an honest game?" His tone belied his words.

"You represent the law, I guess," said Garrett. "If you didn't, you'd be swallowing teeth for that remark."

Boyle looked Garrett up and down carefully.

"I think you'd better come down to the station," he said.

"I can just about keep my eyes open," Garrett said. "If I'm going down for a grilling, it might be too much for me. You can check that with my doctor. And if you want a character reference, you can call Joe Gorham." Joe Gorham was the police commissioner.

Boyle called him. And after the call, Boyle turned back to Garrett.

"You can go to bed. I'll stay here with you. In the living room, just so nothing disturbs your dreams."

Before Garrett turned in, Boyle went over the bedroom thoroughly, studied the drop to the ground below. After Drake was ready for bed, he went out of the room, closing the door behind him.

Garett did not think he would be able to sleep, but he had underestimated his weariness. He dropped off, almost immediately, and his bedroom was flooded with sunlight when he woke. It was a clear, crisp day.

CHAPTER II

Death by Gas

DRAKE GARETT found Boyle asleep on the couch in the living room. There was a uniformed officer playing solitaire on the coffee table. He had dragged the coffee table over to a big chair.

"Good morning," Garett said. "I see my chum couldn't take it."

The officer looked over at Boyle, asleep on the couch, and then back at Garett. He looked like he wanted to smile, but wasn't sure it was the right thing to do.

"Some coffee?" Garett asked.

The officer looked doubtful.

"I suppose it could be considered a

bribe," Garrett admitted. "It's worth a lot more than gold. But I don't use my quota, and it really isn't as big a bribe as it seems."

The officer did manage a smile, now. He nodded toward Boyle. "I'd have to get an okay from him."

Boyle opened one eye at that moment. "I was offering this officer some coffee," said Drake. "Do you mind?"

Boyle pretended not to hear. He spoke to the officer. "You can go now. I'll stick with this."

After the man had left, Drake went out into the kitchen. Boyle followed.

"You keep this apartment locked?" said the detective.

Garrett nodded slowly.

"Nobody else has a key?"

Garrett shook his head even more slowly, and he looked up to meet Boyle's steady gaze.

Boyle said no more, but Garrett knew what he was thinking. He pointed to the back door key, hanging on a hook near the door jamb. "I don't keep that key in the lock. Any kind of a cheap key would open that back door."

"It was locked last night."

"The man who was here," Garrett suggested, "the murderer, would lock it, after he was in, and then go out the front door. It has a spring lock."

Boyle shook his head. "You're saying that the killer would bring this James Fellows up here, break into your apartment, poison him, and then leave. And then call the police?"

"I'm not saying anything," Garrett said. "Because it probably won't do any good. You've got your mind made up. But I didn't kill Jim Fellows, and I don't know who did."

"I'm going across the street, to eat," said Boyle. "I'll be back soon. Don't try to leave."

Garrett did not answer. He poured himself a bowl of cereal and covered it with milk. He ate that, and an orange, and had a cigarette with his coffee. In his mind, he kept seeing those cards, face up, on the table. He remembered what Jim Fellows had said. "I've got to meet a man."

Jim Fellows, he remembered, was a partner in a small chemical company. Garrett thought of the waiter's gossip. If anyone would know about Fellows' business, it would be his associates. Ga-

rett decided he would take a run out to see them, this afternoon, if Boyle did not drag him down to the station.

Boyle came back in a half hour.

"I've been talking to the chief," he said. "I won't be rooming with you any more. But don't do anything foolish."

"Like leaving town?" Garrett gibed.

Boyle looked sour. Then he left.

Garrett called Marge Hanley on the telephone. Marge was now thirty-two years old. When she was twenty and new to town, a theatrical hopeful, Drake Garrett had been seriously in love with her. In twelve years, however, that love had lost its starry touches. He honestly didn't know now, whether he loved her or not. He just knew he liked to be with her.

"I've just had breakfast, but I could use some lunch in about an hour," he said. "How about it?"

"Maybe," she said. "Did you just get up?"

"Yup."

"Poker again last night?"

"Yup, again. And you? Or hasn't your latest play folded yet?"

MMARGE HANLEY pouted. "It has," she said, "and I was out with a perfectly charming man. His name is Carl Dietrich, and he's tall and blond, and a really excellent dancer, and I enjoyed every minute of it."

"I'm jealous," Garrett said, chuckling.

"You aren't, darn you. But you would be if you'd see him."

Garrett continued to smile as he hung up. Marge Hanley had chosen a career, instead of Drake Garrett, twelve years ago. She hadn't the cold, scheming mind necessary for complete eminence in her field. But she had done well, and had lived comfortably through those years.

They ate at a little restaurant they both liked. Garrett told her about the night before.

Marge looked at him quizzically. "Why didn't you tell me about this over the phone? You're a cool customer, Drake Garrett."

"My phone was probably tapped. The less I talk about the murder over a wire, the better."

"You mean—you're under suspicion—?"

"I am Lieutenant Boyle's first choice for the lead. He's a darn stubborn guy."

Marge Hanley shook her dark head. "Cards, gamblers— You were bound to get into a mess sooner or later. Drake, isn't there something you could do besides—"

"Nothing interesting. Honey, don't get started, now. We've argued about this before. And there is something I can do, now."

Marge was already starting to protest, but at that last sentence, she stopped.

"What?"

"Find out who killed Jim Fellows."

"That would be a job for the police, wouldn't it? It's not something you're trained for."

"What am I trained for? For poker, and bridge—and war. You don't want me to play the first two, and the Army doesn't want me to work at the other. But somebody killed Jim Fellows, and tried to pin it on me. That looks like a job I ought to tackle."

Marge looked at him wonderingly. "I've never seen you this serious before."

Garett grinned. "Maybe I was making a speech, huh?" And he changed the subject.

But after he left Marge Hanley, Garrett went out to the Acme Chemical Company, on the west side. This was the company Jim Fellows had helped to manage.

The other partner in the firm, Charles Stevens, had been the business-getter, the front office man. Jim Fellows had been mostly concerned with research, and had spent the larger part of his time in the laboratory.

Stevens was there, in his office, when Garrett arrived. He was a stocky man with quick, bright eyes. He shook Garrett's hand firmly. "Jim talked about you, often," he said.

Drake ignored that. "I'm being implicated, more or less, in his death," he told Stevens. "I suppose the police have already questioned you about Jim, but I thought there might be some things, some personal things, you wouldn't care to reveal to the police."

Stevens said nothing for a moment, and Garrett sensed that the man was undecided. Finally, Stevens spoke.

"I suppose Jim must have mentioned it to you. If I'd known that, I'd have told the police. But it didn't seem like the right thing to do, at the time. It

could only damage his reputation, and his wife—"

Drake answered, on a hunch. "About the money? Is that what you mean?"

Stevens nodded.

"The money he lost to me?" Garrett continued, still guessing.

Stevens nodded. "And the money he—ah—appropriated from the company's funds. We have only a few stockholders, but a meeting was due soon, and a report."

"How much was missing?"

"Nine thousand dollars. He claims he lost almost all of it to you. That may have been why he went to your apartment, to borrow some, before the quarterly report."

DRAKE GARETT, for the first time in his life, was truly ashamed of his gambling.

"Nine thousand dollars would be about right," he said. "I'll see that it's replaced."

Soon after this Drake Garrett left. He went to the club, but the night clerk who had been on duty the night before, after the poker game, was not due to come on for an hour.

Garett took a chair in the lobby. And as he did, he noticed that another man took a chair not too far away. One of Boyle's men, undoubtedly.

Drake Garrett had about ten thousand dollars to his name, and a large part of that was in government bonds. His gesture was going to cost him nine-tenths of his bankroll.

Tom Vaughn came through the front door, at that moment. He saw Drake Garrett and came over to take a nearby chair.

"What's new on the murder?" Vaughn inquired. "The way the papers were playing it, I figured you'd be in the clink by now."

"I'm mighty close to it," Garrett replied. "You didn't notice who Jim left with, last night, did you, Tom? I mean, if there was someone waiting down here for him?"

Vaughn shook his head. "Nelson and I came down a little later." His eyes on Drake were curious. "Blamed queer, finding him in your closet, like that. Must have been quite a shock."

"It was."

The detective, hiding behind a paper,

was obviously trying to eavesdrop. Garrett spoke in a louder voice. "I don't suppose they'll ever find the real murderer. They've decided on me, and the guilty man could be in San Francisco by now."

The man behind the paper turned over another page.

The night clerk came in then, and Garrett left Vaughn, to interview the clerk. "There was someone waiting for Mr. Fellows," said the clerk. "But I couldn't describe him. He was sitting in that chair over near the door, and he got up when Mr. Fellows came down, and he left with him. I heard them talk, but I didn't even look up. I haven't any idea what he looked like."

"That's too bad," said a voice. It was the man who had been behind the newspaper. He displayed a badge. "Maybe you could look over some pictures, down at headquarters, just to refresh your memory."

The clerk shook his head. "It wouldn't

detective took the name.

"I'd like to go along, when you question him," said Garrett.

The detective shrugged. "Why not? It'll kill two birds with one stone. I can keep an eye on you, and check this other thing."

IN THEIR way to the cab company offices, the detective spoke musingly. "Vaughn told me that you had said something about a 'dead man's hand'. What did you mean by that?"

"Jim had aces and eights," explained Garrett. "It's an old poker superstition. I believe some famous player had it when he was shot."

"You dealt that hand?" the detective said.

Garrett nodded.

At the company offices, they were told that the driver in question was not due to report for work for a couple of hours. The detective got his address.

It was a dilapidated hotel near the

Next Issue's Novel: **THE STONES IN THE SCRIPT**, by Sam Merwin, Jr.

do any good. I simply didn't look at the man."

"But you heard them talk?"

The clerk nodded, and looked worriedly at Garrett. "I heard them mention Mr. Garrett's name. That's all I heard."

"They were probably talking about going to my apartment," Garrett said. "There, for some reason, this other man killed Jim Fellows and then tipped off the police. He knew through Jim, that I always stop at Arlen's for a bowl of beef stew before I go home. He figured the police would arrive before I discovered Fellows' body."

"All figured out," the detective said. He nodded toward Vaughn, still in the lounge chair. "He was with you, wasn't he? He was in that poker game?"

Garrett nodded. "He left with the other man, George Nelson. I don't think either of them is guilty."

"I'll decide that," the detective said. He went over to talk to Vaughn.

"Have they questioned the cab driver yet?" asked the clerk. "I know the man who is always out there, at that time. If they took a cab, he'd be the driver."

Garrett called the detective back, and the clerk gave him this information. The

river. The detective flashed his badge at the desk and asked the clerk for the cabbie's room number. It was three hundred ten.

The clerk, a pimply youth, gave them some information. "There's a man from headquarters in that room now. He went up about three minutes ago."

It was Boyle. He was standing in front of the door of the room. He looked at Drake in surprise.

"Your chum and I decided to work together," Garrett explained. "It saves him the humiliation of snooping around."

Boyle looked disgusted.

"They rang this cabbie from the desk, but he didn't answer," he said. "I think we'd better break down the door."

Garrett stood aside while Boyle and the other man crashed the door. They all entered the room together.

The moment Drake Garrett entered, he sensed what had happened. There was no odor in the air, but Garrett's lungs, sensitive from the gassing they had once experienced, burned horribly.

As Boyle and the other detective bent over the figure on the bed, Garrett revealed what he had learned.

"He's been gassed," Garrett said in positive tones.

CHAPTER III

Fumes of Death

BOYLE looked up in surprise, and the other sleuth turned around to face Garrett. Both stared at him in astonishment.

"How did you know, from where you're standing, that he was dead?" inquired Boyle.

"I didn't," Garrett said. "But I can tell there's been gas in this room."

"You're the only one who can, then," Boyle said, and the other detective nodded assent.

Boyle looked at the key, still in the inside of the locked door. He went over to the window. "There's no way anybody could get into this room. No way at all." He turned back to Drake. "Carry on, Hawkshaw. Who gassed him, and how?"

"I'm no detective," Garrett answered. He was trying to hold his breath. "If you can't mind, I'll go out into the hall. I can't stand this, in here."

"You do what you want, but don't leave town," warned Boyle.

Garrett knew, as he left the hotel, that Boyle's man was following him. He went directly home, and from there he phoned Marge Hanley.

"Just reporting that I've spent a busy day," he told her. "And I'd like to borrow some money."

"You've been playing poker," she said.

"If I had," he told her, "I wouldn't need to borrow any money. It's just that most of my cash is tied up in war bonds, and I can't redeem all of them right now. I thought you could hold them, for the cash I'll need."

"Why do you need cash?"

"If you'd like to eat with me, and maybe even dance, I'd explain why. It's for a very noble reason."

"All right," she accepted. "I'll bring my check book—gigolo."

All the time Drake Garrett was taking his bath and dressing, he kept thinking of that cabbie. He had been killed in a locked room, locked from the inside. He had died by an odorless gas. But how had it been released in that room?

Fellows, too, had been found in a locked apartment. Garrett thought both

of these murders were planned. They were no products of a moment's anger. They were planned by a clever man—or men.

He was drying his hair with a Turkish towel when his phone rang.

Again, he had a disturbing, momentary intuition as he lifted the receiver.

The voice on the phone was clear but low, plainly disguised.

"It would not be to your best interests to involve yourself in the death of Mr. Fellows," said the voice.

Then there was a click.

Garrett put the receiver back on its hook. He went into the living room and sat in a big chair. Nervously, he lighted a cigarette. There had been, in that unidentified voice, a threat of power, of control. This was no moronic thug he was up against; this was a man of intelligence and resolve and imaginative daring.

"I wanted something exciting," Garrett thought. "This looks like it."

He was not completely frightened. But he was conscious of a nervous awareness, and the sight of Boyle's stocky pal across the street was more comforting than annoying.

He picked up Marge Hanley around eight, and they went over to the Galaxy Club, which had good food, and better music.

Marge Hanley had a paper with her, and when they were seated, she spread it out in front of him. It told about the finding of the cabbie. It mentioned that Drake Garrett, in whose apartment the first victim had been found, had been instrumental in discovering the second. It told of the mysterious gas, as yet unanalyzed.

"You're right in the middle of one terrible mess," said Marge. "And all because of a poker game."

He shook his head. "I'm in the middle of a mess, but poker has little to do with it. And I wanted a mess, I wanted something I could get my teeth into."

"It doesn't sound appetizing," Marge said. She paused. "Why do you want that money?"

GARETT told her about Stevens' story regarding Jim Fellows' shortage.

"He lost that money to me," Garrett finished.

"He lost nine thousand dollars to you," Marge corrected him. "But are you sure this Stevens person is telling the truth? How do you know there actually was a shortage?"

"I don't," Garrett admitted. "But Jim Fellows always spoke well of Stevens. I don't think he'd lie about a thing like that."

"If I were you," Marge said, "I'd go to see Mrs. Fellows. If her husband had stolen money, I'll bet she'd know it."

"I'll do that before I turn over the money to Stevens," promised Drake Garrett.

There was a shadow, then, at his side. A man had entered the room without a sound. Marge, who was writing the check, looked up, and a smile came to her face.

"Drake," she said, "this is Carl Dietrich. This is the man who showed me such a good time the other night. He wants to marry me, Drake."

Garrett turned, and rose. Carl Dietrich was tall, as advertised, and blond, and he had a charming smile. The grip of his hand was like a professional strong man's.

"The card player?" Carl Dietrich asked.

"Among other things," Garrett said dryly.

"What other things?" Marge Hanley asked, and she was smiling. Smiling at her latest conquest, and at Garrett's discomfiture.

Dietrich came gallantly to the rescue. "Isn't he also a detective? You're being unkind, Margaret."

Garrett searched the handsome man's face for some sign of mockery, but that face was blandly polite. Garrett began to dislike him.

"I know you haven't started to eat, and that's what you undoubtedly came for," Dietrich said. "But the music is starting, Margaret, and I'm sure Mr. Garrett wouldn't mind."

Garrett tried to smile assent, but he was sure it was a bad smile.

Marge Hanley rose, and they walked off toward the dance floor. They were an impressive couple, as they threaded between the tables, both tall, Marge's darkness accented by Dietrich's blond masculinity.

"Margaret," Garrett said aloud. "I'd forgotten that was her name."

At a table, not fifteen feet away, Boyle's chum was sitting. Drake considered going over to ask him for a dance, but decided it might look silly. He lighted a cigarette from the butt in his hand.

She's trying to make me jealous, Garrett thought. But he was not so sure. This Carl Dietrich was no minor leaguer.

After the music stopped, they came back to the table. Carl Dietrich looked at Garrett. "I'm sure she's in good hands. You'll take care of her for me, old man?"

Garrett nodded. That "old man" had been an unnecessary touch.

When he was out of earshot, Marge smiled at Garrett. "Isn't he handsome? Isn't he what all girls dream for?"

"He's what high school sophomores dream for," Garrett said sourly.

"Somebody's jealous." There was that smile again on her face.

He did not answer.

"For three years you asked me to marry you," said Marge. "You asked me practically every day. But in the last nine years, not a word. Did we lose what we had, Drake?"

"After three years of 'no', even I get discouraged. And after twelve years, you're bound to lose something. The first rosy bloom, you might call it."

Marge looked disappointed. "You can't blame a girl for responding to romance. I'll admit I'm thirty-two, but that isn't really so old. You're not disappointed in me, Drake?"

"No," he answered, "of course not." But the evening was not much of a success, after that.

The next morning he went out to see Mrs. Fellows. She was short and blond, and she seemed close to a breakdown.

DRAKE GARRETT introduced himself, and summoned all the tact he could command.

"Jim has played poker with me," he said. "Beyond his limits, I felt, and I wondered if you knew—"

"He told me he was nine thousand dollars short at the company," the widow said. "I think he intended to make it up before the report was due. We weren't exactly penniless. I had some money from my grandmother's estate, and—"

"I don't think it will be necessary to touch that," Drake said smoothly. "You

see, Jim had a run of luck, the other night, and it was too much for me. I wasn't able to pay, on the spot, but there was a matter of around nine thousand dollars due him, and—"

Jim Fellows' widow put a hand on Drake's arm. "You're not telling the truth. Jim always said you were one of the finest, and this proves it. But I can't take your money."

Drake smiled, and looked as professional as possible.

"Thank you," he said. "But I'm not that fine, Mrs. Fellows. Nor have I that kind of money to throw away. This is a personal debt, and I've never welched on one up to now. Please don't ask me to welch on this. If you don't care to

"You're not obligated to do this," said Stevens. "I understand Mrs. Fellows has some money, and—"

"I want to do it," Garrett said. Then his eyes searched Stevens' face. "You wouldn't know of any enemies Jim might have had? I can't believe that his death had anything to do with his gambling. It was cleverly planned by somebody. It couldn't be connected with anything he was doing here?"

Stevens shook his head. "Our business sounds important, but most of our trade is insecticides, and vermin poisons. As a matter of fact, our best seller is known as Juico. It's the best bedbug exterminator on the market."

Drake Garrett winced a little. "I



"Somebody Did for Her—and Made It Look Like Suicide!"

THAT WAS the verdict of newly-chosen Sheriff Val Jones of Brown County, Indiana, the moment he spotted the corpse—but he had a tough job on his hands proving it and nabbing the killer!

YOU'LL FIND many exciting thrills in *MURDER ON DELIVERY*, Lee E. Wells' gripping novelet that races with suspense and action from start to finish!

COMING NEXT ISSUE

take the money, I could give it to Mr. Stevens, at the company."

Mrs. Fellows tried to read Drake Garrett's face, but expert face-readers had tried that and failed. "You do what you think best," she said.

At the Acme Chemical Company, Charles Stevens was busily engaged in a mess of papers when Drake Garrett entered.

Stevens' bright, quick eyes looked up at Garrett. His shrewd mouth tightened. "I see you made the papers again, Mr. Garrett."

"Just a publicity hound," Garrett admitted, with a grin. "I'll probably get more when the trial comes up."

"You're accused of this—of Jim's death?"

"Not quite. Not officially. But I'm the only goat in sight, so far. And because of that, I'm taking an active interest in the case." Garrett handed over the cash, and Marge Hanley's check. "This will cover the shortage."

understand Jim spent most of his time in the lab," he said. "Do you think that he—"

Stevens interrupted him with a flat palm. "Aren't you getting a little melodramatic, Mr. Garrett? If you're thinking of sabotage, or something like that, the only army work we do is of the delousing variety."

Garrett felt a definite let-down. He had visions, rather confused, of an earnest young chemist being slain by some master criminal with a sneer.

Garrett's own role in this melodrama was destined to be heroic.

"I guess I've been seeing too many movies," he said regretfully. "I was beginning to feel like a Junior G-man."

Stevens smiled. "But nothing can detract from this fine gesture you've just made. I can understand now that Jim's high opinion of you wasn't exaggerated." Stevens held out his hand. "If there is ever anything I can do for you, Mr. Garrett, feel free to call on me."

GARETT left, feeling faintly like a saint. Outside, Boyle's man had been replaced by Boyle himself. Garrett could see him in a coupe, across the street.

Garrett walked over to a bus line a few blocks from the plant, and the coupe trailed. Garrett boarded a bus.

He got off near the club, but he did not go in there. He went down the street into Mike Arlen's spot, and he ordered a bowl of beef stew.

George Nelson was in there. Nelson looked nervous, and he did not look any better when he saw Drake Garrett. "I think I'm cured," Nelson said. "I don't think I could ever play poker again. Because if I got aces and eights—"

"That was just a coincidence," Garrett told him. "Jim's death had nothing to do with poker. That cab driver wasn't playing with us, and he got it, too." Then Garrett changed the subject. "How could a man be killed in a locked room, with gas?"

Nelson shrugged nervously. "Doesn't seem possible unless the gas was in there before."

Garrett shook his head. "I'd been thinking of a capsule, or something that would dissolve, in time, releasing the gas. But the police would have found that. And the murderer would have to be sure when the man was coming home, if he had the room full of gas first."

Mike Arlen had been listening to the conversation. "You mean that cabbie who was killed in that crummy hotel?"

Drake Garrett looked up from his bowl of beef stew, and nodded.

Mike Arlen's tone grew mysterious. "I used to be a plumber."

"Well?"

"If that hotel has the kind of plumbing I think it has, a man could be in the next room, and still force gas into the cabbie's room."

Garrett looked at Arlen, puzzled.

"Through the drain in the sink," said Arlen. "Those drains in adjoining rooms hook together."

"Gas travels down," Garrett said. "The kind of gas they used in the war did, at any rate. That gas would be leaking into all the rooms of the hotel."

"This place was on the top floor?" asked Arlen.

Garrett nodded.

"All those drains have traps on them,"

Arlen pointed out. "A trap is that 'U' shaped piece of pipe below the sink. When it's full of water, it prevents sewage gas from backing up. And prevents any other gas from coming through. So the rest of the people in the hotel would be safe."

"Didn't the cabbie's trap have water in it?"

Arlen's face registered disgust. "Look. The drain in the cabbie's room and the room next door probably met and went into the same pipe. When I used to do work on those old jobs, if that drain was clogged, the water would back up in the sinks of all the rooms on that pipe. It's simple. Even a poker player should understand that."

"I still don't understand how the water got out of the trap in that cab driver's room," Garrett retorted with considerable heat.

ARLEN looked smug. "The man in the next room had a plunger. He put it on the trap in his sink. He pumped the water out of his own trap, and out of the trap connected to it. Then he blew in his gas, and it went through the only open trap there was. He could even put something in, to clog the drain pipe in the wall, so he couldn't possibly bother anyone else."

Garrett looked doubtful.

"The police would have thought of that, though."

"The police," Arlen said, "are card players and baseball fans, and scientists and experts. But mighty few of them are plumbers. Plumbing is an art, you might say."

"If I thought you had anything but a pipe dream," Garrett said, "I'd buy you the best hat in town. You've been reading too many detective stories."

"You could go to that joint," Arlen said. "You could even find out if a transient checked in to the room next door that night. You could find out if that drain had been clogged. You might even find out if there was any water in the trap."

Drake Garrett turned to ask Nelson what he thought of all this, but Nelson had left. Then Garrett looked at Mike Arlen solemnly for several long moments.

"Just to make a sap out of you, I'm going over there and check," he said.

CHAPTER IV

Slayer's Skill

OUTSIDE, Boyle's coupe was parked at the curb. Drake Garrett walked over there and put his head down to the level of the window. Boyle's eyes met his unflinchingly.

Drake Garrett opened the door. "Like to drive me over to that hotel where the cab driver lived? My friend 'n there, Mike Arlen, just gave me an idea."

Boyle scowled. "This isn't a cab, Garrett."

"Okay. It probably doesn't matter." Drake Garrett turned back towards Mike Arlen's place.

Then Boyle's voice stopped him. "Just a minute. Maybe I was a little quick on the trigger. Is this a legitimate lead?"

"I wouldn't know," Garrett said. "I don't think so, personally. But I understand the police overlook nothing, absolutely nothing."

Boyle flushed a little. "Get in," he said.

They drove over to the hotel in silence. Boyle got the key from the clerk, and they went up to the room. There was a sink in there.

Garrett called the desk. "You got a handy man in the house? Somebody who takes care of the sinks and wiring and all that?"

The clerk said they had. "Send him up here," Garrett told him.

Boyle had remained silent until now. "What's the plot?" he asked.

Garrett gave him the gist of Mike Arlen's explanation. Boyle did not look impressed.

The handy man was a seedy-looking old fellow. "You got a pliers on you?" Garrett asked him.

The man nodded. "Always. Around here, I got a pliers in my hand from morning until night."

Garrett nodded toward the sink. "Loosen the plug in that trap."

"I'd better get a pail," the man said. "That's full of water. That's what it's for."

"Just loosen it," Garrett repeated. "If the water starts to leak out, you can tighten it again."

The man bent down beside the sink, and did as he was told. Cautiously, he turned the plug with his pliers. No water leaked out. He removed the plug entirely, and lifted a puzzled face to Drake.

"That's funny," he said.

"You got a key for the next room, the room next door?" Garrett asked.

The man nodded. "I've got a key for all the rooms."

"Let's go in there."

Even Boyle looked thoughtful as they went into the other room. It was, as Mike Arlen suggested, a transient room and vacant now.

There was, however, water in this trap.

Boyle looked unimpressed again.

"Of course there would be," Garrett explained. "After the man sent the gas through that drain, he let the water run into this trap again. To seal this room. He couldn't get the water into the other trap, so that one was empty."

"Let's go down and talk to the room clerk," said Boyle.

The clerk gave them some information.

"I think a man rented that room, early in the morning," he said. "I'll check on it."

Then, as he studied the register, his face suddenly brightened, as if he recalled something.

"I remember the man," he said. "He was a short man. He said he had come from Chicago, that morning. He went right to bed."

"What'd he look like?" Boyle asked.

The clerk's forehead wrinkled. "He was dark, and he had a small scar running from the corner of his mouth to his chin. A thin scar."

"Petey," Boyle said. "Pietro Vertano. Back in town."

"He gave the name of George Johnson," the clerk added.

Boyle ignored that. He and Garrett walked out together. Out on the sidewalk, Boyle turned to Garrett.

"I had you pegged for this thing right from the beginning. You were about ready for a warrant. But now, it looks more complicated. But I still think you know more than you're telling. Want to come clean?"

"I would if I could," Garrett said. "You know everything I know."

BOYLE did not accept his statement. Garrett could see that. Boyle lighted a cigarette.

"Going anywhere? I could drop you there."

"I'm going over to buy a fellow a hat," said Garrett. "You could let me off at a store."

From the store, Boyle drove Drake Garrett back to Mike Arlen's place. Boyle went in with him, to use Arlen's phone, while Garrett made a little speech of presentation.

The smugness on Mike Arlen's face almost spoiled the speech.

After a while, another man came in, much too casually. Ony then did Boyle prepare to leave. "I guess you won't need a tail any more, Garrett," said Boyle. "Keep your nose clean."

"I'll do that," Garrett assured him. Then Boyle walked out of the place and the man who had come in, took a seat at a table away from the bar, and spread out a morning paper.

Garrett wondered just how dumb Boyle thought he was.

Mike Arlen, who had been right in an argument with Garrett—for the first time—had a lot of other theories to offer, now that he classified as an expert.

Garrett listened politely, as a good loser should, and agreed with Arlen so submissively that Arlen was stilled.

Garrett went over to the club and had a session of handball with Tom Vaughn, who was getting a little soft around the belt. Finally Vaughn called a halt.

In the locker room Vaughn made a suggestion. "Little poker, tonight? Nelson's sworn off, but there are a couple of untrimmed lambs here who have the urge to tangle with you. Table stakes."

Drake shook his head. "No poker for me. Not for a while, anyway. Maybe never."

Vaughn stopped in the act of tying his shoes, and looked at Garrett wondering. "Well, I'll be danged," he said.

Garrett had a date with Marge Hanley for dinner that night, and they ate again at the Galaxy Club. Garrett told her about Arlen's guess that had proved true, about Mrs. Fellows, about Stevens. And about the threatening phone call, something he had neglected to tell her the night before.

Marge's face grew tense. "This hap-

pened last night?"

"Hmm-hmmm."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I knew you'd look like that, and act like that. It's your standard theatrical reaction number fifty-seven, disapproval touched with fear. And I didn't feel like quarreling."

"Oh," Marge said, and dropped the subject, which wasn't like her.

There was a tall figure walking over toward their table now, a handsome, well-tailored figure.

"Here's that man again," said Garrett. Marge turned and gave Carl Dietrich the full radiance of her smile.

Dietrich's own smile matched hers in warmth and charm. Dietrich turned to Garrett.

"I read in the paper that you had helped the police discover how that cab driver was killed," he said. "Congratulations."

"Did the paper say I had helped?"

Dietrich nodded. "Didn't you?"

"No. It was the tip of an ex-plumber. He'll crucify me. I suppose Boyle released that story. But I'll be the goat."

Garrett winced, inside, as he thought of Arlen's certain wrath.

"The life of a detective is not all roses," said Dietrich with a smile. He had pulled up a chair from a near-by table, and was sitting close to Marge Hanley, too close.

Marge did not seem to mind, however. She directed most of her conversation to Dietrich and a little later they danced.

This, thought Garrett, was getting monotonous. He asked Marge for a dance, himself, when they had returned.

Once away from the table, he asked her a question. "Is this serious? When you told me about this mug, yesterday, I thought you were just trying to rib me. But the way you looked at him tonight—"

"I'm very fond of him," Marge said. "He's kind and thoughtful, and attentive. I honestly don't know how serious it is."

GARETT made a wry grimace. "After twelve years—"

"That's it," Marge said, "twelve years." Then she mimicked his words of the night before. "You might say we've lost the first rosy bloom of our romance."

It was the beginning of a quarrel, the first they'd had in a long time. Garrett

was furious when they returned to the table. "I guess I won't have time to eat with you after all, Marge," he said. "I'm sure Mr. Dietrich would be glad to fill in." Then he turned his back on them and left.

He was acting, he knew, like a mentally retarded adolescent. But the knowledge did nothing to alter his mood. He went over to Mike Arlen's for a beef sandwich, and the moment he entered he realized that had been a mistake.

Mike Arlen's face was stony, his conversation mono-syllabic.

"I didn't give that story to the papers, Mike," said Garrett. "Boyle must have done it."

"Glory grabber," said Arlen. "Was there something you wanted?"

Garrett changed his mind about what he had wanted. "Whisky," he said.

He had that one, and another. And then some more. On an empty stomach, it affected him more than normally, but he didn't care. He was walking with unusual care when he left.

He was hoping, as he walked home, that through some miracle of fate he might meet Carl Dietrich. But such was not his luck, good or bad. The whisky had not made him feel any less ornery. On the contrary, it had deepened his mood, and he was spoiling for trouble.

There appeared to be no trouble available. All the pedestrians abroad were conscientiously minding their own business. No one jostled him, no car driver honked at him. He was disappointed, as he turned in at his apartment.

His apartment looked gloomy. It never had, before, so Garrett decided it must be an optical illusion. Out in the pantry, he had a bottle of whisky. He went out there and poured himself another jolt.

Then he went into the living room and sat down, and thought about the murders. He was, he decided, a mighty poor detective. In all the detective stories he had ever read, the hero was a shrewd and daring man, constantly uncovering clues and looking mysterious. All these heroes were walking encyclopedias, authorities on poisons, the calibers of guns, and the chemical analysis of anything they might run across in their quest.

Even Boyle had a certain competence about him. Even Boyle stuck to the

chase, through thick and thin, stubborn and determined. While all that Drake Garrett could do was play cards, and drink—and quarrel with his girl.

The thought of this last deepened his gloom still more, so he started back toward the pantry. He was walking past the phone when it rang.

He expected the voice to be Marge's, apologizing for her bad manners. But such was not the case. It was a man's voice.

"Drake Garrett?"

Garrett said it was.

"My name is Vertano, Petey Vertano. And I got some important business with you right away!"

CHAPTER V

Dangerous Gamble

AT FIRST Garrett could not recall where he had heard that name. And then he remembered. Boyle had uttered it, at the hotel clerk's description of the man who had rented the room next to the cab driver.

"What do you want of me?" Garrett inquired.

"I want to talk to you."

"All right. Start talking."

"Not over the phone. I want you to come over to where I am."

"And get killed?" Garrett asked. "Do you think I'm crazy?"

There was suspicion in the voice now. "You know who I am?"

"I've heard. If you want to talk to somebody, talk to Boyle. He's looking forward to the opportunity."

"I've got nothing to say to the cops," Vertano said. "I'll admit you've got a right to be scared. But you can come armed, if you want. What I've got to say is important, but not important enough to risk the chair for. And that's what I'd get if I went to the law."

That made sense to Garrett. Perhaps because of the whisky. And, perhaps, also because of the whisky, he decided to go.

The directions were involved, but Garrett placed the spot in his mind finally, a tavern near the water front. He was to ask at the bar for Pietro Vertano.

"I can see you coming," Vertano said

in conclusion, "from a long way off. If you're not alone, if anything looks fishy, you won't see me. Maybe you won't see anything, if I think you're crossing me."

Garett went into the bedroom for his automatic. He wore a heavy coat, with a pocket big enough to accommodate the gun. Out in front, probably, one of Boyle's men would be parked.

Garett solved that problem by going out the back door. It was cold, and the wind that swept down the alley nipped at his face. It would have been even colder, he reflected, if he had not had the forethought to absorb so much whisky.

He got a cab about two blocks from the mouth of the alley. The driver must have smelled his breath.

"Downtown?" he asked.

Garett gave the address.

"Oh," the driver said. "Slumming, huh? You be careful in that neighborhood, mister. You keep your eyes open."

"I guarantee that," Garett assured him.

There was a dampness in the air when Garett got out of the cab. It penetrated, even under the heavy coat, and a sharp, raw wind brought tears to his eyes.

He paid the driver, and started north. About a block down, there was an alley, though a sign proclaimed it Front Street. Garett turned down here to a doorway marked, "Sailor's Rest."

He opened this door, and went in.

There was the smell of beer in there, and the smell of tobacco. There was a small bar, and some tables. None of the customers were the social register type, exactly. A few of them looked rough and ugly. Garett went up to the bar.

There was a flat-nosed man behind the bar, plainly an ex-pug.

"I've come to see Mr. Vertano," Garett said.

The flat-nosed man nodded. "You Drake Garett?"

"That's right."

"How do I know that?"

Garett reached in for his wallet, took it out, and showed Flat-nose his registration card.

Again, there was a pause.

"Walk through that door at the end of the bar," the man said. "It goes into a hall. Go down the hall to the steps at the end, and up the steps. Vertano's room is number twelve."

The hall was narrow, dimly lighted by a small and unshaded bulb. The steps

were even less adequately lighted, and Garett went up them carefully. They opened into another hall, long and narrow. This was evidently some kind of cheap lodging house.

Garett walked down to the door marked "12" and rapped.

It opened slowly and someone called out.

"Come in!"

IN THE brighter light of the room, Garett studied the man who had opened the door. He was small, and dark, and Garett could just faintly see the thin scar that ran from the corner of his mouth to his chin.

"I've got a gun, in my jacket pocket here," said Petey Vertano. "In case you're pulling something—if I get a warning from downstairs, I'll kill you quick."

"Like you killed that cab driver," said Garett.

"That's right. I've killed some others, too. Always for pay, and nobody that didn't have it coming. But this cab driver was different. That's what I want to talk to you about."

"You did that, for pay?" Garett asked.

"Yeah. I was told he'd worked a doublecross. I was told he was strictly a lug. I found out, later, I was told wrong, and that I got mixed up in something too dirty for me."

Garett looked at the small man wonderingly. "Worse than murder?"

"That's right. Look, I'm an Italian. My folks came over to this country about a year before I was born. Well, I wouldn't say I've been any credit to 'em. But my old man told me something once that stuck in my head. 'Pietro', he said—"

There was, at that moment, the sound of a buzzer.

The little Italian seemed to freeze where he stood, his mouth still open to frame the forthcoming words. Then a strange light came to his dark eyes and he looked at Drake with hate in those eyes.

"You crossed me. That's the warning from downstairs. You brought the cops along." Petey's hand came out of his pocket, and there was an automatic in that hand.

"No," Drake said. "I swear I didn't. I'd be a fool to try something like that.

Not after what you told me."

But he knew his words were in vain. And he knew he could not get to his own gun in time. He was looking at death in the short and ugly personification of Pietro Vertano.

Garett could see the trigger finger tightening. The sound of footsteps on the stairs came to his ears. He could hear his heart beating.

Then from the window, flame lanced into the room, and Petey Vertano reeled and fell to the floor. More flame, a crashing retort, and Garett felt something smash his shoulder.

Garett took two swift, sideward steps, and his gun was in his hand, pouring lead at that gaping window. His gun was empty before he realized that his hand was wet and sticky with blood.

The door burst open, then, and Boyle stood there.

Boyle's gun was in his hand.

"Try and talk yourself out of this one," Boyle said. "What's the matter? Did your little stooge try to blackmail you?"

"We'd better get to a doctor," answered Garett. He nodded toward the window. "Somebody shot Vertano from out there. I think I got him. There must be a fire escape, or something. You could look—" Drake Garett's gun dropped to the floor, and then the room began to revolve slowly.

He managed to stagger toward the bed. Then he pitched forward into oblivion. . . .

There was a doctor present when he came to. His shoulder was a wad of bandages, and he still felt faint and dizzy. His stomach felt tight from hunger.

"You've lost some blood," said the doctor. "You'd better take it easy."

Boyle was standing there, looking more puzzled than ever.

"Feel like talking?" He turned to the doctor. "If it's okay with you."

"Not too much," the doctor said. "He needs to relax."

"I need to eat, and to get out of this foul joint," said Garett. "Get me over to Mike Arlen's place for some of that beef stew, and I'll talk all night."

"Somebody better talk," Boyle said. "Petey's dead. And that guy out on the fire escape is dead, too. You didn't miss it by much, yourself."

THERE was another detective standing next to Boyle, and Garett saw a uniformed officer in the doorway. The other detective now spoke.

"That guy on the fire escape is Joe Petrie, boss," he said. "I never thought he'd have the nerve to tackle Vertano."

Boyle shook his head. "There's no figuring this case. Maybe, if I get this card shark fed, he can make some sense out of it."

Garett swung his feet around gently and sat up. A moment's dizziness came to him. Then that vanished, but he still felt weak. Boyle came over to support him on one side, while the other detective brought his heavy coat.

Garett stood between them, then, and they supported him as he walked out into the hall, and down the steps.

The bar was filled with cops and reporters. Flat-nose was nowhere in sight. A few of the scribes came over to talk to Garett, but Boyle waved them away. Then a couple of flash bulbs popped.

Outside, the cold air helped to clear Garett's head, but the chill of it increased the ache in his shoulder. They walked over to Boyle's coupe. Garett got in.

The other detective went back to the tavern, and Boyle climbed in behind the wheel. Garett started to talk, then, and he told Boyle everything that had happened since the phone call.

"I thought I had you with the goods this time," said Boyle. "The way you're mixed up in this case, I can't see how you can come out of it with clean hands."

"Jim Fellows was a square shooter with me," Garett said. "He paid his debts, and didn't beef. I've mixed myself up in this case because I'm as interested as the police in getting Jim's murderer."

"You don't think it was Petey?"

"No. It was too rotten, even for Petey. He was a hired hand, but when he found out who had hired him, he was ready to call copper. But he wasn't ready to go to the chair. That's why he phoned me."

"What would be too low for Petey?"

"From the way he opened his little speech, I can think of only one thing," Garett paused. "With a war on, even Petey got patriotic. But I can't think of why this Petrie killed him."

"Petrie was like Vertano," Boyle said.

"A paid killer. It was a business with those boys, and they were good at their business. Anybody could hire 'em."

"Anybody couldn't hire Petey," said Garrett. "This last boss he had found that out. And so he sent Petrie. I've got most of the picture, I think."

"I haven't," Boyle said.

"It has something to do with the war. Before Petey was killed, he acted almost sentimental. He started talking about his parents, immigrants, and he practically apologized for killing that cab driver."

"He admitted that?" said Boyle in surprise.

"He did." Garrett twisted a little in his seat, easing his aching shoulder.

"When I followed you tonight," Boyle said, "I thought you were a dead duck, especially when you went to that Sailor's Rest. Every time, something else turns up. Maybe I've been playing a dumb game."

Garrett shifted uncomfortably. He was so accustomed to Boyle's stubborn persistence, that this kind of confession embarrassed him.

"If this has anything to do with the war it will be out of my hands," went on Boyle. "It will be F.B.I. work. It might be smart to deal them in now."

"We're not sure of that," Garrett said.

The coupe had pulled to a halt in front of Mike Arlen's place.

"Come on in and have a bowl of beef stew," Garrett said. "It'll do you good." He grinned. "Nothing like beef stew after a whale of a gun fight."

CHAPTER VI

Twisted Trail

FOR the first time since he had known him, a smile came to Boyle's face. "I think I will," he said.

Mike Arlen was not working and Garrett was thankful for that.

Boyle took off his coat and hat, and they sat at a table near the bar. Boyle looked completely worn out. There were circles under his eyes, and his hand shook as he picked up a spoon.

"I'm no Philo Vance," he said. "I walked a beat for years, and then they put me on the plainclothes squad. I

worked like a dog, twenty hours a day when I was on a case, and I had some luck, besides. My method was to decide on who was guilty and move in with him. I'm not too smart, but I've always had a good pair of legs, and that made up for it. But this case has got me down."

"You decided on me," Garrett said. "That was logical, because the killer was trying to frame me."

"I had to have somewhere to start." Boyle was defending himself. "Where else? Petey has no tie-ups, and neither has Petrie. Vaughn's record isn't too good, but there's no murder in that man, I'm sure. That Nelson is the original timid soul. Where was I going to start? With you, and I'm ready to admit I was wrong there."

"You tried to tie the murder up with poker," said Garrett. "So did I, at first. That 'dead man's hand' I dealt Fellows—that was one of those coincidences that acts as a red herring. Jim Fellows played poker, but so do millions of other men. It didn't have anything to do with his death, except that it gave the murderer a chance to shift the blame."

"All logical," Boyle said. "But where do we go from here? We're right where we started from, and the killer could be in China by now."

"You could check Jim Fellows' life, through his wife, and through Stevens. We could try to find out why he came to my apartment. It's a cinch he wasn't forced to come there. He was tricked into drinking that poison."

"That's right," Boyle said. "He came there with a friend, or somebody who he thought was a friend."

"He probably came to borrow some money from me," said Garrett. "He was nine thousand dollars short at the company."

"I heard about that," Boyle said. "This cab driver was killed, then, because he could recognize the man who met Fellows at the club."

"He was killed by a paid killer," persisted Garrett, developing his ideas. "Don't you get another lead from that? There is an organization behind all this. The complicated set-up here doesn't spring from just one man."

Boyle had finished his stew. He went over to get his hat and coat.

"I'll run you home, now," said Boyle.

"I've got some more work to do tonight." He walked over toward the wall phone. "But I'm going to have them put a man in front of your apartment, for your own protection."

They drove to Garrett's apartment in silence. Boyle yawned frequently, and Garrett could see that he was having difficulty in keeping his eyes open.

When they stopped, Boyle spoke again. "The man isn't here yet. Think you'll be all right?"

Drake nodded. "I'll be all right as long as I don't get nosy." He eased himself out of the coupe. Besides the ache in his shoulder, his head was hammering now, and he knew he would feel like blazes in the morning.

There was a light on in his kitchen, and for a second he stood in the darkened hall, and his heart began to hammer again. Then he remembered that he had left it on himself, and he felt foolish as he went to turn it out.

He undressed slowly, favoring his shoulder. He took some soda for his hang-over. The thought of Marge Hanley came to him, Marge and that blond heart-throb, and he put those thoughts from his head. He'd had enough trouble tonight without heckling himself about those two.

It was hard to get to sleep at first. Faces kept running through his mind—Vaughn and Nelson, Stevens, Mrs. Fellows, Carl Dietrich, Marge, the killer, Petey Vertano. He thought of the cab driver, and that pimply-faced clerk at the hotel.

Then the faces began to fade, and he fell asleep. Once, just before dawn, he woke, wet with perspiration, and his eyes groped through the shadows in his room.

BUT it was not fear that caused the perspiration. It was the breaking of his fever, and he returned to sleep—and dream.

The sun was coming through his bedroom windows when he awoke again. His mouth tasted dry and fuzzy, and the ache in his head was steady. He went to the phone and called his doctor. He explained that he wanted a dressing changed.

He went out into the kitchen to make some coffee.

There had been four deaths, but three

of them were not mysteries, Garrett reflected. He had killed one of the victims, Petrie. He forced that thought from his mind. All of them had resulted from Jim Fellows' death, and it added new importance to that. Because these were not small stakes the killer was playing for. It could not be just money. Money alone could not motivate anyone as ruthless and intelligent as the murderer of Jim Fellows.

The doorbell rang. It was his doctor. "You should be in bed, but I suppose you know that," the physician said.

Drake admitted he did. He winced as the last blood-soaked bandage came off. He asked the medico a question.

"What kind of gas is odorless, and deadly, and highly concentrated, so that a man could carry it in some form of package, and still have enough to fill a room?"

"You mean the stuff that killed that cab driver?"

Garrett nodded.

"I was talking to the coroner yesterday," his doctor told him. "He doesn't know any more about that gas than you do. Because of the condition of your lungs, it affected you immediately. That cab driver probably never even knew he was inhaling it—until too late."

"It's—something new?"

The doctor paused, as though choosing his words carefully. "I don't know about that. They just don't know what it was—up to now."

After the doctor left, Drake Garrett drank his coffee. It had been evident, from the doctor's tone, that there was something mysterious about that gas.

Again, as it had the night before, the faces of all of them started revolving in his mind. And the faint beginnings of a pattern began to form.

After he dressed, he took a cab over to the Acme Chemical Company. Stevens was there.

"I may be wearing out my welcome," Garrett told him. "But every lead I get seems to come back here. I'd like to get some more information about Jim Fellows."

Stevens smiled genially. "Shoot."

"He had his own lab, didn't he? And he didn't always make reports on the work he was doing?"

Stevens hesitated. "Jim did some work that wasn't connected with the firm. He

didn't make reports on that work, though I knew of it. He developed a fast paint drier in his own lab, and some kind of a spray for treating steel in the foundry. This last one didn't work out, but the drier was quite successful."

"I'm no chemist," Garrett said. "At college I avoided it like poison. But if you'd be willing to go through Jim's lab with me, don't you think we might uncover something that would aid the police?"

Stevens shook his head. "The police have already had the same idea. They've gone over that place thoroughly. Jim kept all his notes there. They found—nothing."

Drake Garrett said nothing, but his disappointment was evident.

Stevens went on. "I think I can understand why both you and the police are so interested in Jim's work. It's because of that gas, isn't it, the gas that killed the cab driver?"

Garrett looked up. "That's right."

"You can forget it," Stevens said. "I was mighty close to Jim. If he was working on anything that important, he would have told me about it."

GARETT nodded. "You're probably right." He turned to go. "I'm sorry to have been such a bother, but this detective complex seems to have me pretty bad."

"No bother at all," Stevens assured him. "Always glad to see any friend of Jim's."

Outside, Drake Garrett paused on the sidewalk. He had run into a stone wall again. He thought of going over to look up Boyle, but Boyle was probably asleep. He could not forget about his theory, though, and he could not believe that Stevens' assurance necessarily killed it.

Garrett went to the Fellows' home. Mrs. Fellows opened the door. Her first words interested him.

"I phoned you last night, late. And then I tried to get you again about a half hour ago."

"Something's happened?" Garrett asked.

She shook her head. "Come in." Her eyes, it seemed, never left his face, as though she was trying to fathom his mind.

They went into the living room. Mrs. Fellows appeared nervous, and she kept

her voice unnecessarily low.

"After your—gesture of the other day, I made up my mind to give you something, something of Jim's," she said.

"I think I know what it is," said Garrett. "Things are beginning to make sense."

She looked at him solemnly. "You think it caused his death?"

Drake Garrett hesitated.

"Do you? Don't try to spare my feelings. If it's that important, I want to know the truth."

"I think it did," Garrett admitted.

Mrs. Fellows' voice went on. "It's the formula for a poison gas. Jim told me if something happened to him, I shouldn't take any chances on the local authorities, because of the publicity. He told me I should give it to you, and tell you to take it directly to Washington."

Garrett looked at her curiously. "Jim knew something was going to happen to him?"

"He must have been afraid of it." Mrs.

Fellows hesitated. "He said that in the wrong hands, it could mean the end of the Allied cause. I thought, of course, he was exaggerating. He was always so enthusiastic about all his discoveries."

"Why didn't you give it to me when I was here the other day?" inquired Garrett.

"Well, frankly, after all that happened, I didn't trust you. I was going to turn it over to the police, but I remembered Jim's warning. I'd almost decided to go to Washington myself."

"Someone must know about it. It's probably what killed that cab driver," said Garrett.

"There was a bottle of it, complete with tube, at the laboratory," Mrs. Fellows said. "Jim told me that didn't matter, that no one could analyze it."

"The picture's complete, now," said Garrett. "I know who killed your husband."

"I think I do too," the widow said.

She went over to a small table at one end of the room. She removed a vase from this table, and a heavy, cloth spread. She returned and handed Drake Garrett a business size envelope.

"It's all in here."

"I'll go to Washington today," Garrett said. "If the police don't like that, I'll pay to take one of them with me. I'd suggest you say nothing to anybody."

"Of course," she said.

The doorbell rang.

"Are you expecting anyone?" inquired Garrett.

She shook her head. Her eyes were fearful.

"I'll go out into the kitchen. If it's somebody who's looking for me, I'm not here."

There was indecision in her face.

"Trust me," Garrett said.

SHE nodded, then, and went to the door.

In the kitchen, Garrett studied the envelope in his hand. There was no writing on it, nothing to indicate the terrible significance of the contents.

There were voices now, and Garrett heard his own name mentioned. He opened the ice box and lifted one of the ice trays.

Then he pushed open the swinging door that led to the dining room. If Mrs. Fellows was in danger, the kitchen was no place for a man.

But she was in no danger. There was a uniformed officer in the living room, and a man in civilian clothes. The man in civilian clothes was wearing heavy-soled shoes.

"You were looking for me?" asked Garrett.

Again there was a hint of suspicion on Mrs. Fellows' face.

"I could have gone out the back door, but I've no reason to run from the law," said Garrett, meaningly.

"That's good," the detective said. "It saves us the trouble of shooting you here." He took out a pair of manacles. "You're wanted at headquarters."

"The charge?"

"Murder," the detective said. "Don't make me say whose murder, not here."

There was a sharp gasp from Mrs. Fellows. Garrett spoke to her swiftly.

"After I go, I want you to phone the police commissioner," he said. "Tell him everything that has happened, everything. But not over the phone. Have him come here."

"Let's go," the detective said.

Mrs. Fellows' eyes were still troubled as they left. There was a sedan at the curb here, and Garrett got in. The plain-clothesman rode in back with Garrett. The uniformed officer drove.

They had gone about two blocks when

the man in back spoke. "You want to give it to us now? We might be more lenient, if you cooperate."

"Give you what?"

"The envelope. We saw her give it to you, through the window."

Garrett closed his eyes.

"I should have smelled it," he said. "No detective I've ever seen looked as ugly as you. But the uniform did it. I'd overlooked your efficiency, your love of detail."

"You're a smart guy," the man said.

"Not smart enough. But maybe it's time I started. What's the offer?"

The man shook his head. "You don't bargain with us, monkey. You're in no place to bargain. One way you might live, the other way you don't."

CHAPTER VII

Huler's Game

PRETENDING indifference, Drake Garrett shrugged his shoulders. But beneath his cool demeanor, icy fingers of fear were caressing his spine. His mind worked at top speed. He was in a dangerous spot and he realized it.

"You'll have to decide that," he said. "I'm not the only one who's wise to the set-up. If you don't dicker with me, you'll get nothing. Probably you'll get in a nasty jam, too."

"We'll take that chance."

"You talk like an American," Garrett went on. "You must have spent a lot of time here."

"I was born here," the man said. "I lived my life here."

"The Bund, then," Garrett said. "How about your pal, up in front? He a citizen, too? Or did Shicklegruber send him over?"

"It might be smart for you to shut up," said the man. "We've got lots of ways of killing. Some of them are nicer than others." He leaned over toward Garrett, and one hand was reaching toward Garrett's coat. "I'll take that envelope now."

Garrett's right hand came around to smash into the man's mouth. He could feel his fist break a tooth, and there was blood all over the man's face.

The man lifted his left hand—and a sharp command in German came from

the front seat.

Garett was breathing hard. The man in the back took out a handkerchief to wipe the blood from his lips.

"You'll get yours for this," he said.

"I'll talk to your boss," answered Garett. "I don't deal with punks."

In the rear-view mirror he could see the cold eyes of the man in front. Garett was still handcuffed, and his chances for a break were less than nothing. But he had to stall.

"Maybe your boss will put you wise," he said. "Or maybe it isn't the way he works, to let his errand boys in on everything. But I think I can make a deal with him that'll save a lot of trouble all around."

"Quit talking," said the man in front. "Talking won't save you."

"Yeah," Garett admitted. "Chamberlain found that out. But somebody ought to tip off Shicklegruber. He's been playing the same record for years."

"Shut up."

"Why?" Garett asked. "All I can lose is my life, and that's getting shorter every minute. Why shouldn't I yell, and take a chance?"

There were some words then, in German, from the front seat. Drake sensed, too late, what the words were.

He saw the man next to him reach behind him, and then the man's hand was moving through the air. Then darkness welled up over him like a tidal wave. . . .

He was bound when he came to. He was gagged, and lying on a carpeted floor. He could feel the carpet under his hands, and it was deep and soft. The room was dark, and smelled unused.

His head ached, and his bad shoulder was stiff and sore, due to the tightness of his bonds. He had been a thoughtless fool. He had suspected that the detective was not legitimate from the time he had come through the dining room door. But he had wanted to get them out of the house.

He heard a voice then, outside the door of this room, and it was a voice he recognized. And the picture became clearer.

Our government, he thought, won't use poison gas. Not unless the others start it. But the Germans will. It's beginning to look like they'll need that, and more. Jim Fellows' gas was worth plenty to them. But Fellows was an

American, even though he was tempted. He needed money, and he had intended to come to Garett for it. If Garett had given it to him, the pressure on Jim Fellows would have been gone.

Drake Garett had wanted to serve his country. He was going to do that, it seemed, the hard way.

The door opened and light from the other room fell across Garett's face. His eyes closed at the glare, and then opened slowly.

A man stood over him, looking impossibly tall from Garett's position on the floor. A foot crashed into his ribs.

Garett groaned, and the tall man spoke. "Where's that envelope?"

THE lights went on then and Garett could make out the face of the man above. It was Carl Dietrich.

"You made a play for Marge so you could check on me," said Garett. "You're smooth. It gave you an alibi the night Jim Fellows was killed. You were with Marge while your pal killed Fellows."

Again that foot thudded against his ribs, and Garett rolled over with the pain.

"Where's that envelope?"

"Nobody knows," Garett said. He was gasping. "Nobody but me. And there aren't enough of you in the world to work it out of me."

Two hands went under his armpits then, and he was jerked to his feet. Then a chair was brought over and they dropped him into it. His shoulder pained sharply from the manhandling.

It was dark outside, and that meant he had been in this room for hours. It had obviously been the library of a fine home, but long unused. Dust covered the books, the piano in one corner, the chairs.

Dietrich stood directly in front of him now. "You're in a very bad way, my friend," said Dietrich. "We had planned to frame you for the murder of your card playing associate, but you wriggled out of that. Whether you live or die depends on my mood now. If you cooperate, you could live to be an old man."

"I wouldn't take a German's word for anything," Garett said. "You can't bargain with me."

Dietrich's flat palm lashed out. It struck Drake Garett on the cheek.

Garett cursed him fluently.

Dietrich's fist smashed into Garrett's nose, and the sharp pain of it seemed to knife his brain. There was blood, now, dribbling down over his chin. Garrett said no more.

"Where is that envelope?"

Garrett shook his head doggedly, and somebody hit him from the other side. Then Dietrich's fist landed on an eye. Consciousness was slipping away from Garrett, and he prayed silently for oblivion.

But then something sharp and clarifying came through his nostrils, helping to clear his brain. They did not want him to pass out. They wanted him to be fully aware of the punishment they knew how to administer.

standing less than three feet away. Dietrich seemed to be swaying, but Garrett knew this effect was caused by his faulty vision.

"You're lying," Dietrich said. "My patience is just about exhausted. We have ways, you know, of getting information. I had hoped we wouldn't have to resort to them. I'll give you one more chance."

"That's the gospel truth," Garrett said. "Why don't you question him?"

Dietrich turned to one of the men at Garrett's side. "Where's Fred?"

"He's gone back to town."

"Any chance he really did take the envelope?"

"Of course not. This man is lying."

"The Old Gentleman!" Screamed the Switchboard Girl. "He's—He's—"

BRECK BARNUM ran to the front of the office. There in the waiting room was Mr. O'Connell sitting in a chair with a magazine on his knees. His head was forward on his chest. He might have been asleep. But—the hilt of a knife protruded from his chest. The magazine on his lap was crimson!

AND THAT was only the start of the grim mystery that confronted Breck Barnum—a mystery that will amaze you mightily in *THE STONES IN THE SCRIPT*, a novel by Sam Merwin, Jr., packed with suspense and surprises!



COMING NEXT ISSUE

"Where is that envelope?"

"I don't know, now. My head's all—mixed—up—" Garrett's head rolled to one side. "My shoulder—"

"Untie him," Dietrich said.

The tight bonds at his wrists were loosened. Garrett let his arms relax at his sides, and then he stretched gingerly, trying to get some strength into them, trying to stall for time.

"Where is that envelope?"

"I had it," Garrett said, "when I left the house. I had it in my inside coat pocket. That man who sat next to me. He tried to grab it. Then, when I hit him, he knocked me out. He must have taken it if you didn't find it on me."

There was a silence. Through his good eye Garrett saw that Dietrich was

Again Dietrich's balled fist smashed into Garrett's face. His consciousness was really going this time, but the fury in him was stronger.

Garrett lunged forward, lashing out with both hands blindly at Dietrich's face. One landed, and his bad shoulder seemed to be on fire. Then something crashed into the back of his skull. . . .

His face was in the carpet when he woke. The room was dark again. Twice, in his unconsciousness, he had thought he heard someone whisper, but there was no one here now. His head throbbed steadily in rhythm to the beat of his heart. His mouth was dry, and thirst was torture.

He kept seeing faces in his mind, all the faces, but then the face of Carl Diet-

rich stood out before all others. He moaned softly, as an uncontrollable shiver ran the length of his aching body.

A voice came then, a whisper.

"Garrett. It's me, Boyle. I saw what they did to you, from the window."

Garrett tried to make sense out of that, but failed. He managed to speak, nevertheless.

"How did you know I was here?"

"I followed you. Since you left the house this morning. But I came alone. I would have gone for help, but I'm afraid to leave you."

"Where are they now?"

"They're in the kitchen, eating. I came through the window in here."

"Listen carefully," said Garrett. "Don't interrupt. Don't argue." He turned over painfully. "That envelope they want is in the refrigerator in Fellows' house. It's under the ice tray in the top freezer. Don't open it. It belongs to the Government. Get to the nearest phone, have cops sent to Fellows' house, and here. Stevens is the man who killed Jim Fellows. Stevens went along with him to my apartment, and probably suggested they go in the back door and wait for me. Jim Fellows wanted to borrow some money so he could pay that shortage. Stevens wanted the gas formula sold to the Nazis. They probably offered plenty. Get him. Now beat it."

"And leave you here?"

"Get the dickens out of here. This thing is bigger than either of us. You can't do anything, anyway. Go, blast you!"

Then Garrett felt something cold and hard pressed into his hand.

"My gun," Boyle said, "if you get a chance to use it." Then the dark shape of him dissolved in the dimness.

Garrett lifted himself painfully to his knees. He seemed to be whirling in space, and that uncontrollable shiver went through him again. It was no use. He stretched out again, full length on the floor.

He did not lose consciousness completely again. Once or twice he felt himself slipping, but each time he fought against it successfully. Then, a long time later, it seemed, he heard voices outside the door once more. Garrett pulled the automatic up out of sight and closed his eyes.

Even with his eyes closed, he could

tell the lights went on. Then Dietrich's voice came from directly above.

"We have decided to kill you, Garrett," said Dietrich. "The way you die will depend on how much you help us. It is too late to hope for a deal now. Do you want to talk?"

Garrett made no answer.

"Put him on the chair again."

Hands came down to grip under his armpits, and then he was lifted upright on tottering feet.

And Carl Dietrich stood directly before him, right in line with the automatic in Garrett's hand. Garrett pulled the trigger.

For a second the men on either side of him were too startled to move. Garrett spun crazily, and the big automatic jumped in his hand as he threw a shot at the right hand man.

DIETRICH was on the floor. The man on the right went slamming back into the wall.

Garrett turned. He turned in time to see the man to his left pulling a gun from a shoulder holster.

Garrett pressed the trigger again, but the bullet missed. There was shouting in the hall, in German, and he had a swift glimpse of men coming through the door.

Then the room erupted into an inferno of sound and flame.

Something smashed into Garrett's hip, and he crashed. . . .

This time he came to on a bed. It was a hard bed, so he knew he was in a hospital. There was an odor of antiseptics in the air. One face materialized out of the dim light, that of Marge Hanley. And Drake Garrett wondered if he could possibly have gone to heaven.

He felt light-headed, pain-free. They had probably given him a shot of something.

"Darling, I've been such a fool," said Marge. Then her lips came down and pressed against his, and he felt sure he was in heaven.

"I've been a fool, too," another voice said, "but I'm not going to kiss you."

It was Boyle.

"What happened?" asked Garrett weakly.

"Stevens confessed. He's one of those Bund guys. He made a deal with the Nazis, after Fellows had invented the

gas. Everything turned out the way you thought it was. That house you were in was a summer house for some big shot German-American business man. We got him too. We got the whole copperhead gang."

"How did I ever get out of it?"

"The boys from headquarters arrived, just as you started to shoot. It was a

second battle of the Marne, there, for a while."

"Dietrich?"

"You got him."

"I'm glad," said Garrett.

Marge's hand tightened on his. "Me, too," she said.

"Me, too," Boyle said. "I've got a son in Sicily."



NEXT ISSUE'S HEADLINERS

THE STONES IN THE SCRIPT, a gripping complete detective novel
by SAM MERWIN, JR.—MURDER ON DELIVERY, a baffling
novelet by LEE E. WELLS—and many other stories!



This Thin Gillette sure has the stuff—
Talks turkey to beards plenty tough—
Lasts long, shaves fast, saves dough as well—
And that's why wise men say it's swell!



Top quality
at rock-bottom
price



4 for 10c

Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade



Mr. Remington started back in horror as he recognized the chloral odor

THE CAT AND THE FIDDLE

By OWEN FOX JEROME

It Takes a Cat, a Fiddle, and a Lovely Singer to Transform Gentle, Mild Mr. Remington, Violinist of the Romany Club, into a Smart Detective as Well as a Hero!

HAD anyone told Horace Remington that he was heroic he would likely have fainted dead away. Mr. Remington was slightly on the wrong side of forty, and he was fond of cats. Also, he played the violin. He had played fifth fiddle in Tachonovich's Symphony Orchestra for fifteen years. Now he was the sole violinist at the Romany Club, a night spot on East Fifty-ninth Street.

Never a virtuoso, he was nevertheless a conscientious musician who knew his musical scores. He had the soul of an artist—if not the fire of genius—and he was a wow in his make-up as a death's head in full dress, when he played obligato to Madam Oravey's Gipsy fortune-telling scene.

But it was cheap, spectacular, and secretly Horace Remington resented it.

But he was too much of a gentleman to voice his objections. It was difficult enough to put his thoughts into words, anyway. He did much better at pouring out his heart through the strings of his beloved violin.

In appearance Mr. Remington was a dapper little man with graying hair. In cutaway coat, striped trousers and batwing collar, he was always impeccable, in the style of two decades ago. He lived alone in his two-room apartment over on Second Avenue, walked to his nightly work at the Romany Club, and went to the Metropolitan and Carnegie Hall in season on his days off. And on his radio he listened to Kay Kyser's "College of Musical Knowledge" and Hildegard's "Beat the Band."

Not that he was in love with Hildegard—a radio personality he had never

seen. For there was Lola Martin. Lola was a dream. What if she was a fake redhead and every day of thirty. She was the singer at the Romany Club, and as unattainable to Mr. Remington as the stars. Moreover, she was the current favorite of Georgie Mayville. Still, that didn't keep Horace Remington from pouring out his love through his violin and worshipping from afar.

Why he continued to work at the Romany Club, Mr. Remington did not know—unless it was Lola and Grimalkins. Men such as Horace Remington easily got into a rut.

But it had gradually dawned on Remington that the Romany Club was not strictly on the up and up. Just what was wrong with the place he didn't know. He simply had the feeling that something was off-key, a feeling that was growing into a firm conviction.

For one thing he didn't like Harry Doxler, the club manager. Doxler was a fat, swarthy little man, with a waxed mustache, and sharp black eyes that were as cold as chilled jet. He was always genial, smiling—and oily. He laughed frequently, short little sounds that he sucked inward instead of exploding outward in a natural manner. It was more like the barking of a small dog.

MADAM Oravey, the fortune teller, would have been a hag had she not been so fat. Her nose was craggy and her bleached hair was highly incongruous. In walk, posture and manner, she was positively bovine. What thoughts lay behind her cowl-like exterior Mr. Remington could not imagine. But she was not dumb. Mr. Remington fancied that she had once played the cheaper carnival circuits.

Perhaps Remington's first distrust came about when he learned accidentally that in private life Madam Oravey was Mrs. Harry Doxler and that Doxler was in reality the owner of the Romany Club instead of merely the manager fronting for some mysterious owner. Not that this made any difference. Or did it? Anyway, that was none of Mr. Remington's business. His job was to make with the violin six nights a week, for which he received the princely sum of sixty dollars per week.

Until the night he brought the half-pound of liver to feed Grimalkins.

Grimalkins was the club cat, scarcely more than a kitten, the tortoise-shell successor to the aging black cat used by Madam Oravey as atmosphere. Oddly enough, Grimalkins had been presented to the club by Georgie Mayville. This night Mr. Remington learned the reason.

"Where's Grimalkins?" he asked Pietro, the chef, as he laid the package of liver on a kitchen table.

Pietro smiled, granting a vision of gleaming white teeth. Everybody in the Romany Club had a smile for the mild little Mr. Remington.

"Grimalkeens, she ees maybe upstairs weeth Madam Oravey for practeece een new role, eh?" he replied. "What you breeng her? Leever? You leave with me and I cut up een small pieces while you find kitty, eh?"

"Thank you, Pietro," said Mr. Remington. "Don't cut it all up tonight. There is too much there for one feeding. I'll bring Grimalkins down right away."

Pietro gazed after Mr. Remington, then sighed a bit wistfully.

"He ees fine leetle man, Pete," he said to his helper. "And he plays the violin like nobody's beezness."

"Yeah," grunted Pete. "He's a fine little mouse. He better watch out or that cat'll eat him."

Unaware of this banter, Mr. Remington made his way upstairs, left his hat and gloves in the employees' cloak room, and went on toward Madam Oravey's private room next to Doxler's office. Madam Oravey had a comfortable sitting-room up here, where she kept numerous of her props, and where she could confer privately with her husband. They held numerous conferences the reason and purpose of which Mr. Remington could not fathom.

He knocked lightly on the corridor door. Receiving no answer and hearing no sound, he tried the knob. The door opened, and he stood hesitantly on the threshold. In the light from the table lamp he saw Grimalkins curled up on the little pier table under the long, paneled mirror which was the cat's favorite perch. He smiled, and stepped over to pick up the ball of feline fluff. Then the sound of voices halted him momentarily. The connecting door to Doxler's office was ajar, and he could hear the club owner and his wife talking.

"—be here tonight again," Doxler

was saying. "He has reserved that table for the next three weeks straight. He's quite gone on Lola Martin."

"Why doesn't he go ahead and marry her then?" complained Madam Oravey. "I've already read his fortune for him half a dozen times. She'll marry him to get away from here, if for no other reason."

Mr. Remington silently gathered up the cat and tiptoed toward the corridor door. He knew whom the Doxlers were discussing. Georgie Mayville!

"My dear, you forget that Mr. Mayville's thirtieth birthday is still three months off. If there is the slightest breath of scandal about him before then—he doesn't inherit the estate his father left. He's been a good boy for nearly a year now. He's just playing it safe. He doesn't want to see the family fortune go to establish homes for indigent cats and dogs."

"So that's why he's so cagey," rumbled Madam Oravey's cowl-like voice. "Maybe that's why he gave us a cat, too."

"Exactly, my dear. He is trying hard to prove to the executor of his father's estate that he has genuinely reformed and that he really loves animals. At that, I think the fool does."

Doxler laughed, and the jerky sound made Mr. Remington think of the yapping of a jackal. Or whatever canine beast made such jerky noise.

"Well, I'm tired of playing such a waiting game," declared Madam Oravey angrily. "We want him sewed up tight before he gets his hands on that money."

"And so we shall, my dear," agreed Doxler. "I have a plan. I have already talked Mayville into getting a marriage license. If he shows up with it tonight, here's what we will do. . . ."

MR. REMINGTON silently closed the corridor door to the sitting-room and trudged away along the carpeted, darkened hall toward the kitchen precincts. He sighly sadly, shook his head. The incongruity of the Doxlers playing the part of Cupid was lost on him. He was thinking of Lola Martin marrying Georgie Mayville.

Mayville would not be a bad catch, and it was apparent that Lola was fond of him. The only drawback was that Mayville, senior, had finally tired of his son's escapades and had put some teeth in his

last will and testament. From the time of his death, last year, until George's thirtieth birthday, now three months hence, George had to avoid the slightest breath of scandal—or be cut off with a small annuity the rest of his days.

But there was no reason he couldn't marry Lola Martin. Mr. Remington knew there was nothing wrong with Lola. It was all a perplexing puzzle to the little violinist.

Then he thought all about the Doxlers for the moment. For Lola was near the cloak-room. The girl smiled pleasantly at him, and paused long enough to caress Grimalkins, who purred contentedly in the crook of Mr. Remington's arm.

"How are you tonight, Mr. Remington?" the singer asked. "Going to feed Grimalkins again, I'll wager."

Mr. Remington trembled at her nearness. He could only nod and gulp an unintelligible remark. He couldn't blame Mayville for falling in love with her.

Lola Martin flashed him another smile. "I'll meet you here tomorrow afternoon, Mr. Remington," she said, "to run over that new arrangement of songs."

"Thank you, Miss Lola," he managed to stammer. "And—and I hope you will be—ah—very happy."

And he fled for the kitchen.

The young woman stared after him thoughtfully. "Now I wonder what on earth made him say a thing like that?" she mused. "If only he would assert himself some time, I'd be quite happy—I think."

Later, on his way to the shallow stage, violin under his arm, to play his first selection of numbers, Mr. Remington caught sight of Georgie Mayville sitting alone at the table he had reserved indefinitely—at least for the next three weeks. Mr. Remington stopped by.

"Good-evening, Mr. Mayville," he said in his mild and friendly way. "That was nice of you to give us Grimalkins. Have you seen her lately? She is growing up like everything."

"Hello, Rem," acknowledged the former playboy, lightly. "Oh, yes, I see the cat every night up in Madam Oravey's room. Going to scrape out some Gipsy tunes for us tonight? How about the Hungarian Rhapsody?"

"With pleasure, Mr. Mayville. I will play the third and fourth movements es-

pecially for you." Mr. Remington beamed. It was nice that Mayville appreciated good music. At least, he had this in common with Lola.

"Thanks," said Mayville carelessly.

"You know," he went on in a sort of confiding way, "I can't dance so strenuously as I used to. My heart's bad, so the doctors have warned me. But I still like to hear lively music."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that," murmured Mr. Remington sympathetically.

"Don't feel sorry for me," said Mayville, grinning boyishly. "I'll soon have plenty of compensation."

Mr. Remington thought so, too, but he said nothing. However, he soon was telling his thoughts to the patrons of the crowded club, through the strings of his precious violin.

"How sadly you play tonight, Mr. Remington," Lola said to him after one of his numbers, and before she went on to sing a couple of popular songs. "Is there anything the matter?"

"Oh, no, not at all," he hastened to assure her. "On the contrary."

"It must be the atmosphere of this place," she said, and Mr. Remington thought she shivered slightly. "How nice it would be if you and I could get away from here and go on tour in concert work."

"That would—would be delightful," admitted Mr. Remington, distinctly startled. But how silly an idea. Soon Lola would be marrying Mayville.

He saw them sitting together later at Mayville's table, apparently absorbed in each other. And then he was going upstairs to get into his death's head make-up for the scene with Madam Oravey in a macabre mood.

THE following afternoon there was no trace of his sadness of the evening before. In fact, he was almost happy as he ran through the new arrangements with Lola.

"You are too good for this place, Mr. Remington," she observed. "Why don't you leave?"

"I think the same about you, Miss Lola. Why don't you go? You should be singing with a name orchestra—on the radio."

A shadow passed before the girl's eyes. "I—I can't," she murmured. "My brother is—oh, forget it."

But Mr. Remington couldn't forget it. Before he returned to the Romany Club that night he spent several dollars in making discreet inquiries about Lola Martin and her brother. He wound up by visiting Charles Martin himself, and Horace Remington was appalled by what the young fellow divulged to him.

Charles worked as a bookkeeper in a wholesale grocery house. He must have been ripe for someone to talk to, for when he discovered that Mr. Remington was a good friend of Lola's, he unburdened his heart to the quiet and sympathetic little violinist. Charles, it developed, was short several hundred dollars in his accounts. He and Lola were saving every cent they could to make up the deficit. But Harry Doxler and Madam Oravey knew about his trouble because Lola had made the mistake of trying to borrow money from them. And now the pair were holding that information over Lola's head for some unknown reason.

Unknown no longer to Mr. Remington. At last he understood what had been obscure to him before. Doxler and his wife were running some sort of blackmail racket, using the Romany Club as a front and Madam Oravey's fortune-telling business as a weapon.

But what could Mr. Remington do about it? He had no proof. He was no detective, no fighter.

"One thing I can do for you, Charles," he told the anxious young man. "You say you are still short nearly five hundred dollars. I have saved more than that. On condition that you do not tell Lola, I will lend you the money so you can square yourself with your firm—and then the Doxlers will have no further hold over your sister."

Young Martin's gratitude was pathetic. In his haste to escape such a shower of thanks, Mr. Remington made an appointment to meet him the following morning and turn the money over to him. Then, his heart lighter than it had been for months, Mr. Remington made his way back to the Romany Club.

After Lola married George Mayville and left the club, he decided, he would leave, too. Perhaps he would get a job with another symphony orchestra. Anyway, he could no longer stay in such a—such a den of iniquity. Not with Lola gone.

He was late getting to the club. Harry

Doxler met him as he came in through the kitchen. The owner-manager was in a vile mood. "Where the devil have you been, Remington!" he snarled. "You missed the first dinner show."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Doxler. You can take it out of my pay. I—"

"Darned right I will!" Doxler cut him off viciously. "I pay you more than you're worth to play your fiddle, and I won't tolerate this sort of thing. Now, hurry up and get ready for that new act with Lola."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Doxler," murmured the little man, and he scurried for the upper part of the house.

"And don't sneak off afterward," Doxler yelled at him. "I want you to play for a wedding we are having here at midnight. A private one."

"Yes, sir."

It was only after he disposed of his hat and gloves that Mr. Remington remembered he had not yet fed Grimalkins. He glanced at his watch. He had but a scant half-hour before donning his death's head regalia and playing for Lola the numbers that led up to the Gipsy fortune-teller act with Madam Oravey. There was just time enough.

Racing along the dim-lit corridor, Mr. Remington paused breathlessly before the closed sitting-room door. He tapped gently. There was no answer. He tried the knob and the door opened for him.

He entered, and saw Grimalkins stretching and eying herself in the mirror behind the little table. Then he noticed that the room was not empty. A man sat in the armchair beside the table. It was George Mayville, and he was slouched down in an attitude of sleep.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," murmured Mr. Remington. "I had no idea you were here, Mr. Mayville."

MAYVILLE did not stir. Mr. Remington was on the verge of gathering up Grimalkins and tiptoeing out when something about Mayville's slumped attitude arrested him. Almost timidly he touched the ex-playboy on the shoulder. The man did not stir. Lightly Mr. Remington touched his face. It was cold and toughly resistant—like aging dough Pietro sometimes left overnight.

His heart beating more rapidly, Mr. Remington swiftly felt for Mayville's

pulse. There was none. George Mayville, the bridegroom to be, was dead.

In his concern, Mr. Remington almost wrung his hands. Then he bent closer, sniffed at the dead man's lips. He recognized that chloral odor. In horror, he started back, resting his left hand on the center table to steady himself. He looked down and saw a legal-appearing paper beneath a book. It was a marriage license, issued to George Mayville and Lola Martin! Suddenly he understood a great many things. The Doxlers scheming the night before . . . Doxler's plan to marry the couple—

"Good heavens!" whispered Mr. Remington. "They must have slipped Mayville a mickey finn to get him in a befuddled state so they could rush the marriage and hold blackmail over his head. But they didn't know about his weak heart—and now they've murdered him!"

What to do? How could he prove what he knew to be true? Did he even want to prove it? Should he call the police? Did Doxler know Mayville was dead? Evidently not, as he was right now planning on rushing the marriage through.

But as soon as the death was discovered things would start happening quickly. Knowing they were guilty of manslaughter on top of their blackmail racket, the Doxlers would surely try to pin this crime on somebody else. And the logical person was—Lola!

Horace Remington, making stricken noises in his throat, hastily left the room, closed the door tightly behind him. In a frenzy he donned his death's head make-up, grabbed his violin. How much time had elapsed when he reached the wing entrance to the little stage he did not know, but he knew he had missed his cue again.

In a ghastly blue and yellow spotlight Madam Oravey was on the stage and ready to pour a glass of champagne for a frightened-looking Lola. The only music was a poor accompaniment on the piano.

Mr. Remington signaled the piano player, and with a bound he leaped into the spotlight. A grinning death's head in immaculate evening clothes. He slapped his violin to his chin, swept the bow across the strings in one mad volume of sound. A woman in the audience screamed.

Then Horace Remington was playing as he had never played before. A crazy medley of improvisation was pouring from his violin and he only hoped Lola remembered the words of the songs. That she would realize it was nothing like the arrangement they had practised, he was sure.

"I had the craziest dream. . . ." throbbed the violin. "Get out of town. . . . They're hanging Danny Deever in the morning. . . ." Then it swept into a strain of the "Danse Macabre."

Madame Oravey and Lola were looking at him in amazement. Then Madame Oravey filled the wine glass and urged it upon the girl. Instantly the notes of the violin changed.

"Drink to me only with thine eyes. . . ." Mr. Remington was playing in mad grotesquerie. No telling what dope the Doxlers had put into that champagne for Lola to drink.

The girl looked startled. Her lips moved as her mind registered the words of the music. Mr. Remington swung into an old barroom favorite—the only thing he could think of at the moment. "I'll be glad when you're dead you rascal, you, I'll be glad when you're dead you rascal, you. I'll be standing on the corner, hi, when they bring your body by—"

"No!" cried the girl hysterically. "I won't drink that! I can't go on. Something is wrong. Horace! What—"

There was a snarl from the entrance wing, and Harry Doxler rushed out onto the stage. In his hand was the blue blackness of an automatic.

"Drink that wine!" he shouted at the girl. "As for you, Mr. Death, I'll banish you forever!" He raised his gun to aim it at Mr. Remington, signaling for the curtain with his other hand.

It made a good tableau for the customers, but Horace Remington knew there was a deadly menace behind it all. Doxler must have discovered that Mayville was dead. Now he intended hanging the crime on Remington or Lola.

UNARMED, helpless, despised for his quiet gentleness, Mr. Remington made the supreme sacrifice of his career. Somehow he *had* to get Lola out of this mess. The curtain was going down, cutting them off from the wildly clapping patrons. He dropped his bow,

caught his precious violin by the neck with both hands. With all his might he was swinging the instrument, and it crashed against the head of Mr. Harry Doxler, murderer and blackmailer. The violin splintered into a thousand pieces, but Mr. Doxler went down like a stone.

Instantly Mr. Remington snatched up the automatic, and menaced Madame Oravey and the pair of men who came rushing on stage.

"Lola," he ordered crisply, "get to the nearest phone and call the police. Doxler has murdered George Mayville. You others stay right here, or I'll do some killing of my own. Hurry, Lola!"

Madame Oravey screamed. "I told Harry not to make that mickey too strong."

Twenty minutes later she was still screaming and babbling out the facts to the sergeant in charge of the homicide squad that answered the call.

At last, order of a sort was restored, and Mr. Remington had the opportunity of looking over the shattered remains of his beloved violin. He was oblivious to the people around him, to the bluecoats and detectives, to the snarling Doxler and the hysterical Madame Oravey.

Sadly he fussed with bits of his violin, aimlessly trying to fit them together. He started, when a warm, soft hand rested on his forearm. Raising his eyes, he found Lola looking into his face. Tears had dimmed her eyes.

"Oh—ah—Lola," he stammered. "I am—er—awfully sorry about Mayville. I just—don't know—what to say."

"So am I, Horace," she said. "He didn't deserve death. But I am more sorry about your violin. And—and I think you are wonderful!"

"You—didn't love—Mayville?"

"No. It was my brother. You see—"

"I know about that," Mr. Remington said modestly. "I fixed that up with Charles. I didn't mean to be prying, but—but I had to help you."

"Horace Remington! Put down that broken violin and look at me," she ordered firmly. "We're going to buy you another violin, better than this one, and you and I are going to make that concert tour yet. Look at me."

Horace Remington looked. And what he saw in her eyes made him indifferent to whether he ever returned to the concert stage or not.



Before the roar of the killer's shots died down, he

A Green Ghost
Novel

THE CASE *of*

CHAPTER I

Coffin Kayo

"I'M NOT quite sure about tonight, darling," said Merry White as she and George Chance turned into the jammed lobby of New York's famous Sports Palace.

Mr. Chance looked down—quite a way down—at his petite brunette companion. The champagne sparkle of Merry's eyes taunted him, and he contrived, by pursing his lips and cocking a red-

gold eyebrow, to assume a hurt expression that was at least ninety per cent fraud.

"What's wrong?" he demanded. "Didn't I promise you we'd see Benny Akers try to knock Tony Rex off the lightweight throne?"

She nodded vigorously. "But you've always got two or three reasons for doing anything. Comes of being the world's greatest magician and a super-duper detective at the same time."

Mr. Chance's smile was a trifle secret—no answer at all to the question that

Magician-Sleuth George Chance Tackles the



felt the prick of a knife at the back of his neck

the **EVIL EYE** *By G. T. FLEMING-ROBERTS*

was troubling Merry's pretty head. This was not the time and place to divulge the real reason why they had come to the Sports Palace.

Churning through the turnstiles was a typical night crowd. Gleaming dress shirts and silk toppers were mixed with cabmen's crumpled uniforms and conservative business suits. A checkered suit here and there was clearly stamped "Broadway," and tawdry garb clothed the shallow-faced gentry from the lower East Side. All were hurrying to get seats before the wind-up battle.

Chance held tight to Merry's mink-jacketed arm, steered her around the edge of the jam and across the sill of a door marked "Passes." A doorman shot out a hand to detain him. Chance turned, blue eyes wide and innocent—an expression which theatre audiences the world over had learned to associate with devilry to come. He held out two passes which vanished in a twinkling even as the doorman reached for them. Chance was half a step on his way before the doorman again caught his arm.

"Mister, watcha do wit' them tickets?"

Baffling "Hex" Mystery of a Prize-Ring Murder!

Merry's rippling laugh drew the door-man's attention.

"Don't trust him," she advised.

"He didn't gimme 'em, did he, Miss?"

A quick shuffle of footsteps sounded behind Chance. The magician turned to see "Sailor" Mack Hollis, the fight promoter, approaching at a rolling stride. Sailor Mack was red-faced and multi-chinned, fairly bursting out of his double-breasted navy blue jacket.

FOLLOWING in Mack's wallowing wake was Ralph "Tinhorn" Gabriel, an upper-bracket gambler who wasn't above putting the fix on a fight or a horse race to insure himself against loss. Gabriel was thin with blue-white skin covering a cadaverous face, and protruding brown eyes that were suggestive of strangulation. Judging by the glances he sent in Merry's direction and by the waxed, curled ends of his black mustache, he considered himself in the category of lady killers.

"What's all the altercation?" Sailor Mack demanded hoarsely.

"Why," Chance said coolly, "the little man at the door dropped our passes, and I think you picked them up, didn't you?" He stabbed Sailor Mack Hollis with a long forefinger.

"A gate-crasher!" Tinhorn Gabriel said. "I can pick them every time, Mack."

Chance's right hand flicked to the big promoter's breast pocket and jerked out Mack's handkerchief. He managed to make the palmed passes flutter down from the handkerchief. Sailor Mack stared blankly, then covered his embarrassment with a loud guffaw.

"I know you!" he crowed. "Sure! From the super-colossal magic shows. The incomparable George Chance, the world's foremost prestidigitator!"

"Essentially correct," Chance cut in, "without the superlatives." He glanced at Merry who was crinkling her saucy nose at the profile of the cadaverous Tinhorn Gabriel.

"Well, I hope you like the fracas tonight," Sailor Mack said, clapping Chance on the back. "It should be stupendous. This boy Tony Rex, you know, is a kind of protégé of mine. I brought him up from a Golden Gloves slugger. You go on and have yourself a time, Mr. Chance."

"Thanks." Chance nodded and hastily joined Merry. "Sailor Mack Hollis," he explained to Merry as he took her arm.

"I thought for a moment it was Noah Webster," she said. "The way he slings the dictionary at you."

They hurried through a tunnel under tiers of seats where the stamp of feet made talking difficult. Before them, and just beside a soft drink stand, hung an electric sign indicating "Aisle A." Chance maneuvered Merry toward that entrance, noticing at that moment a familiar figure of a man draped in a gaudy checked suit.

The man was unmistakably Joe Harper. Nobody else in the world would have endured the noisy wrangling of a blue and red tie and a nauseous green snap brim hat. Joe Harper, former pitcher, booking agent, and race track tout, had years ago discovered Chance's guest room as a comfortable place to endure a hangover. Prince of chiselers that he was, he had conveniently forgotten the location of his own home, and had devoted his life to sharing Mr. Chance's wealth.

Joe came toward Merry and Chance now, but his black beetle eyes showed no sign of recognition. At the moment of passing, however, he winked at Merry, spoke to Chance in a nasal voice that emanated from one corner of his mouth.

"The screwball's in the seat ahead of yours. Watch it!"

Chance nodded, and hurried Merry along before she had an opportunity to ask questions. Down the incline of the bowl they stepped, down into the smoke-filled cavernlike blackness lined with thousands of faces, and toward the white spot that was the light-drenched arena. They turned into a row of seats, the second back from the ringside, climbed over legs and reached their places just as the foghorn voice of the announcer bellowed the name of the semi-windup winner. A roar of approval arose from the stadium.

MERRY WHITE began eagerly searching out the celebrities who were filling the ringside seats. She found the mayor, a couple of senators playing hookey, and any number of Hollywood stars. She leaned toward Chance to whisper in his ear.

"Will you cast an eye on the skinny

gent in front of me? He's got to be a famous violinist, with all that hair!"

The man in front of Merry turned slightly, pulled the brim of his dark hat well down over a thin, yellowish face that was a good third covered by enormous smoked glasses. Before Chance could comment, the announcer was introducing the heavyweight champ who drew an explosion of cheers.

The champ was followed into the ring by other fistic luminaries and noted personages. While these ceremonies were going on, a sly, pussy-cat expression came into Merry White's face.

"Darlin', don't you think you've held out long enough?" she asked. "I think this pleasure jaunt is all tied up with mystery, so—"

"Shsh!!" Chance gave her hand a cautioning squeeze. Then he reached into his pocket and drew out a piece of paper on which were pasted clippings of printed words to form this note:

EVIL EYE WILL HEX TONY
REX INTO SHEOL TONIGHT

"Sheol?" Merry's pretty lips had trouble with the word.

"A sort of refined word for Hades," he explained. "Police Commissioner Standish gave that paper to me. Sailor Mack Hollis said it came in the mail, and he turned it over to Standish."

"Does Sailor Mack know that's why you're here?"

He shook his head. "Standish wouldn't have told him."

She snuggled closer. "How does a hex work?"

"It doesn't, generally. But if you're really interested, you might ask your fight-fixing admirer, Tinhorn Gabriel."

A sudden roar from the crowd drew their attention to the ring. The announcer had just introduced Tony Rex who, for the eighth time this year, was about to defend his title.

Rex stood in the ring, waving clasped gloves over his head at the cheering throng. He was a slight man with scarcely a muscle showing beneath his smooth light skin. There was a certain fragile quality in his features that made it seem incredible that in three short years he had slashed his way to the lightweight throne and salted away more than a million dollars in the process.

Introduced next was Benny Akers, the shaggy, black-haired contender. Akers was a top-ranking fighter with plenty of mean murder in either fist, but from the moment the gong sounded, it became perfectly clear why Rex was champ.

Rex moved to meet Akers with easy grace, his fists cocked in front of his chest. He was calm, unhurried, intent, his face puckered with quiet determination. Akers, on the other hand, was a violent fighter—now dodging, now weaving, now slashing out with feinted punches that met only air.

Rex apparently decided he had felt out his opponent enough. His left fist blurred with the speed of a blow that smashed into Akers' cheek. A heavy right to the heart, a stabbing one-two to the middle, a quick shift of his head to give Akers' wild swing the go-by, and then Rex moved in close. The two fighters were face to face, pumping a terrific hail of blows at each other. The crowd came up roaring.

THE crowd, of course, included Merry White. She was on her feet, face flushed, small fists clenched and swinging wildly.

"Hit him again! Paste him!"

"Easy," Chance cautioned, laughing so hard at Merry he could scarcely speak.

Merry seemed oblivious to Chance. She launched something that resembled one of Akers' haymakers. Her fist caught the hat of the man sitting in front of her. Off went the hat and down fell the smoked glasses. The man twisted around, threw up one yellow claw in a gesture of protest. His were hideous eyes with small, washed-out blue irises so completely crossed that their point of focus seemed the bridge of his beak of a nose. Red hair like something shorn from a Halloween witch, hung in strings about his hollow cheeks.

"What's the idea?" he screeched.

Merry shrank back, one hand going up toward her neck as though any moment now she expected that yellow claw to close about her throat. Chance leaned in front of her, touched the cross-eyed man on the shoulder.

"Just an accident, my friend," he said, with more threat than apology in his voice.

The cross-eyed man stared at the magician a moment, then turned to recover hat and glasses which he hastily put on. Chance glanced at Merry, saw her shoulders twitch as though caught in a sudden chill. Chance gave her a reassuring wink, then turned his attention to the ring where resounding thwacks of leather on flesh had once more brought the stadium crowd howling to its feet.

Rex was chopping short, vicious upercuts into Akers' face with the precision of a killer. Akers grabbed his way into a clinch to hang on until the referee parted the fighters in the center of the canvas.

Akers' eyes looked dull. His gloves hung at his hips. Tony Rex, oblivious to the hysterical roar of the crowd, seemed to deliberately measure Akers for the kill. He was, perhaps, too deliberate and too confident. For Akers came back.

Akers came back from nowhere, his fist lashing out from his hip to crack into the champ's mouth with such force that the blow knocked out Rex's rubber mouthpiece.

A deep groan from the spectators almost drowned out the bell that ended the round.

Seconds and handlers were now scurrying onto the platform. Armed with buckets, bottles, and other paraphernalia, they began working on Rex almost before he was down on the stool. Rex appeared calm and confident, laughing and joking with one of his seconds—a man named "Tiger" Mullin, according to the red letters on his shirt.

"Tony Rex is swell, isn't he, darlin'?" Merry said admiringly.

Chance looked down at her small flushed face and grinned.

"They don't come any better. You've heard about his wife, haven't you?"

Merry pouted. "Oh, he's got one of those, has he?"

"Yes. Fortunately for me. And he's devoted to her, they say, to make the bad news worse. She was hurt in an auto crash two years ago, and I understand she'll always be an invalid."

A klaxon honked the ten-second warning. A man in a derby hat, apparently Rex's manager, reached into a bag and took out a box containing a new rubber mouthpiece which he handed to the champ. The fighter put the protector

into his mouth, biting down to get it properly set.

At the bell, Rex darted across the canvas to meet Akers in his own corner, and the crowd tensed. Rex slammed a flurry of leather that sent Akers covering, and into the ropes. The battle went on all around the ring, the white-garbed referee dodging frantically to keep out of churning action.

Again Rex had Akers onto the ropes and just in front of where Chance and Merry sat. Akers tried a clinch, but Rex, his face over Akers' shoulder, pistoned crushing blows into Akers' middle.

AND then it happened. The long-haired man in the seat in front of Merry bobbed to his feet, yanked off hat and glasses. Over Akers' shoulder, Tony Rex saw the man. The fighter's eyes, previously narrowed to veritable bombsights, widened. His arms fell limply to his sides.

In this unexpected respite in punishment, Akers whirled to one side and slammed a steaming left to Rex's head that flung the champion through the ropes, to crash into the front row of seats where he lay like a rag doll cast aside by a careless child.

For a fraction of a second, a graveyard hush hung over the stadium. Then bedlam tore through the stillness.

Chance rammed through the confusion of upset chairs, but he was not the first to reach the fallen fighter. The long-haired man who had sat in front of Merry was trying to extricate himself from a knot of excited onlookers, and it was Chance who filled the gap the long-haired man had left. A girl in a white fur jacket, with a wealth of honey-gold hair tumbling down over her shoulders, had the unconscious man in her arms, was rocking him back and forth, planting red-smudged kisses on his cheeks.

"Tony!" she sobbed. "Speak to Dorothy. Say something, Tony!"

Chance got down on his hands and knees and squirmed his way in next to the woman. Referee and handlers crowded him on all sides, and somewhere in the background he could hear Sailor Mack Hollis' foghorn voice trying to clear the way. There was shouting and shouting. One of the handlers tried to tear the blonde away from Rex.

"Here, Miss Bishop, let us handle him. He'll be okay."

The blonde let Rex down gently, stood up, swaying slightly, and George Chance inched his way closer to Rex. The young fighter's blue lips were parted slightly, showing white teeth. His eyelids flickered, the lips moved a little. Chance dropped his head close to the champion's mouth, caught the faint murmur of words.

"Mack," Rex was whispering. "You've been swell, Mack. . . . I fixed everything for Lucy. You'll take care. . . ."

A man who was carrying a doctor's satchel dropped a hand on Chance's narrow shoulder and yanked the magician to one side.

"What are you doing here?" the doctor wanted to know.

Chance stood up and his deep-set eyes gave the medical man a chilly stare.

"As much as you can do," he retorted. "Tony Rex is dead."

CHAPTER II

The Tiger with Fists

GEORGE CHANCE hurried Merry up the aisle to avoid the slowly departing crowd and did his best to wedge a word in through her excited chatter.

"It was the cross-eyed man," she said. "The 'Evil Eye' in the note. He hexed Tony Rex. Didn't you see him stand up? And did you see how quick he made tracks to get away from the place?"

"I saw him," Chance said patiently. "But he didn't get away. At least, not without being tailed by Joe Harper."

"It's a job for the Green Ghost, if you ask me!"

"It is," Chance admitted. "It was a neat piece of murder, or I'll eat my hat, including the rabbit in it. Now listen, sweetheart. You're to get on the phone and wait for a call from Joe. I'll call you the moment I can. And have Glenn Saunders take over for me. Understand?"

Merry, of course, understood. To "get on the phone" meant that she was to go to that ancient and supposedly haunted house that had once been a rectory on East 55th Street. It was the headquarters of the Green Ghost, and

there she would wait for a call from Joe Harper.

Glenn Saunders, of course, was George Chance's identical double, a man who had been extremely valuable when Chance had toured the world with his magical review. Even as Glenn had made it possible for Chance to appear to be in more than one place at a time on the magic stage, so Glenn now made it possible for Chance to step at will into his alter ego, the Green Ghost—that fabulous detective who had haunted many a murderer straight to the electric chair.

The Green Ghost had made so many enemies throughout the underworld that Chance's life would not have been worth a plugged nickel had the true identity of the Green Ghost become public knowledge. It was Saunders' ability to stand in for George Chance that protected this vital secret, for Saunders was a living alibi to "prove" that Chance could not possibly be the Ghost.

Descending a stair at the head of the aisle, Chance handed Merry through a fire-door that opened on 58th Street. Then alone and unobserved, he returned to the top of a stair that led down into a dimly lighted corridor extending to right and left, bending around the perimeter of the stadium like a huge horseshoe.

He knew the layout perfectly, having used one of the men's dressing rooms off this corridor only a short time before when his magic had done-its bit at a War Bond show.

He turned to the right of the deserted hall and moved swiftly around the bend, to come to an abrupt stop. There at the main entrance to the dressing and shower rooms, a uniformed cop was holding off a group of reporters and photographers. Evidently Tony Rex's body had been taken through that door and now reposed in the fighter's dressing room.

But there was still another entrance available to Chance—a back entrance to the dressing rooms.

He retraced his steps along the horseshoe corridor, kept on until he came to a door illuminated by a dim yellow globe above the frame. The door was locked, but neither George Chance nor his alter ego, the Green Ghost, had ever lost much sleep over a locked door. He had the lock picked and the door open in short order.

He stepped into friendly darkness within a hall that paralleled the outside corridor and from which opened the shower and dressing-rooms. At the opposite end of the hall he could see a glow of light which came from the room where they had taken the body of poor Tony Rex. Chance moved toward the light, his groping fingers locating the door of the first dressing-room. He stepped in, closed the door behind him, and snapped on his tiny flashlight.

THERE was a door in the side wall leading to the adjoining shower room. Beside the door was a dressing table, a bench, and a mirror. The magician-detective put the flashlight down on the table and immediately stripped off his gray-green tweed suit, snapped the black silk lining out of the coat, reversed both coat and pants to reveal a new surface of dead black cloth.

The silk lining, with its many secret pockets, he snapped over the tweed surface, now in the inner side of the coat. That lining contained many secret pockets which were loaded with tricks and gimmicks which the Green Ghost had found useful in keeping his criminal audiences occupied.

Dressed now completely in black, with a black silk scarf to hide the white "V" of his shirt front, the magician sat down on the dressing table bench and removed his compact make-up kit from an inner pocket.

His early life in the circus had taught Chance many things not to be derived from books. He had learned ventriloquism, knife-throwing, impersonation, and—important now—the art of make-up.

He first inserted two small wire ovals into each nostril, tilting the tip of his nose and distorting the lines above his mouth. Brown eye shadow he next applied, to deepen the pits of his eyes and emphasize the hollow of his cheeks.

Down the hall sounded the slam of a door, and the magician paused in his task, listening intently. Somebody was coming down the hall, searching the dressing-rooms. Which could be bad, very bad, for Mr. Chance.

His fingers fairly flew to complete his make-up. Brief touches with a lining pencil emphasized the outline of facial bones. Then he took from his make-up

kit a set of yellow plastic shell teeth that looked as though they had been stolen from some long-buried skull. He fitted these plastic shells over his own gleaming teeth, then dipped into a powder box to obtain the ghostly pallor for his face.

Last, he secured his black scarf with an ornate pin that concealed a tiny green light bulb. The safety clasp of the pin was a minute plug connecting the globe through fine wires to a flashlight battery and miniature rheostat switch.

The sound of slamming doors was close to him now.

He gave his soft black hat a tug down over his eyes. He scooped up the make-up materials, returned them to his kit, dropped the kit into an inner pocket. Snatching up his flashlight, he turned it off at the moment he heard the knob of the dressing-room door turning.

Soundless as a shadow, he sprang into the adjoining shower-room. He was George Chance no longer. That relentless, ghoulish hunter of murderers, the Green Ghost, had for the present, eclipsed the genial personality of the famous magician.

In the darkness of the shower-room he groped until his hands encountered the softness of a towel hanging from a bar. He took down the towel, stepped back to the connecting door, and waited there while the watchman's torch made patterns of light and shadows on the walls of the dressing-room.

As the man stepped through the door, the Ghost slid in behind him and raised the towel, extended between two hands.

"Who's th—"

The watchman got no farther. Down came the towel in front of his face, reducing his words to incomprehensible gurgles. A twist and a knot at the towel ends, and the Ghost shoved the struggling man away from him, turned back through the door and closed it after him. Back through the dressing-room and into the hall, where he closed the outer door and paused long enough to wedge it shut with a triangular block of rubber he took from his pocket.

LESS than a minute later he came into the dim, empty expanse of the stadium. The police had sped the crowd on their way in record time. The ring, now, with its powerful floodlights

blacked out, was only a pale square nesting at the bottom of the gray bowl. He descended the deserted aisle to the ring-side, carefully picked his way over upset chairs toward the spot where Tony Rex had fallen through the ropes. His tiny flashlight beamed along the wall of the ring platform, and for several minutes he searched among the chairs within a twenty-foot radius.

Then he moved around the rim of the platform to the opposite side and continued his methodical search. Finally, beneath one of the chairs, he found the red rubber mouthpiece which Benny Akers had knocked from Tony Rex's mouth in the first round.

Squatting on his heels, the Ghost subjected the mouthpiece to careful examination. There was a rip in the groove where the fighter's teeth would fit—so deep a rip that the upper and lower teeth would almost meet and thus receive scant protection. In fact, a sharp blow to the jaw might have caused the

hear the second's ugly chuckle.

"Now, let's have that mout'piece, wise guy!"

The Ghost's right hand slid limply along the right edge of his black coat, the heel of his palm pressing momentarily against a concealed gimmick originally intended to drop multiplying billiard balls. A small automatic dropped into his palm, though Mullin could not have been aware of the gun at the moment, for the simple reason that one side of the automatic—the side now uppermost—was painted a flesh color that matched the Ghost's palm.

The Ghost's legs shot out like coiled springs, feet pistoning to Mullin's ankles. Mullin came down on top of the Ghost, and it was then that the magician-detective deftly flipped the gun over. Perhaps Mullin saw the chill blue steel of the other side of the automatic an instant before the Ghost slammed the barrel of it to the second's temple. Mullin slumped, dead weight.

Coming: George Chance in CASE OF THE PHANTOM BRIDEGROOM

teeth to bite through and chip against each other.

A slight crunch on the concrete floor. The Ghost looked up quickly. Not ten feet from him was the burly hulk of a man with ears like small knobs at the sides of his egg-shaped bald head. It was Tiger Mullin, one of Tony Rex's seconds.

"Awright, mister. Hand it over. That's my mout'piece."

"Oh, it is?" said the Ghost quietly. "You know, it was my impression that it belonged to Tony Rex."

"Don't gimme none o' that, wise guy." The hulking figure took a menacing step forward. "I'll get it if I have to—"

Tiger Mullin apparently decided he would "have to." He closed in, but fast. The Ghost recoiled from his crouch in a backward spring that was not fast enough to ride the Tiger's blow. Mullin's fist crashed into the Ghost's chest and catapulted the magician-detective back against the ringside wall, winded and hurt.

A wave of dizziness swept over the Ghost. His lean body slumped down against the ringside platform and lay deceptively still. Dimly he could see Tiger Mullin crouching over him, could

The Ghost extricated himself from beneath Tiger Mullin, squatted beside the unconscious man, and made a hasty search of Mullin's pockets. He found keycase and matching wallet. No great amount of money in the wallet, but in one of the transparent pass compartments he found a snapshot of a girl—that same blond girl who had tried to snatch Tony Rex back from death with her kisses.

"You wanted that mouthpiece pretty bad, didn't you, Tiger?" he mused.

"Could be you're the lad who cut it."

He could not, however, immediately see why anyone would have deliberately put that cut in Rex's mouthpiece. It didn't quite make sense—unless, of course, the *second* mouthpiece had some strange and deadly significance.

Suppose the first mouthpiece had been deliberately cut so that Rex would be compelled to use another mouthpiece? And what had become of the second rubber teeth protector? It hadn't been in Rex's mouth when the blond girl had been bending over the fighter.

Had the girl snatched it? Or had it found its way into the possession of the sinister cross-eyed man who had been seated in front of Merry?

CHAPTER III

Mystery House

THE Ghost emerged from a Sport Palace exit on Tenth Avenue and headed for the corner of 6th Street where a lighted show window indicated an all-night drug store. His entrance attracted no particular attention from clerks and customers. He was, after all, only a thin man in a black suit, and everybody was excitedly discussing the sudden death of Tony Rex in the ring.

He passed to the back of the store and was walking along a row of luncheon stalls when he saw a familiar figure leaning against one of the telephone booths at the extreme rear—a man with a blue-white cadaverous-looking face that was ornamented by a waxed black mustache. Ralph Tinhorn Gabriel was one person who hadn't lost any money on the fight tonight. Gabriel was a sure-thing gambler, and, in the Ghost's opinion, that represented the lowest form of life.

The Ghost slipped into one of the luncheon booths. Tinhorn Gabriel was either waiting for a phone call or he intended to call somebody. The gambler had taken a cigarette from a pack. Instead of immediately lighting it, he bit off a good half of it, rolled paper and tobacco in his mouth a moment, spit it out on the floor. Then he lighted the remaining half, slid around the edge of the booth and in through the door which he closed behind him.

The Ghost darted from the luncheon stall and into the phone booth adjacent to the one occupied by Tinhorn Gabriel. From one of his secret pockets he removed a flat black plastic case to which was attached a wire that ended in a tiny flat phone receiver. The black case contained a microphone and battery operated amplifier of the sort used in hearing aids for deaf persons.

He held the plastic case against the thin wall that separated the two booths, and put the little phone to his ear. Turning battery current into the amplifier he built Gabriel's murmuring voice into something clearly audible.

"... you been, Iggy?" came Tinhorn Gabriel's voice. "Three times I called you and no dice.... Pal, when you hex a

guy you don't mess around, do you?... What do I mean?" He laughed. "Listen to the guy—what do I mean! Now, about that dough—"

Gabriel broke off, and for some time listened, injecting nothing but affirmatives. And then a hoarse oath broke from his lips.

"No! Don't go to the cops! I'll pay you tonight. After I collect." He laughed uneasily. "Not that you *could* take it to the cops and keep your nose clean, you cock-eyed rat!"

Gabriel hung up violently. The Ghost switched off his hearing device and returned it to his pocket. He was out of the booth in a flash at the same instant that Tinhorn Gabriel emerged from the booth next to him. The gambler gave the Ghost no more than a casual glance until the Ghost stepped in close and shoved his little automatic suggestively into Tinhorn's side.

"Wouldn't you like to have a nice strawberry icecream soda with me?" he invited in a mocking voice.

Gabriel's piercing black eyes shifted from the Ghost's face to the automatic which was all too close to him.

"What in thunder?" he muttered.

"Into that luncheon stall—quick!"

Gabriel swallowed ineffectually at a protruding Adam's apple and slid into the luncheon stall.

"No table service for the duration!" somebody at the soda fountain in the front of the store yelled. "Come and get it!"

Lack of table service was all to the Ghost's advantage. He and Tinhorn would not be interrupted. He got into the stall and sat opposite the gambler.

"Who the devil are you?" Gabriel's voice practically swagged.

THE Ghost gave the gambler a deadpan stare. His lips twisted back from the shell teeth. Magnificent control of facial muscles enabled him to tighten the flesh across skull bones. At the same time his left hand switched current into that green globe concealed in his scarf pin. Ghastly green light rayed upwards across his face.

And then the gambler knew!

As Gabriel stared in terror, fascinated by the grinning green death's head across the table from him, a chilly dew broke out on his forehead. He slid the length

of the bench and would have slipped from the stall if he could have managed it.

"Ah-ha," the Ghost warned. "Remember the little gun? It's watching you under the table, Tinhorn."

Gabriel's lower jaw sagged. Right now the shrewd gambler did not look as though he had sense enough to bet on a royal flush.

"So you paid a cross-eyed man named Iggy to sit in the front row at the fight tonight," the Ghost said. "A new kind of fix, eh? You must have cleaned up a small fortune on Akers with the betting odds so heavily favoring Tony Rex."

The gambler squirmed uneasily. "I don't know what you're talking about. Can I help it if a cross-eyed man sits in on the fight? Can I help it if Tony Rex thinks cock-eyes are the jinx?"

The Ghost's unblinking, hollow-eyed stare never left Gabriel's cadaverous face.

"Why was Rex superstitious about cross-eyed men?" he prodded.

"It's like this," Gabriel's attitude became suddenly fawning. He leaned across the table as though to give the Ghost a confidential tip on a horse. "The only time Rex really kissed the canvas for the count, there was a cock-eyes at the ringside. Then two years ago, Rex was working out in front of a crowd that came up to his training camp. Rex finishes a bout with his sparring partner, looks out at the spectators, and hanged if there isn't another cock-eyed man. Just five minutes after that Rex got a telegram saying his wife had been hurt in a car crash. So—" Gabriel shrugged, "to him a cross-eyed guy is the shadow behind the eight-ball."

"What happened to the second mouth-piece Rex used tonight?"

Gabriel shrugged again. "How should I know? I wasn't near the ringside."

"What about a blond girl named Dorothy Bishop? Know her?"

Gabriel sneered. "Just another blonde. She's crazy for Tony Rex, and Tony never would look at her." The gambler's black eyes lighted up. "Listen, Mr. Ghost. Rex had a second named Tiger Mullin. Don't quote me on this, but the Tiger goes for the Bishop dame in a large way, and she can't see anybody but Tony Rex."

"Interesting."

"And another thing. I happen to know that Sailor Mack Hollis was at Iggy Miggs' place yesterday afternoon."

"Intimating that Mack Hollis hired the cock-eyed guy to jinx Rex, huh?"

The Ghost watched Gabriel take a cigarette, bite it in two, and tongue the tobacco around in his mouth. He uttered a ghoulisn chuckle.

"You've got the soul of a stool pigeon, Gabriel," he said. "And it might interest you to know that the only other man I ever knew who chewed cigarettes, chewed his last one sitting in the electric chair. Could be you're headed in the same direction."

And with this unpleasant thought, the Ghost got out of the luncheon stall and went toward the back of the store. The last he saw of the gambler, Gabriel was hurrying from the store as though the devil were at his heels.

The Ghost entered a telephone booth and called Merry White. She gave him the word that Joe Harper had reported following the cross-eyed fight jinxer from the stadium to an address on 123rd Street. . . .

IT WAS close to midnight before the taxi in which the Ghost was riding slowed down for a traffic light at 123rd Street. The Ghost tossed a bill to the driver, hopped out, and crossing under the viaduct, walked swiftly toward Broadway. As a wartime caution, the street was lighted by a hooded lamp at each intersection that left the middle of the block in virtual darkness.

He walked along a solid row of old flat buildings that hugged the sidewalk, splashed his light experimentally upon one door. A sign reading,

FLATS FOR RENT

was mounted above the address number, and the Ghost knew that the place he was looking for was the next door down.

The door of the next building also carried a sign—an oblong board with black background and staring white letters:

DR. IGNACE MIGGS
The True Medium
Explore the Subconscious

Lessons In
Mediumship, Metaphysics
Telepathy & Mesmerism

Which was quite an array of talents for one little cock-eyed man known familiarly as "Iggy."

The Ghost clicked off his light and plunged into a black companionway between houses. Perhaps Joe Harper was watching the back door instead of the front. He turned left, came upon a short flight of wooden steps leading to the back door. No sign of Joe Harper or anyone else.

He climbed the steps and came onto a long porch which stretched across the rear and connected with a similar porch on the first house to the east. The back door of Iggy's place was locked, but an ordinary ten-cent skeleton pass key quickly eliminated that obstacle. He entered the darkness and closed the door quietly behind him.

The velvet darkness was laden with the oily-sweet odor of incense. Such spirit mediums as Iggy, he reflected whimsically, needed something of the sort to mask the fishy odor of their quackery.

Closing his fingers over the lens of his flashlight, he snapped the light on. The rays that seeped through his fingers disclosed a rumpled cot to the left of the door. A badly scarred chest of drawers stood against the far wall between two doors.

To the right was a sink, piled with kitchenware and dishes, and besides the sink a small cabinet with a two-burner gas hot-plate on top. On the hot-plate was a stew pan and beside it a carton of baking soda. Surely a teacher of metaphysics and mediumship wouldn't bother with so earthly a thing as indigestion!

The Ghost stepped to the stove, turned his filtered light ray into the pan. Inside was an inch of water and a threaded metal plug the size of a two-bit piece—the sort of a plug that is screwed to the lower curve of a sink drain trap. A fine thing to cook—the plumbing!

He stepped to the sink, stooped, and fingered the bottom of the drain trap. Yes, the threaded plug had come from Iggy's own sink. The Ghost straightened, crossed this room that seemed to comprise Iggy's living quarters, went through the door at the right of the chest of drawers, and on into a small storeroom littered with empty boxes and other trash.

Here there was a battered desk, a steel filing cabinet in which Iggy apparently kept "case histories" of the poor dopes who came to consult him—histories which such mediums frequently turned to blackmail uses. Above the file case was a small wall cabinet of the sort you would expect to find in a bathroom.

The Ghost's black-gloved hand yanked open the door of this wall cabinet. There, on shallow glass shelves were a number of bottles and vials—narcotics, hypnotics, barbitates, and similar drugs.

A DERISIVE grunt escaped the Ghost's thin lips. Iggy apparently was not above putting his patrons into a trance via the drug route. Odd he hadn't included chloral hydrate the standard "Micky Finn" in his collection. But wait!

The Ghost swung around, passed out of the storeroom and into Iggy's combined kitchen and bedroom. He went directly to the little gas stove and lighted the burner beneath the pan. In the back of his agile brain a vague idea was beginning to take shape.

He left the stove, went to the sink, and ran a gloved finger up into the drain trap through the hole at the bottom. Withdrawing his finger, he had collected quite a little grease and soap scum. He returned to the stove, tipped that finger into the warming water and held it there until the gummy stuff had dissolved.

Then he picked up the baking soda carton and shook a little of the contents into the pan.

He sniffed at the steam that was beginning to rise from the water and nodded his satisfaction.

Faintly detectible in the rising vapor was the sickening sweet odor of chloroform. Somebody had recently dumped a quantity of chloral hydrate down Iggy's sink. And somebody else, possibly Iggy himself, had detected the presence of the powerful sedative by boiling the drain pipe in a solution of baking soda—somebody with sufficient knowledge of chemistry to know that hot baking soda and chloral hydrate in solution will liberate pure chloroform.

The Ghost had just turned out the gas beneath the saucepan when he heard stumbling footsteps on the steps approaching the back porch. He switched

out his flashlight, took a step toward the door, stopped. The knob of the door turned, the door opened. A slim, blinding ray from a torch beamed into the room.

The Ghost flicked fingers to the cuff of his right sleeve. His slender, deadly knife dropped from its sleeve sheath into his hand. His left hand went out toward the sink, fingers closing on the knob handle of an aluminum pot cover. His hand that held the knife was lifted above his head as the man with the light stepped into the room.

He waited.

The light ray was on the move, turning in his direction.

Suddenly, when he knew discovery was imminent, the Ghost thrust the shiny pot lid directly into the ray of the other man's torch. The reflected light beam struck the other squarely in the face, illuminating the black beetle eyes and lean, wolfish features of Joe Harper. The heavy automatic in Joe's right hand swung like the gun on a battleship turret.

"Hold it, Joe!" the Ghost said sharply. "G. G.!" exploded from Joe's loose lips. His gun arm dropped limply. "Phew! You got me in a cold sweat, G. G. If you hadn't sung out just then, I'd have killed the goose that lays the golden eggs as sure as Christmas."

The Ghost put down the pot lid. He tossed his knife up through the ray of Joe's light, caught it by the hilt and returned it to his sleeve sheath.

"You weren't exactly on a safety spot yourself, my friend," he said.

Joe shivered at the thought. Reflected rays of his light showed Joe without his inevitable green hat. There was a bruise on his forehead centered by a dark clot of dried blood. His right hand trembled as he shook a cigarette out of the top of a pack and conveyed it to his lips.

"Well," said the Ghost, "let's have it. Where you been? Where's Iggy Miggs?"

"Iggy," Joe said, "could be one of two alternatives. Either he's a stiff or he's a guy who bops guys like me and tries to toss them in the river. Since you been here for a while, you can probably tell me which Iggy is."

"What the devil are you talking about? Who bopped you?"

JOE shrugged impatiently.

"I'm telling you, it was either Iggy or the other guy. Look, G. G. I tailed the cock-eyed guy from the stadium here. I hung around. After a while, Iggy showed himself at the back door. It's his landlady next door. He comes back and makes a phone call. Don't ask who he called. After another spell I am getting flat feet from my lonely vigil, and Iggy gets a phone call."

"From Tinhorn Gabriel," the Ghost put in.

"Could be. Time passes. It's a little after eleven when somebody comes to the front door and Iggy lets him in. No light, so I don't know who the caller was. I keep waiting. My vigil is irksome."

"Nuts to your vigil. Get on with it."

"So I go up to the front door of this place and walk in. It's dark. Nobody stops me. I stumble around through that screwy seance room of Iggy's, and I find a door. I open the door, and there it hangs."

"What hangs?"

"The corpse," Joe said coolly. "Sure, you noticed. From the door I can clearly see the shadow of a man hanging by his neck. But I don't know whether it's Iggy or the other guy, because right then I get bopped. I come to in the back end of a car heading for the Harlem River, I figure, and sure enough, the car stops near the Lenox Avenue bridge. Which is when I and a murderer have a falling out. I tried for a getaway, got shot at, and don't ask me who's at the other end of the gun, because in all the sound and fury nobody was passing out introductions."

"Where's this hanging corpse?" the Ghost demanded. "I haven't been through the flat yet. I only got here about ten minutes ago, and I've been occupied with my culinary pursuits."

Joe's lower jaw sagged and still, by some miracle, his cigarette remained clinging to his lower lip.

"G. G., you're slipping," he said. "You mean to tell me there's a corpse within a block of here and you haven't dug it up?"

Joe Harper led the way through the door at the left of the chest of drawers. They passed into Iggy's seance room which was large, complete with its semi-circle of chairs, and a small platform at

one end, screened away from the rest of the room by a gauze curtain.

Harper stepped to the end of the platform and behind the curtain. The Ghost followed him across to the other side of the room where he stopped with his hand on the knob.

"In here," Harper said, "and if it's not Iggy, then Iggy is the murderer."

He opened the door.

DIM night glow passing through a window of the room beyond cast a pale square of light on the opposite wall. This feeble illumination was immediately eclipsed by the rays of both the Ghost's and Joe's flashlights, and for a moment both men stood on the doorsill, staring into the room.

Then the deep-set eyes of the Ghost met the shiny black beetle eyes of Joe Harper. Joe's lips quirked into a sickly imitation of a smile.

"Yeah," he said. "I see."

"I don't," the Ghost rapped.

He stepped into the room. It was about as barren a place as he had ever been in. An ornate grill-work cabinet of red lacquered wood stood beneath the window—a "spirit" cabinet, the Ghost decided, of the sort used by mediums and magicians alike. It stood about two and a half feet from the floor and was about a foot square across the top. And that was the only piece of furniture in the room.

"Where's the corpse?" the Ghost asked.

Joe Harper swallowed. "Honest, G. G., I saw it. Right in that patch of light on the wall, I saw the shadow of a man hanging by his neck. I could see the rope, too!"

"Just a shadow, though."

Harper shivered. "You make it worse. Empty rooms don't cast shadows. Look! He could have been hanging from that drapery crane there above the window."

The drapery crane was, in fact, the only thing from which anything could have hung. The Ghost stepped to the window, put a foot on the sill, stepped up, and balanced himself there while he beamed his light across the top of the drapery crane. The crane was layered with dust. He got down.

"Joe," he said, "you were in a trance. No rope has been tied to this crane."

"I'm getting the blue-willies, G. G.

I tell you—". Joe broke off, stepped to the light switch beside the door. "Nobody's going to kid me. There's a corpse somewhere around here, and I'm going to find it. Let's get a little light on the subject."

He pressed the switch. There was the expected click but not the expected light. Joe muttered an oath.

"Shsh," the Ghost cautioned. "And turn off your torch, Joe."

"What—"

"Listen!"

Footsteps sounded on the stone steps at the front of the building.

In darkness, the Ghost turned and hurriedly retraced his steps through the seance room. Joe was at his elbow. They stopped, listening. There was no fumbling with lock and key. Whoever was out in front simply pushed open the door and walked in.

Footsteps sounded hollowly in the hall. Then the door of the seance room opened and somebody crossed on tiptoe to go through the door that led to Iggy's living quarters.

The Ghost felt a tug at his coat sleeve as he stood there in the dark of the seance room.

"Shall we take him?" Joe whispered.

"No. Just wait. If he leaves the house, tail him."

They could hear the prowler in Iggy's kitchen-bedroom, opening a door—the door of the store-room. There was a faint show of light through the open door and then the sound of glass clinking on glass. In his mind's eye, the Ghost pictured the glass shelf in that wall cabinet above the file case in Iggy's storeroom.

Then footsteps traced out of the store-room, across the combination kitchen, and to the back door.

HARDLY had the prowler stepped out onto the back porch than Joe Harper was on the move. As for the Ghost, he went into the kitchen-bedroom, turned through the door of the store-room, closed the door behind him, and switched on his flashlight. He reached over the top of the file case and toward the wall cabinet, then paused.

On the front edge of the file case—the part of the case that all but touched the Ghost's lean middle as he reached for the wall cabinet—was a thin line of pale yellow powder. The Ghost stooped,

sniffed at the yellow powder, and at once recognized it as rosin. A thin smile curled his lips. He was quite certain about the identity of the prowler now.

Opening the wall cabinet, he rayed his light along the shelf of drugs. There he spotted a small, cylindrical vial that had not been there before. It was labeled
CHLORAL HYDRATE

He took the bottle from the shelf. A wax seal had secured the cork, but this had been broken and a part of the contents removed. Gloved fingers uncorked the vial, and the Ghost sniffed cautiously at the white powder within. He frowned. Maybe it was chloral hydrate, as labeled, but the white powder had the unmistakable bitter-almond odor of cyanide.

He recorked the bottle, then ran an exploratory finger along the tubular paper label. Grasping the bottle at the top, he slid the tight-fitting label from the vial. Half-way down the bottle was a hairline crack that extended all the way around.

He nodded slowly. Before the original seal had been broken, somebody had slid off that label, cut the thin glass, breaking the vial in two. The original chloral hydrate had been poured down the drain in Iggy's kitchen and cyanide substituted in the bottle. The two halves had been carefully rejoined with transparent cement, and the label replaced—all without disturbing the original wax seal at the top of the bottle.

The murder of Tony Rex had actually been accomplished right here in Iggy's house of mystery, regardless of where the actual death had taken place. Three grains of cyanide placed in some crevice in that second mouthpiece Tony Rex had used would have done the trick.

Now the purpose of the cut in the first mouthpiece was clear—to compel Tony Rex to use the second mouthpiece sometime during the fight. It would not have been good practice to put the poison in the first mouthpiece, because if Tony had died during that first "feeler" round, murder would have been immediately suspected.

The killer had tried to give the impression of accidental death. After all, fighters did die in the ring, and cyanide could easily make it appear he had died of a heart ailment.

The Ghost left the house by the back door, and sprinted up through the com-

panionway between houses to the street. He looked both ways, saw the figure of a man coming toward him out of the murk and from the direction of Broadway. Joe Harper? He walked to meet the advancing figure.

"G. G.," Joe's nasal voice greeted him, "we got the breaks this time. The guy went three blocks up the street and into the second floor flat of the place on the corner."

"Right. The guy is Tiger Mullin, Tony Rex's second."

"Huh?" Joe was incredulous. "You got cat's eyes?"

"He had rosin on the front of his clothes," the Ghost explained as they hurried off in the direction the prowler had taken. "Rosin from dead Tony Rex's shoes. Remember at the end of the first round Tiger Mullin was the second who gave Tony's legs a rubbing? Ever notice how a fighter will plant his foot in his second's tummy when the second rubs a leg? Well, the rosin from the fighter's shoe clings to the second's middle—"

"Okay, okay, Mr. Sherlock. So it's Tiger Mullin. Now what?"

THE Ghost remained silent until they came to the apartment building which Joe indicated. Then he told Harper to stick around. He coolly approached the front door.

A few seconds later, Mr. Tiger Mullin answered a knock at the door of his second floor flat. Eyes somewhat blurred by drink, he peered out into the dark hall at the head of the steps, and for a moment thought that the whisky had played tricks on his ears. There was apparently no one in the hall.

Just as Mullin would have closed the door, he saw a faint glow of green light in the dark of the hall. Mullin stared, with gaping mouth, as the glow became more intense, illuminating a grinning skull of a face that was moving slowly toward him.

Tiger Mullin retreated. He walked backward half-way across his own living room and then it must have occurred to him that he would have been smarter if he had slammed the door and locked out the apparition. He took a quick step forward, and at that moment was aware that his thinking was both too little and too late. The Green Ghost

stepped into the room.

Mullin shook his head. "Huh-uh. Go 'way. I don't know you."

A graveyard chuckle from the Ghost. "But you *will* know me, Tiger Mullin. Where is that second mouthpiece Tony Rex used in the ring tonight?"

"I dunno. So help me, I dunno. It wasn't in his mout' when they brought him back to the dressing-room."

"Mullin, you killed Tony Rex. You doctored that second mouthpiece with poison. You made the first mouthpiece defective. You put a knife slit in the second mouthpiece, poured some of the contents of this bottle into the slit."

The Ghost had produced the bottle which fifteen minutes before Tiger Mullin had returned to the shelf in Iggy's storeroom.

"Naw!" Mullin gasped. "It was Iggy. Iggy gimme the bottle, paid me to doctor the mout'piece. He said it was just the old Micky Finn and would make the champ groggy. The bottle was all sealed when he give it to me. How was I to know it was poison?"

The Ghost's gleaming knife dropped from the sleeve sheath into the Ghost's gloved hand. Mullin stared at the cold steel and shook his head in mute protest.

"Mullin, I can kill you. You've no idea how beautifully I can get away with murder. Only it wouldn't be murder, would it, if I took a life for a life?"

"Wait! Don't stick me! I'll give you the straight goods. Day before yesterday, in that tavern on Tenth Avenue across from the Sports Palace, Iggy Miggs had a talk wit' me. Tinhorn Gabriel was fixing the fight, see? He couldn't buy Tony Rex, so he hired Iggy to sit on the ringside and jinx Tony. Tony thinks cockeyed guys are the jinx, see?"

"There was a guy once in this town made a fancy living just putting the jinx on fighters, and Iggy got ambitions he could be a professional fight jinxer himself. It'd all depend on what kind of a reputation he made for himself on this job. He wanted this job to be good, see?"

"Vaguely," the Ghost said. "Go on."

"For publicity, Iggy sends Sailor Mack Hollis a phony note saying the Evil Eye will hex Tony Rex tonight. If Tony kissed the canvas, Iggy said his fortune was made. Maybe Iggy bought

me too many drinks. Maybe I was just crazy, but I said I'd put the dope in Tony's mout'piece so he'd flop tonight. Just before the fight, Iggy gimme that bottle you got, and I doctored Tony's extra mout'piece and fixed his first mout'piece so he'd have to use the extra—"

"Thinking," the Ghost cut in, "that a certain blond lovely named Dorothy Bishop would maybe begin to notice you if Rex flopped tonight."

MULLIN'S egg-shaped head sagged a little.

"Well, heck, what was the sense of Dorot'y going for Tony? Tony always stuck wit' his wife, even if she is nuts—"

Tiger Mullin checked himself. A sheepish grin spread across his battered face.

"That's strictly hush-hush," he said.

"You mean," the Ghost said, "that Mrs. Tony Rex isn't just an invalid? She's actually insane?"

"Tony never wanted it known," Mullin said. "She's been off her top since the accident two—" He paused, cocked his egg-shaped head on one side. Footsteps were ringing on the stair outside the apartment—panicky, pelting footsteps, too light for a man's. Hard heels clicked in the hall, knuckles pattered frantically on the door.

The Ghost stepped to the door of a bedroom, walking backward, his hollow eyes on Mullin.

"Open the door," he directed. "Don't try to slip out. Don't give it away that I'm here. I'll be watching every move."

He stepped back into the bedroom, swung the door all but closed. Mullin stepped to the front door of the flat, opened it. Through the narrow aperture, the Ghost saw blond and beautiful Dorothy Bishop enter the room.

"Dorot'y!" A broad grin of pleasure spread across Mullin's lips.

The girl wrung gloved hands, and anxious blue eyes toured the room.

"Tiger, have you got a phone? I been running all over, trying to find a drug store that's open. And then I remembered where you lived."

"About time you remembered," Mullin said. "You been giving me the go-by plenty."

"Tiger!" The girl raised her hands in protest. "Don't start that. Especially

not tonight. I—I've been through so much, with poor Tony practically dying in my arms—" She checked a trembling lower lip with visible effort. "Tiger, you've got to help me. Mack Hollis sent me to phone the police. About fifteen minutes ago, I guess, Mack and I went to Iggy Miggs' place—"

"You and Mack?" Tiger said through clenched teeth. "Why, I'll moider the bum!"

"Tiger, please listen to me. And don't be like that. Mack's almost old enough to be my father, and besides he's got a wife. About an hour ago he came to my apartment in the Bronx, and we talked about what happened to poor Tony. Mack's trying to find out who did it. Tony was murdered, you know. Poisoned. He asked me questions, and I remember seeing this cross-eyed Iggy Miggs right in the front row. So Mack and I decided we'd pay a call on Iggy."

"Okay—now what about the cops?" Tiger wanted to know.

"That's what I was telling you! We got there about ten or fifteen minutes ago. Mack rang Iggy's doorbell and couldn't raise anybody. The front door was locked. We went around to the back and in that way. We searched the place, went through that creepy seance room, and I opened a door. So I was the one who discovered the body—"

"What body?" Tiger demanded. "Calm down, baby."

"Why, Iggy Miggs' body! Tiger, I'll never forget as long as I live. I opened the door of that room!" The girl shuddered, and her eyes grew round. "I opened the door and there on the wall I could see that awful shadow. A man, Tiger—a man hanging from a rope! I screamed, jumped back. Mack went into the room. 'It's Iggy!' he called to me. And told me to phone the police."

"Iggy's got phones," Tiger said. "Two of 'em."

"Yes," she said. "One in the seance room, and another back in his living quarters. But the wires on both phones were cut. I ran out of the house to go to a drug store and phone, but they're all closed."

"This," said the Green Ghost from the door of the bedroom, "is where I came in."

Dorothy gave vent to a little squeal. Tiger Mullin snorted.

HE STEPPED from the room. He had turned off the tiny lamp that was responsible for the greenish glow about his face. His lips covered the yellow shell teeth and the dead-pan expression was gone from his face. He was once more the thin man in a black hat.

Dorothy Bishop gasped her surprise. Tiger Mullin was perhaps equally startled at the change that had come over the Ghost's face. Perhaps he remembered that face from the encounter he and the Ghost had had at the stadium that night, for he reflectively rubbed the back of his skull where the blow from the Ghost's gun had landed.

"I think we'll not call the police just yet," the Ghost said. "I think we'll all just walk over to Iggy's place."

"You!" Dorothy gasped, pointing a finger at the Ghost. "You killed Tony Rex! Why else would you want to prevent me from calling the police?"

"Young lady," the Ghost said quietly, "the people I've killed haven't been nice people at all. And somehow I've had the impression all along that Tony Rex was nice people. So if you will take Tiger Mullin's arm, and both of you proceed directly in front of me, neither of you will get hurt."

Tiger and the blonde hesitated only a moment, then joined arms and left the apartment. Down the stairs they went, with the Green Ghost following close behind. In the entryway of the building, Joe Harper lounged against a row of brass mailbox plates. He didn't so much as look up from the cigarette he was lighting as the Ghost passed, but he could not have missed the Ghost's whispered order to follow at some distance.

CHAPTER V

Never Kill a Ghost

AS THE Ghost and his companions approached Iggy Miggs' house of mystery, the front door was opened by Sailor Mack Hollis. The fat fight promoter looked out anxiously from the lighted hallway.

"You've finally found the minions of the law, Dorothy?" he called quietly to Dorothy Bishop. "What took you so long?"

Dorothy and Tiger went up the steps with the Ghost close behind. Mack Hollis' eyes shifted to the Ghost and he was not quite sure whether or not he ought to smile.

"A precinct detective, no doubt?" he inquired.

"He's the Green Ghost," Tiger Mullin cut in. "Don't let the pan fool you. And don't you fool wit' him, Mack."

The announcement resulted in at least two of Hollis' chins sliding down over the front of his collar. And then he stepped back from the door and his thick lips again smiled uncertainly.

"I have heard of the Green Ghost, but I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting him."

He put out a plump hand which the Ghost chose to ignore.

"Where's Miggs?" the Ghost demanded.

Mack Hollis inclined his head.

"Miss Bishop and I had the extreme misfortune to—"

"I know," the Ghost cut in. "Just show me. Miss Bishop, and you too, Tiger, go right on in."

Mack Hollis took wallowing steps ahead of them into the big seance room. Here he pointed to the door of the room in which Joe Harper had sworn he had seen the shadow of a hanging man.

"It isn't a pleasant sight," Hollis said. "It would be especially unpleasant for Miss Bishop."

The Ghost stepped ahead of the others, went to the door of the room, and flung it open. On the wall to the left was a square of faint light from the window, and in the square of light was the dim silhouette of a man hanging by the neck from a rope—just as Joe Harper had seen it well over an hour ago!

He went into the room, turned to the window, and switched on his flashlight. Ugly little Iggy Miggs was suspended by the cord of his own bathrobe from the heavy metal drapery crane above the window. The spirit cabinet placed beneath the window, a little to the left of Iggy's dangling feet, might have served as the hangman's platform.

The Ghost stepped up on the sill of the window and looked at the crane for the second time that evening. Then he looked at the cord. The noose was a running bowline knot, a bit unusual for hangings, but entirely adequate.

He stepped back, stooped, and opened the grilled door of the spirit cabinet. It was empty, as spirit cabinets presumably must be. Then he jerked off a glove and touched Iggy's hand with bare fingers. The corpse was quite warm. Death had occurred only a short time before. Yet all that had happened in this room had been foretold by a shadow over an hour before!

"Could be," he mused, "that Joe Harper is getting psychic."

A doorbell rang. The Ghost turned back into the seance room. Mack Hollis stood there, smoking. Out in the hall beyond, he could see Tiger Mullin and Dorothy Bishop, both staring at the front door. The Ghost walked past Mack, into the hall, and to the door which he opened.

TINHORN GABRIEL, the surething gambler, stood on the threshold. He took one look at the Ghost, heeled around, and would have dived down the steps had not the Ghost caught him by the coat tails.

"It's Tinhorn!" Tiger Mullin said from behind the Ghost.

"Yes, yes," the Ghost said mockingly as he pulled Gabriel into the hall. "The party wouldn't be complete without Gabriel."

Sailor Mack Hollis ambled into the hall, peeling the cellophane from a cigar. His thick lips curled into a sneer as he saw the gambler.

"I think it would be interesting to find out how much of the filthy lucre you cleaned up on the fight tonight," Mack said. He rolled the cigar wrapper into a ball and dropped it into the breast pocket of his coat.

"You wipe your own nose!" Gabriel snarled.

"You come here to pay Iggy off, Tinhorn?" Tiger Mullin said.

"None of anybody's darn business!"

Dorothy Bishop wheeled to Mack Hollis. "Gabriel could have killed Tony," she declared. "I mean, he would have so he could win money on the fight."

"Miss Bishop," the Ghost said quietly, "I would like to remind you that everybody in this room had motive to kill Tony Rex. Yes, even you, since hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. As for opportunity, that also may be equal. You see, Iggy Miggs thought that he gave

Tiger Mullin a bottle of chloral hydrate with which to drug Tony Rex. Actually, somebody slipped into Iggy's house and cleverly opened that bottle of chloral and substituted cyanide. I think it is only a matter of a short time until we will know who that murderer is."

He stepped to the front door, opened it, then turned to them again.

"I won't be gone a moment. And need I remind you that there is a murderer in this room?"

The Ghost went out onto the steps and uttered a shrill whistle. Joe Harper emerged from the darkness across the street, joined the Ghost on the steps.

"Joe, you said that while you were watching Iggy's place, Iggy left the house by the back door, went over to the landlady's place next door?"

"Right, G. G. He wasn't there five minutes."

"Okay. I think you'll have to wake the good woman. I want to know why Iggy called on her tonight. And while you're there, you might put in a phone call to Police Commissioner Standish. I've got the murderer..."

In the gray hours of the morning, two uniformed police opened the doors of the late Ignace Miggs' seance room and ushered in Dorothy Bishop, Mack Hollis, Tinhorn Gabriel, and Tiger Mullin.

The four of them took chairs in the semi-circle that faced the curtained platform on which Iggy had once gone into his fake trances and produced his fraud spirits. In front of the platform stood the spirit cabinet which had formerly been the only article of furniture in the barren room where Iggy had kicked his way into the next world.

The room was dimly lighted. No sooner were the suspects seated than the police retired, closing the door of the seance room behind them. Through the dark gauze curtain that was drawn over the platform, the four suspects could see the green glowing death's head of the Ghost's face. They were not at ease. They were not intended to feel at ease.

FOR a long moment, there was no sound within the room except the creak of the folding chairs on which the four suspects sat.

Then the hollow, mocking voice of

the Ghost filled the room.

"You have been detained for two hours while the police and myself have made a thorough search of the premises, and we now have sufficient evidence to convict one of you of the murders of Tony Rex and Iggy Miggs. We have found the second mouthpiece which Tony Rex used in the fight and which, I presume, might be called the murder weapon. As Tiger Mullin will testify, Tiger himself cut a gash in that mouthpiece and filled the gash with a white powder which Iggy Miggs had given him."

Tiger Mullin's voice cut through the Ghost's solemn intonations.

"I tell you, I didn't know it was poison!"

"You will all have a chance to make denials in court," the voice of the Ghost continued. "The mouthpiece was found in Iggy's kitchen cabinet where Iggy himself no doubt placed it. You will remember that Tony fell through the ropes of the fight ring and practically in Iggy's lap. There was plenty of time for Iggy to snatch the mouthpiece and make off with it. Iggy knew, before the police knew, that this was murder. He knew that chloral hydrate could not have caused Tony's sudden death.

"Iggy brought the mouthpiece here and discovered that the substance inserted in the gash in the mouthpiece was cyanide, and not chloral. Iggy began to figure out how and where the switch of chemicals could have been made. He knew that he had not been in this house the afternoon before the fight—a fact which the landlady next door will verify. It was therefore possible that someone had entered this house and actually performed the chemical switch here.

"Iggy then examined the drain trap of his sink, learned that chloral hydrate had been poured down the drain. His surmise was correct; the switch had been made in this house. He went next door, checked with his landlady, and learned that during the afternoon two men had arrived and left Iggy's house separately. One was Mack Hollis, and the other was Tinhorn Gabriel."

"I admit that," Mack Hollis said gruffly. "My wife has been coming here for some time now to consult with Iggy about the spirit of her dead mother. I don't take any stock in such things, and

I came here yesterday afternoon to tell Iggy that if he so much as spoke to my wife again, I'd knock his head off."

"Our search of the house verifies the fact that your wife was coming to see Iggy," the Ghost replied. "Her name is mentioned frequently in Iggy's records. Gabriel, would you care to tell why you came here yesterday afternoon?"

"You go to blazes!" Gabriel said. "You can't prove a blasted thing."

"You came here," the Ghost persisted, "because you wanted to make sure Iggy was going to carry through his promise and jinx Tony Rex. Assured of that, you could place your money on Benny Akers."

"But to get back to Iggy's actions of the evening. After he had checked with his landlady, it must have occurred to Iggy that someone had overheard him talking with Tiger Mullin about doping Tony Rex. Tiger had admitted that this subject was discussed in the tavern across from the Sports Palace, and it's highly probable that Iggy remembered whether it was Tinhorn Gabriel or Mack Hollis whom he might have seen in the tavern at that time, and who, consequently, might have overheard the plan.

"Knowing who had actually killed Tony Rex, Iggy Miggs called the murderer on the phone and threatened him with exposure. The murderer came promptly to Iggy's house, but not with a roll of hush-money for Iggy. The first thing the killer did was to drug Iggy and conceal him in a little cubby hole in the base of this platform on which I am seated. Next, he must have cut the wires on both telephones—a necessary precaution if his plan was to succeed."

THE murderer got stealthily out of his chair. His hand dropped into the pocket of his coat and closed on the butt of a revolver. His hand closed quite tightly, because from the grip of that weapon he derived a certain amount of self-assurance.

His eyes narrowed on the leering green deathhead face that had been speaking to them from behind the gauze curtain. It would be quite a trick to kill from this distance.

The murderer pulled the gun from his pocket and took a stealthy step forward. It was quite dark in the room and every-

body else was concentrating on the babbling from the lips in that green face behind the curtain.

The murderer began to feel quite cool about the whole thing. There really wasn't any proof against him so far. The Ghost had the general gist of the thing, but nothing that could hold in court. The thing was, that if the Ghost did produce proof, then the Ghost must die!

"Why didn't the murderer kill Iggy and be done with it?" Dorothy Bishop's voice asked, out of the darkness.

"My dear Miss Bishop," the Ghost replied, "you should know that. He wanted to have you as an alibi, and the killer's alibi depended entirely upon your discovering the shadow of the corpse before Iggy was actually a corpse! Confusing, perhaps? You've heard of future events casting shadows, haven't you?"

As the Ghost's voice drifted into silence, a square of pale light suddenly appeared on the wall of the seance room. It was like moonlight falling through a window, except that there wasn't a window in the room. And in the center of the square was the silhouette of a hanging man!

Dorothy Bishop shattered the silence with a scream.

"It's Iggy! It's Iggy's shadow, just as I saw it when I opened the door of that room!"

"Don't be alarmed," the Ghost said quietly. "There is a projector in the spirit cabinet in front of the stage. Iggy's projector which he must have used to throw weird shadows into columns of incense smoke and thus produce phony spirits. In the projector is a glass slide with a crude drawing in wax pencil on its surface. It's the drawing you see on the wall—not anybody's corpse."

The murderer got down on hands and knees and crawled between chairs. The Ghost was breaking down the murderer's alibi, was he? Well, he was talking himself into a grave. He would never live to offer any kind of proof. There hadn't been any clues, and no mistakes.

Of course, there was that worrisome business of the premature discovery of the shadow on the wall. Curse Joe Harper, anyway, butting in at a time like that. But then who was Joe Harper? An ex-pitchman, ex-bookie, ex-vaude-

ville agent, ex-everything. A no-good who wouldn't be carrying tales to the police, because Joe Harper was not on speaking terms with the coppers.

And then it suddenly came into the mind of the murderer that maybe Joe Harper was the Green Ghost. It didn't seem possible, of course. The killer had seen Joe Harper knocking around Broadway for a long time. But then if it so happened that Joe was the Ghost—well, this would be killing two birds with one stone, so to speak.

"Of course," the Ghost's voice continued, "you realize that the spirit cabinet was in the room where Iggy was hanged. And when you, Miss Bishop, opened the door of that room, the projector was in operation. You saw only the shadow of the hanging man, and naturally presumed that there was a hanging man. You would naturally testify that you had discovered the body, which would mean that Iggy had been hanged before you arrived. Actually, at the time you opened that door and saw the hanging shadow, Iggy was still alive, though unconscious and hidden in the hole beneath the stage."

"There goes the alibi," the murderer thought. "Now he'll be naming names. But there won't be any proof. No proof at all."

"Mack Hollis hanged Iggy," the Ghost went on, "after he had sent you for the police, Miss Bishop. You understand now why he had, on his previous visit, cut the phone wires? And before you got back with Tiger Mullin and me, Hollis had removed the projector from the spirit cabinet and concealed it in the cubby hole where before he had hidden Iggy."

"Perhaps, Miss Bishop, you can now understand why Hollis insisted that you enter by the back door. The main light switch is on the back porch, and he closed the switch before you entered, thus turning on the projector.

"He had turned off the house current at the end of his previous visit because he had already had one experience with the premature discovery of the shadow of the hanging man. A fellow by the name of Joe Harper had intruded just before Hollis was ready to leave for Miss Bishop's apartment, and except for Mr. Harper's good fortune, Hollis would have added another murder to his list."

MACK HOLLIS was now within ten feet of the stage. He straightened a little, sitting back on his heels. His gun was ready, leveled at the glowing, skull-like face behind the drapery. The mouth of the Ghost was open to speak again.

"Mack, you've a better motive than anybody else for killing Tony Rex. Before Rex died he said something about having everything fixed so you could take care of 'Lucy.' He meant you could take care of Mrs. Rex. Mrs. Rex isn't just an invalid. She's hopelessly insane. Imagine what you could accomplish as trustee of a million dollar estate with the real beneficiary hopelessly insane!

"You made one huge mistake, Mack, in addition to the fact that your patent alibi was accidentally smashed even before you needed it. In hanging Iggy, you didn't use a slip-knot or a hangman's knot. You used the running bowline, which happens to be the most common knot of its kind used by seafaring men. They don't call you 'Sailor' Mack Hollis for nothing, do they?"

Mack Hollis came cautiously to his feet and drew a careful bead.

"I'll answer that with lead, Ghost!"

He pulled the trigger once, twice. And even before the roar of the shots had died away, a chill hand, a thin strong hand, closed on Mack's gun wrist. Mack jerked, and at the back of his neck he felt the prick of a knife point.

"Never kill a ghost, Mack," the voice of the Green Ghost said over Mack's shoulder. "Like crime, it doesn't pay."

Mack Hollis made one final, desperate effort to bring his gun around, to kill this man or devil who could be in two places at once. But with a deft twist of the wrist, the Ghost disarmed him, and gone with the gun was all of Mack Hollis' courage.

Police were pouring in through the door of the seance room, and there was not much Hollis could do except put out his hands for the cuffs.

Some moments later, when the seance room had been cleared, the Green Ghost stepped behind the curtain that hung in front of the stage. A "talking" skull of plastic material stood on a small table back there, and in front of the skull was the Ghost's flashlight with a piece of green cellophane over the lens.

The skull was one of Iggy's properties

and doubtless he had found it useful in his spirit seances, for the hinged jaw could be operated by means of a silk string from some distance away.

Had Mack Hollis seen the skull, had he known what a truly wonderful ventriloquist the Green Ghost was, he would perhaps have realized that the Ghost had been behind him throughout the session,

and never at any time more than a few feet away.

As the Ghost reached over to regain his flashlight, he saw two neat bullet-holes not two inches apart in the head of the plastic skull.

A little shudder raced across the Green Ghost's lean shoulders.

It had been a close call.



Dan Fowler, Ace of the F. B. I., goes into rapid action when sudden doom strikes the mining pits—creating havoc and imperilling war production—in DEATH STOPS THE COAL, a smashing complete novel by Laurence Donovan in the Winter issue of

G-MEN DETECTIVE

Now on Sale **10¢** at All Stands

MY, YOUR
TECHNIQUE'S
SMOOTH!

SO'S MY CHEEK-
THANKS TO KEEN,
STAR BLADES!

6NX PROCESS

DOUBLE EDGE

4 for 10¢

6NX PROCESS

SINGLE EDGE

RATS ARE SMART

By ROBERT WALLACE

Mike the Mouse Didn't Even Like Cheese!



DOWN on his knees, hidden in the dark parlor of the old house, Mike Dawson grinned. The gang wouldn't be calling him "Mike the Mouse" when they heard about *this* job he'd pulled all by himself. Those guys thought he didn't have brains.

"I'll show 'em," he muttered. "Once I get my hands on all the stuff old Dan'l Hardley's hid in this house I'll be settin' pretty."

He heard heavy footsteps in the room over his head. The old man was getting ready for bed. That was fine! He didn't want to tangle with Hardley, if he could help it.

"And there's nobody else in the house with the old miser," he thought with satisfaction. "Mmm—call me Mike the Mouse, will they? And I don't even like cheese."

The window blind was up, and he could see the street. There was nobody in sight.

Restless, waiting, he lighted a cigarette, very careful to keep the glow screened.

Upstairs, he heard some clicks, and a rumbling voice.

What was old Hardley doing? Mumbling his prayers?

Mike Dawson grinned again, pleased with himself. It took a smart guy to catch on like he had.

And all he'd had to go on was that grocer talking to a customer about the old man.

"Yeah, guards it with his life," the grocer had said. "Yes, sir, old Dan Hardley sure has his own way of doing things. Always been like that—doesn't believe in banks, either."

That had been three days ago. Since

then Mike Dawson had trailed Hardley and watched until he had learned all he could about the old man. Peering through the windows he had seen how careful Hardley was always to keep a certain closet in the dining room securely locked.

That would be the place—sure! That was where the old guy hid his dough. But tonight Mike the Mouse was going to get that money.

MIKE punched out his cigarette. No longer did he hear footsteps upstairs. Time to go!

Maybe he didn't like his nickname, but he stole into the dining room as softly as any mouse. He drew out a flashlight and slipped to the closet door. It was locked, but he opened it with a skeleton key.

Inside the closet, curtains hid some shelves.

Mike Dawson reached beneath the curtains—and yelped sharply. The heavy steel spring of a rat-trap had clamped down on his fingers. Trying to shake free of the pinching spring, he pushed the curtains aside with the flashlight, and cursed roundly. All that was on those shelves were boxes and packages of cheese.

Suddenly Mike was startled by the sound of approaching footsteps.

"There he is, Officer!" shouted a cracked old voice behind him. "I knew somebody was in the house when I smelled cigarette smoke! That's why I phoned the police. I never smoke myself."

Old Daniel Hardley's voice rose angrily. "And he was trying to steal my cheese that I used up every one of my red points from week to week to get and keep! The rat!"

"Mouse," Mike Dawson said bleakly, as the officer strode toward him. "Rats are smart."

A SHORT SHORT STORY COMPLETE ON THIS PAGE

WITHOUT ERROR

By RAY CUMMINGS

*John Chace Planned the Perfect Murder, and
Made Sure That He Removed All Evidence!*

JOHN CHACE had the small book, "Modern Methods of Positive Identification" propped up on his knees as he slumped back in the train seat. But he was

not reading it. The pages had faded so that he seemed to see through them and out to the little cottage.

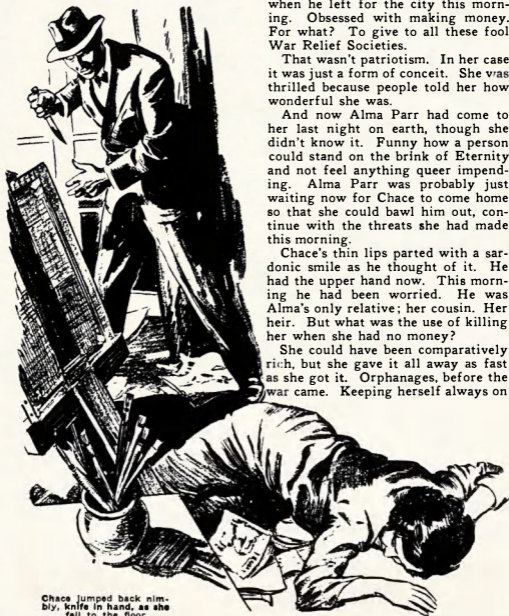
She would be there now, alone. Making sketches for her posters, probably. That's what she had been doing when he left for the city this morning. Obsessed with making money. For what? To give to all these fool War Relief Societies.

That wasn't patriotism. In her case it was just a form of conceit. She was thrilled because people told her how wonderful she was.

And now Alma Parr had come to her last night on earth, though she didn't know it. Funny how a person could stand on the brink of Eternity and not feel anything queer impending. Alma Parr was probably just waiting now for Chace to come home so that she could bawl him out, continue with the threats she had made this morning.

Chace's thin lips parted with a sardonic smile as he thought of it. He had the upper hand now. This morning he had been worried. He was Alma's only relative; her cousin. Her heir. But what was the use of killing her when she had no money?

She could have been comparatively rich, but she gave it all away as fast as she got it. Orphanages, before the war came. Keeping herself always on



Chace jumped back nimbly, knife in hand, as she fell to the floor

the edge of being broke, so that she had to quibble about Chace's allowance and harp all the time about him getting a job and supporting himself.

That was up to this morning. Alma Parr had a sizable amount of money coming to her now, though she didn't yet know it herself. Chace had found the letter to her from the Art Calendar Concern. He had taken it this morning from the little mail-box out by the fence, had read it as he went down the road to get the morning train for the city.

Those pastel girl heads which Alma had been making so industriously at the rate of nearly one a week for a couple of years—the whole works were sold now. Forty-five hundred cash, and a royalty which ought to bring a good bit more than that in the next year.

NOW was the time to do it! Chace had carefully destroyed the letter. That money would come to him, as her heir. No opportunity for her to give it away. And the police wouldn't suspect anything, wouldn't hold it against him that he was the heir. There wouldn't be anything worth a hoot now, to inherit.

And then, when the excitement was all over, the Art Company would unexpectedly kick in. It would be John Chace who would sign that contract.

His mind flung ahead. He and Vivian—a trip up through the Rockies, maybe. And then a little apartment in New York. And that bunch of paintings which Alma had never yet offered for sale—after her death, and with the publicity of her war posters, they would be worth quite a bit. An auction, after the war—that might bring him another twenty-five thousand.

"I see you're still nuts on fingerprints, eh, Johnny?"

The voice jerked Chace from his roving thoughts. The blue-uniformed figure of old McGuire, the conductor, loomed in the aisle beside him.

"Sure am, Mac." Chace riffled the book pages. "You know, since that Bertillon guy, they've done a lot in classifying prints. And finding 'em. Making 'em show up where you'd least expect 'em."

He pointed to a page of fingerprint illustrations.

"Want a lesson, Mac? Take a look. There's a double, or twinned loop. This one, see? They call that a whorl. Over here—that's the simple loop. Whatever combination of 'em you've got on your different fingers—well, there's nobody else in the world got just the same."

Chace had always been fascinated by fingerprints, even back to those days in his 'teens, when he had decided he wanted to be a detective and had answered some ads offering to teach him. He was convinced that more criminals were caught by leaving some identification of themselves on the victim, or at the scene of the crime, than in any other way.

Well, with Alma Parr now, nothing like that would happen. He certainly had had enough training so that he would keep his mind on it.

"You'd oughter write a book on your own theories," Mac observed, with a grin.

"Isn't so funny," Chace retorted. "Matter of fact, I've often thought that I will."

This argument with Mac was just what he had planned to have happen, before the train got to Spring Lake. Mac would remember that Chace had been on it. And that the train was late, which now Chace knew it was.

"Say, don't this old milk wagon of yours ever run on time?" Chace asked. "How late are we? What'd you do, take the engineer out to supper back there at Valley Crossing?"

The conductor consulted his big nickel watch.

"Only about eight minutes," he said. "Oh, Thursday nights we generally get hung up a little at the Valley Crossing."

"Thursday nights? That's right, this *is* Thursday, isn't it? So we'll be at Spring Lake by ten-thirty, you think?"

Mac was convinced they would. Thursday night—the Spring Lake depot at ten-thirty. Mac would not forget that, if the police ever had occasion to ask him.

The conductor moved on through the train, and Chace settled back to wait for Spring Lake.

This darned shortness of breath. He hadn't realized how excited he was. Especially now. Two or three things had to go just right. And then he was all set with a perfect alibi.

HE SET his wrist-watch at the next station to make sure he had correct railroad time. It was ten twenty-nine when they pulled up beside the shabby little frame station at Spring Lake. A night of brilliant stars; soft and balmy. Just the sort of night when one would logically want to walk the two miles from here to his home.

"Oh—no thanks, Pete." He waved away the small-town taxi driver. "Nice night like this, I'll walk. What you think I am, a millionaire? Only two miles, by the short-cut over the Knob."

The State Road ran from here, through the town, and then on up the valley. By road it was about three and a half miles to Chace's home. The short cut over the Knob started here with a little path by the tracks.

Chace was aware that the taxi driver saw him start on it. Half an hour's walk, at the minimum, for a fast walker. But Chace only followed the path until he was beyond Pete's sight. Then, at a jogging dog-trot he skirted the north end of the village and hit the state road just beyond it.

A little luck now. His heart was pounding.

The kind of car he hoped for came along in a minute or two. The lonely cross-roads needed no traffic light, but there was one here nevertheless. Good luck again. It went red; held up the car. Chace moved forward. It was a big car, piled with luggage, and just a lone man driver.

"Mind giving me a lift a few miles?"

"Hop in."

He sat beside the driver with his cap pulled down. No sense in talking. Be as unobtrusive as possible. This fellow was going swiftly, and evidently on a long trip. He would be a state or two away by tomorrow.

"This suits me fine," Chace said in a moment or two. "Little side road, on the left beyond next curve."

He hopped out, waved and thanked the man again. The big car roared on.

As simple as that. It was only a

few hundred yards from here, up the side road, to the cottage. Chace looked at his watch. Not quite ten forty-five. Fifteen minutes now, to do the job.

Queer, his hands were like ice, and also sweating. He was hot, and wet all over, and breathless. As though he had been climbing the short cut up to the Knob and down again.

He chuckled. Fair enough. If he had done that, he still wouldn't be more than half-way home yet.

The little cottage, alone in the trees with the garden and the white fence around it, was dark. Its slate roof glistened in the starlight. Then Chace saw that there was a light in Alma's ground-floor studio. The big French windows, facing north, were wide open, with the yellow light streaming out in the soft shaft through the trees. She was there, of course, still working.

With his key, he quietly opened the front door, carefully laid the book about fingerprints on the hall table.

She heard him. Her studio hall door was open.

"That you, John?" her querulous voice called.

"Yes."

"Come in here. I waited supper for you. The defense plant hired you right away, and you had to work all evening?"

Sarcasm was her strong point. She prided herself on it.

"How'd you guess it?" Chace said.

For just an instant he stood in her doorway, his big figure lounging against the casement. This mustn't take long; every minute was precious.

THE studio was a big room, littered with her paintings and sketches which stood on the floor, leaning against the wall. The big French windows were open with their filmy curtains waving gently in the night breeze. There was a window seat, with magazines scattered on it, and beyond the broad sill it was only a drop of some three feet to the garden path.

A marauder could have got in along that path easily enough, climbed in here, killed her and gone out the same way. Chace had figured that.

At one side of the room, a big

hooded light illumined the easel where Alma Parr was now standing, working on a charcoal sketch of a war poster. She was a big woman in her mid-forties. A spinster. Naturally. What man would fall for such a battleship type of woman?

She was as tall as Chace and somewhat heavier—the angular, masculine style with a rough-hewn, big-featured face surmounted by a mop of iron-gray hair. She was wearing a dirty, smudged gray smock, knee length over her blouse and skirt.

As Chace entered she put down the chunk of charcoal with which she was sketching and turned to face him. She was smiling ironically.

"Sit down, John, and tell me all about it. Uncle Sam rejected you for the Army. Not your fault, of course—though you weren't so sorry, were you? But you're pleased, now, that you can do your bit in factory work. That's just as important, John. Tell me—what'd they say?"

"I—I didn't get out there—not yet—not today," Chace mumbled.

What difference, what he said now? All he had to do was stall for a minute; keep her interested.

He could see that the big silver paper-knife was lying in its accustomed place, on her desk over by the window. Keep her from seeing him grab it. And then make a jump.

"Not yet—not today?" she echoed caustically. "You didn't actually think I figured you would, did you, John?"

"I tried to. I got delayed. And if you want to know, they're only interviewing applicants on Wednesdays and Fridays."

"And today is Thursday. How convenient! So you could have gone yesterday?"

"I told you that yesterday I had to see a fellow on something else." He was edging past her, toward the window. "Pretty nice night," he commented. "I walked over."

Her caustic smile had faded.

"I've decided not to wrangle with you any more, John," she said suddenly. "I just thought I'd tell you—the allowance I'm going to give you next Saturday is the end. And you're leaving here. You're packing your

things and getting out. I don't want you around. I'm finished with you, John."

Her voice had a cold, decisive snap to it, like a man firing an employee. What a joke! By Saturday he would be in full charge here, even signing her business contracts. He would do Uncle Sam a good turn, too, by turning loose a lot of these posters—any of them that wouldn't sell and that the Government wanted.

"So you're just going to ditch me?" he heard himself saying. He had backed up against the desk as he faced her. He managed a sort of lugubrious smile. She didn't notice that his right hand had gone behind him.

"After six months of trying to show you that you ought to be something besides a loafer," she retorted. "If you couldn't have found work in a defense plant—that's all right. An office boy in a candy factory—that would be better than living off me and fooling around with the wrong kind of girls and with wastrels. Oh, I know all about you, John."

"Do you?"

THE heavy metal handle of the paper-knife felt cool and sleek in Chace's grip. Now was the time! One quick jump. Mustn't let her see the blow coming. To get into a fight with a woman like this—almost as bad as fighting with a man.

Now—

"I certainly do, John. I'm not dumb nor . . . Why, John—why—"

She saw the knife as he plunged it at her chest. But she had no time to do anything about it. She just gasped with astonishment and then the blade went in between her ribs. It went in—like a knife plunged into a tub of lard.

Horrible thing. Shove it deep . . . Hang onto it . . . Twist it . . .

Everything was a sudden chaos of horror to Chace. Alma didn't exactly scream. She gasped again, then there was a weird grunting groan that ended with a ghastly choked rattle of blood welling up into her throat.

For those horrible seconds Chace was aware that he was clinging to the knife handle. Why didn't the woman fall? It was like fighting with a dead

woman, those few seconds while she stood swaying, with crumpling legs, her hands flailing at him futilely, one of them trying to clutch at his throat.

But it was only an instant, with her goggling, contorted face on a level with his own, staring at him with bulging eyes. Then her legs buckled. He was aware that he had the knife in his hand as he nimbly jumped backward, avoiding her flailing arms as she crumpled and fell to the floor.

For another few seconds she lay on her side, twitching, with blood-foam at her goggling mouth and a stain of crimson on her chest where the knife had been deeply buried. Then the paroxysm ended. She stiffened with a jerk, then went limp. Motionless. So easy.

Panting, bathed in sweat, Chace stood with the room swaying before him dizzily. But in a moment he steadied, triumphant. A blamed sight more horrible a thing to do than he had figured. But it was over now. Everything just as he had planned.

And the whole thing had not taken more than two or three minutes. He still had at least ten minutes to make sure that everything was all right here. Then he would phone the police. John Chace, just arriving home after walking over the Knob from the station. Coming in here to find poor Alma Parr dead.

Fingerprints. That would be the crux of this thing, of course. The police would gallop in here, all set to do some high-class sleuthing after prints.

It occurred to Chace suddenly, what a neat trick it would have been if he had figured out some way of lifting an impression of some fingerprint illustrations, not from his book, but from some other book he could have found in the library. To have lifted them, and transferred them here to the room; to have put them on the murder weapon, for instance.

That would have puzzled the police plenty. They probably never would have identified the prints. But he had no way of doing that now.

He stood pondering the question carefully, fully aware that he must keep his wits and not make the slightest error. His own prints—they had a

right to be here around the room, of course, since he lived here, often had been in this room, watching Alma at her work.

But they must not be on the murder weapon. Nor on anything else that he had touched tonight.

Chace had brought with him a pair of light, thin cotton gloves. He put them on, carefully wiped off the knife-handle. He remembered that he had not touched the desk. The knife-handle, they would find blank, obviously wiped clean by the murderer. Fair enough.

THE criminal's entrance and exit would be obvious—the big French windows. The trees were thick outside. No one could see, from out there, into the room here.

Chace scattered the magazines which lay on the window seat. Carefully he ripped one of the filmy curtains, as though the escaping criminal might have torn it, making his hasty exit.

And what would be the motive for this crime? Robbery. Why not? It would be simple for Chace to say that several of Alma's best paintings were missing. He knew she kept no record of them, and nobody could dispute such a statement.

Then Chace thought of an additional motive. Vandalism. Swell idea. With his pen-knife he carefully ripped several of the partly finished posters. That would open up a whole new line of thought to the puzzled police. Some crackpot obsessed with hatred for America. Murderously angry at these war posters and at the woman who painted them.

Two of the posters Chace slashed showed a caricature of Hitler cowering in the background before the wrath of Uncle Sam. That could have been the one which inspired this foreign maniac to murder. Fair enough.

Chace was chuckling as he swiftly went down into the cellar and hid his gloves behind a loose chunk of masonry in the wall. He put his pen-knife with them, just in case somebody asked him if he had one.

Back in the studio he took a look at himself in the wall mirror. All okay. His hair wasn't even ruffled. He

straightened his neat bow necktie. His stiffly starched turn-down collar was just a little wilted. Quite okay, this warm night, climbing up over the Knob and down again.

Everything was ready. Chace looked at his watch. It was just eleven o'clock. Just the time he would be arriving here. He stood in the hall for an instant, letting his mind dwell on it.

Now he he was just arriving from the train. Hot, a little out of breath. Now he was tossing his hat and the book about fingerprints to the hall table. He could see the light from here, in the studio. Now he was calling, "Hello Alma." No answer. Queer. Maybe she had fallen asleep.

Quietly he went to the length of the little hall. The studio door was open. On the threshold he stood gazing. Mute, tragic scene. She was so obviously dead, lying there on her side, stiff, with the side of her blouse all crimson. And her dead face against the floor. Horrible.

Naturally he wouldn't run inside to investigate further. He could see from here that the French windows were open. The magazines there were scattered; the curtain torn. His first instinct would be to turn and run to the hall telephone and frantically call the police.

Hastily he turned back from the threshold. Must be incoherent now; excited; horrified. It was all so simple.

With his voice breathless, gasping in horror, he told the operator at the little Central Exchange to get the police. And then he babbled out the horrible news that poor Alma Parr was lying here murdered. . . .

THE little cottage of Alma Parr was blazing with light, noisy with the voices and the tramping tread of the policemen. What a different scene here now! Chace had paced the veranda nervously, after putting in his phone call, until the police arrived.

Now he was standing in the hall by the studio door. Pale and nervous. That was proper. The dead woman's only nearby relative; the only member of her household. Only a bystander here, willing to help, but not knowing what to do. So he just stood smoking

one cigarette after another and silently watching the investigating police.

"Be with you in a minute, Chace."

"Yes, sure. Surely, Sergeant. Anything I can do to help—"

That was Sergeant Johnson who, so far, seemed to be in charge here. He was a big fellow, with a red, weather-beaten face. Grim, of course, investigating a thing like this. But he seemed a decent sort. There was no suggestion of menace in his voice. He seemed to accept that Chace deserved sympathy at this tragic time, this shocking death of his only relative.

Spring Lake's Police Force was almost nothing. Sergeant Johnson and most of these men had come from Blairsville, the nearby county seat, so that Chace had never seen them before.

Chace had already poured out his story to the sergeant and several of the men—excitedly, incoherently. But he realized he had cleverly driven home his points, nevertheless. They were certainly simple enough. His arrival on the train, his walk, by the short-cut over the Knob. Eleven o'clock when he had arrived home here, had seen the horrible sight in the studio. He had instantly rushed back to the hall phone. And of course they had a record that his call had come in at 11.02. Everything perfectly straight; absolutely plausible.

"When you saw her lying there, you didn't go into the studio at all?" Sergeant Johnson had asked.

"No, no, I didn't." Chace had managed a faint, but grim, smile. "Maybe I subconsciously realized it's better not to touch anything at the scene of a crime."

"Sure. That's right."

The studio door was wide open now. From out in the hall where Chace stood leaning against the wall, smoking, he could see and hear what was going on. This bunch of hick sleuths had their minds on fingerprints, all right. Just as he had expected. The little fingerprint man had hustled in with all his paraphernalia.

He had been poking around the room like a hound dog for twenty minutes now.

"Only seem to be two sets of prints around here, Sarge," Chace heard him

say suddenly. "Hers, and his, most likely."

Despite himself, that made Chace's little jump. But that was silly.

"What you'd expect?" the sergeant retorted. "Both of them lived here. This was a slick murderer. Wore gloves, probably?"

"Yeah, guess so. The knife-handle—clean as a whistle."

Fair enough. Exactly right. A little thrill of triumph went through Chace. So easy to pit your wits against a dumb bunch like this. And Chace had been additionally clever. He had not suggested a thing yet, of motive, or who or what the marauder might be. Let that come from them.

"Seems to figure this way," one of the men was saying now to Johnson. "He came in the window. Knocked the magazines around, getting in or going out. Anyway, look where he grabbed the curtain and tore it."

ONE of the men who had been outside came past Chace in the hall and joined the others in the studio.

"Nothing outside, Sarge. A cinch for him to get in and out without leaving footprints. There's a little concrete walk under the windows here. Leads out to the back road. All pretty stony ground anyway."

Of course they would figure all that Elementary stuff.

One of the men was gazing at the slashed canvases.

"Hitler sure got it in the neck, eh, Sarge? Maybe this fellow didn't like Hitler? Well, can't say I blame him for that."

Fool reasoning.

This dumb hick sleuth, he had it exactly backwards!

But Sergeant Johnson was not quite so dumb. "There's a thought," he said. "But maybe you got it wrong, Mulvaney. These slashed pictures—"

"Seems to me several of her new paintings are missing," Chace said impulsively.

He had not meant to speak. It popped out of him. He had advanced to the studio threshold.

"Robbery?" Johnson said.

"Yes. Seems so."

Chace's heart was beating fast. All the men in the room were staring at

him. He should not have spoken; should have kept himself unobtrusive as possible. But now that he was in it, he had to keep on.

He gestured.

"Over there in the corner, Sergeant. Seems to me she had several war posters standing there for the last week or two. Looks like this murderer made away with them." And then he added, with pride in his voice: "She donated everything to the Government. Tremendously active war worker, you know. When the Japs and Germs get it in the neck, she'll be one of the ones who did a lot. On the home front, anyway."

That ought to tip them off into the right line of thought.

It did. Within another minute they were all excitedly arguing about this assailant being maybe a Fifth Columnist, or some foreign fanatic who came here to kill Alma Parr so she couldn't do any more war work against Hitler. Stole her war posters; all he could safely carry, probably. And slashed a few others in his anger.

Chace chuckled inwardly. What a thrill this must be giving Sergeant Johnson! This was not turning out to be just an ordinary murder. This was a big International Crime he had on his hands.

The argument went on. Chace retired back into the hallway.

How easy it had all been! In another hour maybe, this would be finished here. He would be able to see Vivian tomorrow, of course. Just give her a hint of what they had ahead of them. Then would come the funeral.

And after that—just Vivian.

"Well, you know, Sarge, she was a pretty big, powerful woman."

The voice of one of the men floated out into the hall and jerked Chace from his pleasant reverie.

"I was thinking of that," Johnson said. "You fellows arguing everything out—but it doesn't quite hook together."

WHAT was this? A stabbing thrill of startled fear went through Chace.

"Pretty husky woman," Johnson was saying. "A marauder comes in

through the window and stabs her in the chest. Queer she didn't put up any fight."

"Say—hadn't thought of that," somebody else said excitedly. "If she hadn't seen or heard him coming—if he'd stabbed her in the back—"

"Exactly. But she was facing him. And she didn't put up any fight." Johnson's voice was low and grim, as though he were talking to himself. Puzzled. "Didn't put up any fight, obviously. Fell right by that flimsy easel and must have knocked it over herself. Nothing disturbed here in the room—just those magazines scattered from the window seat."

"Say, that's so. Pretty fishy. Planted evidence? Sarge, if—"

"Now if she knew him," the sergeant was saying, "him coming at her, talking to her so that she didn't suspect—"

"Right! How could some murderous crackpot come in the window and keep her happily talking while he walked up and stabbed her?"

"Sarge, close that door, will you?"

The tense, terrified Chace suddenly was aware that Macdougall of the Spring Lake Police was inside the studio.

Chace knew Macdougall well.

"Some things I want to tell you, Sarge," Macdougall was saying as the studio door was abruptly closed.

Out in the hall Chace stood numbed, suddenly more frightened than he had ever been before in his life. An error! Why in time hadn't he thought of that sort of reasoning?

It would have been so easy to knock the easel over and scuffle one of the small rugs.

For that instant there was within Chace a wild instinct to run. Get out of here. Make a getaway.

Absurd. There was a policeman here at the end of the hall anyway. But to show any sign of guilt—the worst thing he could do.

Chace steadied in a moment. What difference did that little error make? Any theories they were having now—just nothing but theories. Wouldn't prove a thing.

Suppose they did come to suspect him? What of it? All he had to do was hold firm.

This would be annoying; maybe a little frightening, if he was fool enough to let himself get frightened. But there would be nothing worse. Macdougall was probably telling them now that Alma Parr wanted Chace to go to work, that sometimes they had had arguments. In a little hick place like Spring Lake everybody knew everybody else's business. But what of it? In all families there were arguments. That was a long way from having anything to do with a murder motive.

Chace's heart seemed to jump into his throat as the studio door opened and Sergeant Johnson came out.

"Come here a minute, will you, Chace?" he said.

"Why—why sure, Sergeant. What is it?"

The studio was a blur of light to the frightened Chace. Hold firm now. Don't let them bluff you. There's no evidence. Just suspicion.

Everybody's eyes, staring. A ring of eyes around him as he went forward. Even the dead thing on the floor—waiting for the county medical examiner who hadn't yet arrived. The dead eyes were staring, too, as though trying to accuse him. Take it easy. Not a thing to be frightened about.

WE WERE just wondering,"

the sergeant's voice was saying pleasantly, "theorizing on whether or not Miss Parr might have known her assailant."

"Known him?"

Careful—careful what you say now. The words rang in Chace's head.

"Yes. Someone she thought was a friend. Someone who at least didn't come in like a burglar through the window."

"Oh. I see. Well, I have no idea, Sergeant."

"No. Naturally not."

Queer how the sergeant's eyes were roving over him! Questing eyes, as though hoping that they might see something.

"What I mean," Johnson added, "could he have come in through the front door? You said it was locked when you arrived? You let yourself in with your key?"

"Yes, I did."

What silly questions. Was he just stalling, staring at Chace, trying to frighten him. "And you didn't go into the studio at all?"

"No, I told you I didn't, Sergeant."

"Just stood at the threshold, took a look and went back—"

"To the telephone. Yes."

"And after you phoned, you just went to the veranda?"

"Yes, sure I did. I stayed right there. Sergeant, what—"

But there was only silence. Just eyes staring at him. Then Johnson was saying:

"Well, we don't know—"

And suddenly into his pondering, questing, puzzled gaze a light leaped! He drew in his breath, muttered:

"Well, I'll be—"

What in heaven's name was this?

"What—what's the matter, Sergeant?" Chace heard himself stammering.

Then Johnson's hand snaked forward, twitched at Chace's necktie. Neat bow tie, its tied ends covering the front of his starched white collar. And Johnson's voice, triumphant now: "Macdougall, you said this fellow was always interested in fingerprints. Sort of a self-appointed expert. Take a look at this. Look at this, you fellows!"

What in heaven's name? Chace's hand instinctively went up to his neck, but Johnson struck it down.

"Never mind that," he said sharply. "Keep your hands down, Chace! Look, Mac, he evidently watched his fingerprints like a hawk. But what he didn't think of—"

"Wh—what do you mean?" Chace was stammering.

Easy now! Careful what you say! This could be all a bluff!

"Take a look yourself," Johnson said.

Chace felt the sergeant pushing him toward the wall. The wall mirror. And the sergeant was saying ironically:

"So worried about your own fingerprints, Chace—and she was making a charcoal sketch. Her fingertips were black with charcoal."

Numbed with horror, Chace stared at his reflection in the mirror—his pale, terrified face—his bow tie, with its ends across the front of his collar. And his mind swept back. Her flailing hands—one of them which for an instant had tried to clutch at his throat.

Blankly he stared at his mirrored image where on his white collar, partly hidden by his tie, the fingerprints of Alma Parr were stamped in charcoal!

"You—you got me! I forgot all about *her* fingerprints!"

He thought that he was only thinking it, but he was stammering it as they shoved a chair under him to keep his buckling legs from dropping him to the floor.

Next Issue: MURDER ON DELIVERY, Novelet by Lee E. Wells

Asthma Mucus Loosened

While You Sleep

Say Thousands of Sufferers

Do recurring attacks of Bronchial Asthma make you choke, strangle and gasp for breath? Are you bothered so bad some nights that you can't sleep? Do you cough and cough trying to raise thick strangling mucus, and strain so hard you fear rupture? Are some attacks so bad you feel weak, unable to work? Are you afraid of colds, exposure and certain foods?

No matter how long you have suffered or what you have tried, we believe there is good news and palliative hope for you in a splendid medicine which was originally a doctor's prescription but that is now available to sufferers at all drug stores under the name of **Mendaco**.

Mendaco usually works very rapidly because it con-

tains ingredients intended to help nature loosen thick, strangling excess mucus. And you know from your own experience if you can just raise that strangling phlegm you can sleep well, breathe deeply of God's fresh air and not feel like there was an iron band around your chest crushing out your very life.

Guaranteed Trial Offer

Mendaco is not a dope, smoke, injection or spray, but is in pleasant, tasteless tablets. Formulin an every package. In fact, Mendaco has proved such a great palliative success for thousands suffering recurring choking, strangling symptoms of Bronchial Asthma that an iron clad guarantee insures an immediate refund of your money on return of empty package unless you are completely satisfied. Under this money back guarantee you have everything to gain and nothing to

Mendaco lose, so ask your druggist for Mendaco today and put it to the test. **Only 60c.**



ELLIOT PAUL

An Investment in Victory By ELLIOT PAUL

Famous author of "Fracas in the Foothills" and other novels

THE United States must finance the United Nations if we are to win the war, and Americans must finance the United States. In buying War Bonds, an American is taking advantage of the safest way to save money, the surest way to invest it with the hope of seeing and using it later, and at the same time is placing a bet on our country and our allies to win.

Against the growing accumulation of the profits of slave labor available to the enemy, our side has only the earnings and loans which free men contribute. If we believe in liberty and popular government we must back them now in time of danger. We must do of our own free will, having thought out the matter to the end, better than robots under Hitler's "New Order" are forced to do.

The threat of slavery and death hanging over the heads of the Axis subject peoples, of which

the Germans themselves are the most abject, approaches closer to Americans with every military, naval and aerial reverse and outcropping of internal dissension.

Other nations now under the Nazi yoke did not spend their money in time to crush Hitler and his dupes. Americans, with greater resources, better sources of information, under the protection of longer distances from enemy headquarters, must give a better account of themselves.

The purchase of War Bonds is investment, insurance, common sense and self-protection. From a broader point of view, it is tangible evidence of belief in the American way of life and in the good faith of our fighting allies. We cannot buy our way out of this struggle, but we can save lives by sacrificing our money. We can save time and bring victory nearer by investing now.

A WAR BOND MESSAGE FOR ALL AMERICANS



Mabry swung a haymaker that connected with the cameraman's chin

THE CORPSE THAT PLAYED DEAD

By A. BOYD CORRELL

Murder Closes Down on a Hollywood Lot When a Pompous Actor Gives Up the Ghost in the Midst of a Machine-Gun Melodrama!

WHEN Emil Friml, who had jumped from burlesque to become a big-time Hollywood movie producer in the short course of two years, phoned and said somebody was trying to murder Ronald Edwards, I thought he had a touch of the sun. I nestled the receiver closer to my ear and said:

"Listen, Mr. Friml. I'm a detective,

supposed to think the worst. But why should anybody hold anything against Edwards? His fans, yes! His pictures smell to high heaven. But fans don't get into studios—not in war-time, anyhow."

I heard Friml sputtering. "Listen, Jimmy Lee." Everybody calls me Jimmy Lee. "Yesterday he climbed a wall and somebody dropped sandbags

at his head. Today we shot a scene of flame-throwers and they threw real flames at him! I tell you, you've got to come out here and look into it. And remember, no publicity!"

I said I would be out. Panamint Studios, who paid Friml a salary that was so big it was difficult to write it all on one check, had me on their call list to take care of disagreeable things like blackmail, inside petty thefts, and other unpleasanties that by rights should go to the police, but would be bad publicity for Panamint.

The studio was near Santa Monica, off Wilshire Boulevard.

As I cruised the coupe toward the setting sun, I thought about Ronald Edwards.

Edwards had appeared from nowhere into star roles in a new series of war pictures Panamint was producing. Friml was head of the unit shooting them.

However, the films had been so corny and full of hokum that they never made the first-run houses except as added attractions.

Yet Edwards, who wrote his own scripts, continued to be publicized as though he were a million-dollar draw. I wondered what he had done to the brass hats in the front office to get such a gravy train. Probably hypnotized them; or knew where the body was buried.

At the studio gates the cop was expecting me. He hopped on the running board and directed me to a parking space, then said Friml had left word I was to meet him on Sound Stage Four.

I cut across the parking lot to the huge building that housed the sound stages. I expected to find a couple of hundred extras, dressed as Commandos, snaking across scenery made to look like enemy territory. Instead of that, I found a small camera crew setting up in a boarded-off portion of the otherwise deserted stage. Friml was not around.

ART MABRY, the director and right-hand man to Friml, was bouncing around, supervising the lighting effects and the background scenery. He was a huge man with a

sharp face and prematurely gray hair that stood up in a short, startled pompadour. He stopped his bouncing long enough to tell me that Friml was in Edwards' dressing room.

I glanced toward that room, a portable affair about fifty feet away in the shadows of the stage. Then I settled down on a stack of scenery flats. Jane Mathis, a script girl whom I had met on a previous job for Panamint, waved. I motioned her over.

"Hi, beautiful!" I said. "What's Mabry shooting?"

Jane sat down beside me. She pushed back her wavy brown hair.

"Just tying in some scenes and sound effects. Mostly retakes."

She peeled a piece of gum and stuck it into her rosebud mouth. I studied her. Her chin had a tilt that suggested she could take care of herself, yet her lips made a man unconsciously lean toward her when she faced him. There was nothing wrong with her figure either, which was draped with a pair of tailored slacks and a tightly-knitted sweater. She flipped the gum wrapper at a passing workman.

"Friml, as usual, is not satisfied," she continued. "This story's edited and in the can, but he took part of it back to the cutting room and demands retakes. Edwards is the hero who plays dead after a burst of machine-gun fire and lets the dirty Nazis advance over his beautiful body. Then he ups and blows the blazes out of them from the rear.

"The same old corn he's been doing for the past year. However, Friml wasn't satisfied with the shots of him playing dead while the shooting goes on, so here we are, still doing retakes. Lou says they've already spent more on raw film than the picture will gross."

I grinned. Lou Mathis was her brother. A handsome kid, whom I had spotted back of the camera when I came in. He had been something of a prodigy in the movie world and had had chances to go East and direct big-time shows on the legitimate stage. However, he liked photography, and had never left his native California. At twenty-one, he was one of Hollywood's top-rank cameramen.

"It's all dough in Lou's pocket," I said. "I could do with his salary."

"Yeah," said Jane. "But he told me if it wasn't for the fact that he's going into the Army next month and will need the money, he'd tell 'em where they could send the Ronald Edwards pictures. He said his name on the credit titles did him more harm than good." She yawned and glanced over her shoulder. "Here comes Romeo now."

I looked toward the dressing room. Ronald Edwards, in a dusty uniform, was talking with Mabry.

Edwards was a good-looking guy in a sleek sort of way. His hair was black and full of tight waves. His uniform looked good on him, what with the padded shoulders Wardrobe had furnished and the snazzy Sam Browne belt around his middle.

Mabry said something to him, and he walked toward a bridge which had been placed by the property men in a set made to look like a blasted waterfront village. The bridge was about seventy-five feet from camera.

Edwards stretched out on the ground, arranged his hair in careful disorder, and got his profile just right. Mabry stood over him.

"Okay, Ronny," I heard Mabry say. "You're dead, see? We're shooting around the mob scene. Thank the gods Friml okayed that and it's in the can. What you've got to do all over again is get up while the guns are firing—register hate and determination, and start snaking toward camera, see? Friml said you looked scared in the one I wrapped up." He glanced over his shoulder, and added, "Personally, I think Friml's a dope."

I AGREED with Mabry that he was a dope. A dope for continuing to splurge money on pictures featuring Ronald Edwards. What kept him doing it was a mystery. My guess was that he held a forlorn hope that one of these Commando stories would be a smash hit and make up for the others which were losses.

Mabry stepped back of the camera in the shadows.

"Lights!" he shouted.

The overhead floodlights blinked

out and the stage came to life. It was a bomb-wrecked hamlet. A low rumbling started, grew in intensity, and broke into staccato blasts. A red glow rose from the background scenery. Thin smoke crept over the scene as a machine-gun chattered. A searchlight stabbed the hazy air. I watched the prone figure of Ronny Edwards.

The tempo of gunfire increased to crescendo, then slackened, sputtered, and faded away. Silence. From out of the darkness and smoke Mabry shouted "Cut!" and I saw him dart before the camera.

"Hey, Ronny," he cried. "You missed your cue. You're supposed to get up during the shooting."

The director had reached the star's side. He bent down—and jerked away. I felt a tightening around the nape of my neck. Edwards had not moved.

I jumped up from the pile of scenery and started for the prop bridge, with Jane and her brother close behind. I leaned over the actor. A dark red worm of blood was jerking and twisting from his temple, and his throat moved convulsively. He sighed and gurgled. Then the blood stopped jumping, and merely seeped as though no more was left in his body.

Mabry's face turned as gray as his short, clipped hair. He backed further away, pushing at the air with his hands.

Next to me I could see Jane's fingers biting into the arm of her brother. "They've killed him!" she cried shrilly. "Yesterday we thought the sandbag was an accident, and this morning that flame-thrower—"

Lou Mathis slapped her grasping hand—hard. I heard him whisper "Hush!"

Emil Friml had suddenly loomed up from nowhere. One moment he wasn't there, and the next he was. In the ghostly light of the background flares, he looked like Scrooge and the devil rolled into one. His withered leg swung like a pendulum between his good one and the mahogany crutch which supported him. His head, a tremendous load for such a scrawny neck, was covered with a fuzz of colorless hair. His ears were pointed, and be-

longed on a character from a child's fairy story book. I had seen him often, but I was always startled when I faced him.

He balanced himself by holding to the bridge rail, and leaned far over to gaze at the dead actor. At last he looked up.

"Murderers!" he whispered softly. Then his voice rose to a shrill, hysterical screech. "Murderers!"

I felt my face flush in sudden anger. The man was acting insanely. Mathis' arm tightened around his sister's waist. Mabry jerked his gaze from the corpse to the frenzied producer.

"Emil!" he said. "You're talking crazy!"

The producer turned on him. His voice again was low.

"Crazy, am I? We'll see. Three times someone in this unit tried to kill Ronny. The third time they succeeded." Friml pointed a finger at me. "Jimmy Lee, get over to the main door and don't let anyone leave. I'm calling the police."

He hobbled to a phone attached to a partition near the dressing-room and jiggled the hook viciously.

AS I STARTED for the door, the background lights, casting their eerie glow of red, suddenly blinked out. The stage was in total darkness. I let out a yelp of surprise, and was smacked flat as someone rushed past me. Jane screamed—a long, piercing cry that echoed and reechoed through the building.

I heard a thumping as I pushed to my feet and held my hands out to avoid another collision. There was a swishing, grating noise as though a body were being dragged across the floor, then a bump—and silence.

"Throw the main switch!" That was Mabry, his voice almost hysterical.

The overhead floods blossomed out like a flash of lightning and I squinted my eyes.

One of the workmen stood at the light control panel, his hand still on the switch. His eyes were wide with fright. Jane lay on the floor, her hand pressed hard against her mouth. Mabry stood near me. Mathis was

diving for his sister on the floor. I glanced toward the telephone and saw Friml, apparently still trying to get his number. He was jiggling the hook.

"What in thunder's going on—" I started, when I glanced at the spot where the corpse had been. The body was gone.

Under the bridge a head appeared, raised further from the ditch underneath, and a man climbed onto the stage proper. He was a sallow-complexioned fellow of about thirty, with a slightly bulging forehead, a head almost bald, and a body so thin it looked emaciated. He stared at the faces around him and swept an arm across his sweating face. "Who—who dropped the corpse of Ronny Edwards on me?" he demanded, in a quavering voice.

I recognized him then. He was Lyle Bradford, Mabry's assistant. I darted past him and looked into the ditch below the bridge. Crumpled in a heap was Edwards' body, the mouth gaping, the eyes open and glazed. Around him was the electrical equipment Bradford had been operating. But why had Bradford stayed there when the death was discovered? Friml had certainly shouted "Murderers!" loud enough to bring him out.

I told everyone to keep away from the bridge, then went to the stage entrance. Friml, at last, had the police on the wire . . .

When Detective-Lieutenant Tom Callahan arrived with a couple of plainclothesmen and the medical examiner, he found two groups of silent people. The five stage hands, who had been working on the set, were huddled together near the camera. Jane and her brother, Bradford and Mabry were sitting on the stacked scenery I had vacated when Edwards was shot. Friml stood slightly away from them, swaying on his crutch and staring at the property bridge. After letting Callahan in, I followed him.

The detective was a debonair cop if there ever was one. He fitted his district, which was Hollywood, as perfectly as the scores of celebrities who make up its glamour. His tailored tweed suit must have cost him half a

month's salary, and the expensive Homburg hat pulled over his short, smartly-clipped graying hair suggested a well-to-do sportsman rather than a cop.

His eyes, though, were as official as the gold badge pinned to his wallet. They were slate-colored and as cold as a death sentence. He gave me a curt nod of recognition, and went straight to Friml.

The producer looked at him with smoldering eyes.

"Someone here murdered my star," he said flatly. "I want that person found, and"—he pounded the floor with his crutch—"I don't want any publicity!"

Callahan pushed back his hat. I could see a faint smirk creasing one side of his face.

"Mr. Friml, murder news isn't censored in Hollywood. Not even at the request of a great producer." He ignored an angry glance. "Where is the body?"

"Over here," I said, motioning to the bridge. "He was shot at this spot, but the lights went out and someone dumped him into this ditch."

CALLAHAN leaned over the bridge, gazed at the body a moment, then walked toward the group of stage hands. He spoke to them briefly. I couldn't hear his words. He nodded to one of the cops.

"Take 'em outside somewhere and frisk 'em. I'll talk with them later."

After the workmen had left, Callahan climbed down into the ditch and ran deft hands through Edwards' pockets. He transferred papers and trinkets to a large envelope which he slipped into his own pocket. Back on the stage, he motioned to the medical examiner.

"It's yours," he said.

He walked to the group of movie people, pulled up a folding chair which had "Art Mabry" stenciled on it, and sat down.

"All right, let's have it," he said briskly. "Everything that happened before Edwards was shot." He settled back and lit a cigarette.

Mabry started to bounce forward, but Friml pushed him aside.

"It started yesterday. Ronny had to scale a fourteen-foot wall, on the top of which were sandbags. When he reached the base of the wall, two sandbags toppled down and missed him by inches. If either one of them had landed on Ronny it could easily have broken his neck."

Callahan flipped ashes from his cigarette. "Who placed the sandbags on the wall?"

Friml shrugged. Bradford ran a nervous hand through his remaining hair.

"I did."

The detective turned his cold eyes on the assistant director, raised his eyebrows, but said nothing.

Bradford squirmed. "At least, I directed the placing of them. I was behind the wall when the scene was shot."

Callahan leaned forward smiling. He ground out his cigarette with his heel.

"Interesting," he said. "And you pushed the sandbags on Ronny's head?"

Bradford's loose-lipped mouth gaped open.

"No! No! I was busy watching the lighting effects."

Callahan nodded complacently and settled back in his chair. "Okay. You didn't push the sandbags. Where were you when Edwards was shot?"

"I was in that ditch," Bradford said.

"And of course you came out immediately he was found dead?"

The assistant director turned pale.

"No, I—I fainted! Honest, I fainted! Friml shouted 'Murderers!' and I just fainted." He flipped his hands around helplessly. "I've got a weak heart, so help me. I'm listed Four-F with my Draft Board on account of it. I woke up to find Ronny's body on top of me."

Callahan grinned broadly in Bradford's face.

"Well, well!" he said. "You fainted!" He rolled a cigarette in his hand. "Let's go back. What else happened before the murder?"

Friml stumped forward on his crutch.

"This morning we were doing some retakes of a flame-throwing scene.

The flames were supposed to shoot behind Ronny, but they shot at him. If his clothes had not been soaking wet from him having supposedly swum a river, he would have been badly burned."

Callahan turned to Bradford again. "And were you 'directing' the flame-throwers?"

Bradford yanked at his collar. "Well, yes, I was. But, curse it, man, that's my job!" The assistant suddenly flew into a rage. "As far as that's concerned," he yelled, "I was behind the scenes, directing the machine-gun fire and the lighting effects when Edwards was killed, but you can't pin this killing on me!"

Callahan hooked a fresh cigarette into his mouth.

"And why can't we pin this on you?"

BRADFORD rubbed his temples and stared at the detective.

"Because all the sound effects on this set are canned. There's not a gun on the stage!"

"What do you mean," Callahan said, "there's no gun on the stage?"

"I mean the firing came off the sound track. You can't buy blanks during war time, and we use prop sound. I was running a projector and amplifier in sync with the action. You'll find the equipment under the bridge."

Callahan rubbed his close-shaven jaw.

"Then you turned out the lights?"

Bradford was lighting a cigarette shakily.

"I must have fallen against the switch when I fainted and —"

He was interrupted by a shout. The remaining plainclothesman, who had been probing over the set, came running toward his superior.

"Hey, Chief!" he said, holding out an object wrapped in a handkerchief. "Here's a thirty-eight I found under the camera."

Callahan reached for the gun. He waved it under his nose, then flipped the chamber open. He cocked an eyebrow at Bradford.

"No gun on the set, eh? Who was behind the camera when Edwards was shot?"

[Turn page]

BUCKSKIN

WEATHERPROOF FABRIC!

\$5

ONE TO A FAMILY



Made **Water Resistant** by **DUPONT**

SUPPLY IS LIMITED! Here's why: Between the Buck Skin fabric, DuPont sprays a thin film of precious Rubber. Rubber resists rain and snow.

1 Warm for War Work. Several layers of insulation are your barrier against icy blasts. Buck Skin is a real lightweight for heavy work and heavy winters.

2 Weatherproof. You are on the Farm. Or perhaps you are at the prow of a Merchant Marine on the icy sea. The wind is howling, biting and penetrating. Yet you are warm. Now—though rubber is so limited, a remarkable War Emergency inner coating, still made with rubber, has been developed for me by DuPont, which will keep you reasonably dry in rain, snow or sleet. Even the inner seams (see 3) are sealed up tight to prevent ordinary leakage.

3 Fleece Lined for Extra Warmth
Windproof Workpuff!

4 Windproof Chest Protector. By buttoning one flap over the other you get a double Buck Skin thickness across your chest—and double protection against the cold. A two-way collar for style or storm.

5 So Warm It's Air-Cooled! The Jacket is so warm that a secret air vent acts as a "cooling system" to carry off excess perspiration when a man works hard. Keep well, America!

Besides these five great features, Buck Skin wears like elephant hide. Yet Buck Skin is soft, pliable, and washes beautifully. It won't shrink or fade.

MAIL THE COUPON NOW if your dealer is all sold out, and I'll rush your Jacket to you at once. Carrying charges prepaid. To my old friends and customers—yes, and to you Wives, Mothers, and Sweethearts—give a jacket to the one in the family who needs a Buck Skin most, because I haven't many left. *As ever,*

Buck Skin Joe

c/o LUSTBERG, NAST & CO., INC., Makers
212 Fifth Ave., Dept. T-12, New York City
See that I get the \$5 Buck Skin Joe Jacket at once
as checked. Chest size.....

"Iceland" Blue or "Honey" Brown
Here's my check or money order

Name.....

Address.....

I saw Jane move closer to her brother. He started to push forward, but Mabry was ahead of him.

"I was," said the director. "I was about ten or fifteen feet behind it. But," he added, "there were two stage hands alongside me. They'll tell you I didn't shoot Ronny, and I'm sure they didn't."

Callahan nodded. "I know. I found that out when I questioned them. Who was running the camera?"

Lou Mathis stepped forward, staring hard at the .38. His face was pale and his slight but wiry frame seemed taut.

"I was," he said. "But if you think I bumped that dirty wolf simply because he insulted—"

Jane sprang up from her seat on the scenery. She ran to her brother's side and grabbed his arm.

"Lou! Be quiet! That was all settled." She stood as if to shield him from the detective.

Callahan's cold eyes lighted with interest. He rose from his chair and walked to the cameraman.

"Nothing's settled yet, except that a man has been murdered. I want to know just why you called the corpse a wolf, and just what has been settled." He divided his stare between brother and sister.

Jane's words tumbled on top of each other.

"Edwards merely made a pass at me a few days ago. He's done it to every girl on every set he ever worked on. Lou heard about it and threatened to push his face in. Edwards apologized. That's all there is to it, isn't it, Lou?" Her eyes sought her brother's for confirmation.

Mathis patted her arm. "Not quite, honey. Just before we set up for this scene, Friml came over and said Edwards had complained about me. Said I had insulted him."

"And did you apologize?"

The cameraman shook his head. "I suggested he tell Ronny to go fry in his ham grease."

Callahan's face almost cracked in a grin. He hid it behind a flaring match which lighted his cigarette.

"Tell me, Mr. Friml," he said, "just why Ronald Edwards was given the

front page of all of Panamint's publicity? It might not be as unrelated to the case as you may think. Personally, I've always been of the opinion that his acting belonged with third-rate legit houses instead of Hollywood's billion-dollar industry."

Friml flushed. His beady eyes squinted and his sharp, gnomelike chin thrust out.

"Listen, Mr. Inspector. Rome wasn't built in a day. Art Mabry has discovered more stars for me than you'll find in the flag, and I have confidence in him. We were trying to build up Ronny. I'll admit now that we made a mistake in putting him in a starring role right away, but he was still good material. Ronny's contract ended next month, and I had just told him that I'd put him in stock at a hundred a week to groom him for future pictures."

"And I suppose he loved that?" said Callahan, sarcastically. "Panamint publicity says Edwards was paid three grand a week."

Friml made a deprecating gesture. "Publicity only. We actually paid him eight hundred."

"Okay," Callahan said. "Eight hundred. That's still quite a comedown. What was Edwards' reaction?"

Friml thumped his crutch and shook his massive head.

"What's this to do with Ronny's murder? I only told Ronny about the stock job a few minutes before he went on for the scene. He said he wanted to talk it over with Mabry. Mabry's been his friend and adviser since he came to Hollywood."

The medical examiner climbed out of the ditch and came over to Callahan. He held a flat disc in his hand.

"Here's your bullet, Lieutenant. It was embedded in Edwards' arm after coming through his head. Apparently he was resting his head on his arm when he was shot. It knocked a hole as big as a saucer through his right temple. It's soft lead, and I don't believe there's any chance of Ballistics finding markings."

Callahan took the flattened bullet. It was a jagged piece of lead, the size of a fifty-cent piece. He snicked open

the .38 and examined the unfired cartridges. I saw him push a fingernail into the lead.

"There's one bullet fired from this gun," Callahan said. "The remaining ones are soft lead." He got up from his chair and spoke to the M. E. "Take the body down to the morgue. We'll carry on this questioning from Friml's office." He flipped a finger at the plainclothesman. "Lock this stage and stand by the door until you hear from me. Nobody is to go in."

Except for that cop and the M. E., the group of us, including Callahan and a couple of uniformed men with him, headed across the lot to the directors' building. It had grown dark.

After we were settled in the chrome and black-leathered room which complemented Friml as the great producer he supposedly was, I started fidgeting. I was through with the case. A guy had been killed and the police were investigating. I wasn't being paid to sit around. More business might be crying at my office.

I walked over to a window that overlooked the street. Dimly I could see the silhouette of huge floodlights that were off for the duration, due to the California coast dimout. Before the war, they used to go on when the first street light flashed up and broke the

[Turn page]

*America's Best Dime's Worth
of Picture Entertainment*



Now on Sale at All Stands

MEN in other
you are **16** OR
UP
TO **50**

Come to
COYNE
for a great
future in

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONICS

**"Learn-by-Doing" on
Real Radio Apparatus!**

expensive, radio stations, 7 in studios, police short-wave, television, industrial electronics—all need **TRAINED RADIO SPECIALISTS**. Learn the quick practical way, on actual equipment in the great Coyne Shops. Not by correspondence, but personal training based on 44 years of "know-how!"

**I'LL FINANCE
YOUR TRAINING!**

Don't let lack of money hold you back. My plan lets you start now, pay tuition in easy monthly payments; when you're trained and on the job, I help you get part-time work to help pay your expenses while training, give you Lifetime Employment Service as a Coyne Graduate.

Prepares for Govt. License

Many of the better Radio jobs require government license. Coyne has enabled hundreds to pass this test successfully. You learn operating—learn to send Code rapidly—do trouble-shooting—handle real transmitting equipment, etc., etc.

**Dozens of Branches to
Choose From**

Why be satisfied with a narrow, outworn line when by putting in a short time in my Shops, you can qualify for unlimited opportunities in **RADIO AND ELECTRONICS**, today's fast-growing field! This picture shows only a few of countless well-paid jobs for trained Radio Operators.

SEND FOR FREE BOOK

Fully illustrated with big pictures of my shops—facts about your future. Mail coupon now. No obligation, no salesman will call. Act today!

**H. C. LEWIS, Pres., RADIO DIV.
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL**
500 S. Paulina St. Dept. 93-5K
Chicago, Illinois

H. C. LEWIS, Pres.,
RADIO DIV. COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL,
500 S. Paulina St., Dept. 93-5K, Chicago, Illinois
Send FREE BOOK, "Your Future in Radio", and details
of easy "Pay-After-Graduation" plan.

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
CITY..... STATE.....

circuit of a photo-electric cell.

Now the street lights were hooded, and the electric eye was in the discard. A wire dangled in the breeze just outside the window where the "eye" had been. Probably salvaged for the war effort. They were salvaging everything nowadays.

Salvage! An idea struck me. Friml was taking retake after retake, yet the WPB had limited the use of raw film to about seventy-five per cent of previous consumption. And using the precious stuff on a picture that no amount of reshooting could help. I swung around to put in a question, then realized I was out of the case. I shrugged.

LOOK, Callahan," I said, "I'm scrambling. You know where you can reach me."

I smacked on my hat. Emil Friml jumped to his feet. "Jimmy Lee!" he yelled. "I hired you, and you're going to stay until this business is over! You've got ten times more brains than this clothes-horse, and I want you to find out who killed Ronny!"

Callahan's granite face bordered on a sneer. He had been in the middle of questioning Jane's brother.

"Okay," he said. "If the great producer wants you to work along with us. But keep from under foot."

He gave me a dirty look, then pulled the handkerchief-wrapped .38 from his pocket. From another pocket he pulled a fingerprint kit. He dusted the gun, then examined it closely. I saw him ball up the handkerchief and throw it into a wastepaper basket. Obviously, the gun carried no prints.

"Mr. Friml," Callahan said, "this clothes-horse would like to know if the studio had insured Ronald Edwards before the picture was started? I understand that's the custom."

Friml, his chin resting his huge head on the crutch, darted his birdlike eyes at the detective.

"Of course. For half a million. That's what the picture budget, plus the profits, was figured at."

"So," Callahan continued, "the studio is in half a million, plus whatever the film grosses?"

The producer jerked his chin from

the crutch.

"Plus losing our best star!" he shouted.

"Who had just been banished to stock at a hundred a week."

Lou Mathis laughed. "It'll be the first time a Ronald Edwards picture made money."

Art Mabry got to his feet. His eyes were blazing.

"Ronald Edwards was the greatest potential star Panamint ever contracted!" he yelled.

Mathis swung toward him. "Ronald Edwards was a dirty, woman-chasing ham that had Panamint hypnotized! Friml does anything you say just because you discovered Gale Prentiss. Edwards was your pal. What'd he do—give you a cut of the salary you got for him?"

Mabry's bouncing turned into a tremble. He swung a haymaker that connected with the cameraman's chin. Mathis took the big man's swing but came right back with an upper-cut that lifted the director six inches from the floor. He spun dizzily, crashed into Callahan, and folded like an accordion in the detective's arms.

Callahan helped Mabry to a chair while the two cops calmed the rest down, then the detective-lieutenant walked up to Mathis.

"Listen," he said. "You were back of the camera when the shot was fired. The gun's wiped clean of prints. The dead guy insulted your sister—" He weighed the gun in front of the cameraman's face. "If I could trace this to you—"

Friml, who had been watching the action, thumped noisily on his crutch.

"That gun," he said, twisting his huge head around to the detective's side, "looks like—"

Mathis leaped to his feet. With one sweep he whipped the gun from the hand of the detective.

"Yes, curse you! It's my gun! Someone took it from my desk!" He backed away slowly, covering us all with the .38. "But you're not taking me down to put me through a third degree!" His hand reached behind him and he opened the door. "I think I know who killed Edwards, and I'm taking out time to confirm it."

Jane screamed, but it was too late. A police positive arced through the air, and its butt thudded on the cameraman's head. Mathis dropped like a Zero fighter with its wings shot off.

THE plainclothes cop who had taken the workmen out of the stage, stepped over the unconscious man, pocketing his gun. He looked at Callahan questioningly.

"I did right in conking him?"

The detective's face wore a sadistic grin. "You conked the murderer of Ronald Edwards. You'll probably get another stripe for doing it."

The cop beamed. He swayed self-consciously.

"To tell you the truth, it was an accident I came up. I've been holding those workmen downstairs and I wondered if you wanted me to take them to Headquarters?"

Jane had run to her brother's side. She was bending over him, sobbing. Callahan pulled her away and felt Mathis' pulse.

"This killer is just stunned. I'll have a confession out of him half an hour after he's at Headquarters."

The cameraman was coming to. [Turn page]

Approved by Parents and Teachers



Now on Sale—10c at all Stands

"YOU ARE UNDER ARREST"



**There's a Thrill
in Bringing a
Crook to Justice
Through
Scientific**

CRIME DETECTION

I have taught thousands of men and women this exciting, profitable, pleasant profession. Let me teach you, too, *in your own home*. Prepare yourself in your leisure time to fill a responsible, steady, well-paid position in a very short time and at very small cost. What others have done you, too, can do.

53%
of all
**American
Bureaus**
of

Be A
**FINGER
PRINT
Expert**

Identification

Employ I.A.S. students or graduates. "I will teach you Finger Print Identification—Firearms Identification—Police Photography—and Secret Service." That's what I told the men who now handle jobs in over 840 Identification Bureaus throughout the nation. And now I repeat, **THIS time to YOU**. . . Just give me a chance and I'll train you at home to fill an important position in the fascinating field of scientific crime detection. It is not expensive or difficult to learn. Now is the time to start. War conditions make it necessary to guard against sabotage by enemy aliens. Finger Print Identification is one of the recognized means of uncovering them. The need of more Finger Print experts is evident. Fit yourself now to help win the war and later on to hold down a fine job as a recognized expert in Crime Detection.

FREE! "BLUE BOOK OF CRIME" It's a thriller, filled from cover to cover with exciting information on scientific crime detection. It tells about some of the most interesting crimes of modern times, and how the criminals were brought to justice through the very methods which you are taught at I.A.S. The book will tell you, too, how at a cost so low you shouldn't even think of it, you can get started on this important work without delay. Don't wait. Clip the coupon and send it along today.

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
Dept. 7969, 1920 Sunnyside Ave. Chicago 40, Ill.

CLIP AND MAIL COUPON NOW

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, 1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 7969, Chicago 40, Ill.

Gentlemen: Without obligation, send me the "Blue Book of Crime," and complete list of over 840 bureaus employing your students or graduates, together with your low prices and Easy Terms Offer. (Literature will be sent **ONLY** to persons stating their age.)

Name

Address

.....

FREE OFFER for FALSE TEETH



Don't suffer embarrassment and discomfort caused by loose dental plates. Apply CROWN RELINER. In a fifty year plate fits like new and stays that way up to 4 months. No old fashioned heating to burn your mouth. It's the CROWN from tube and put your teeth back in. They'll fit as snugly as ever. Inventor is a recognized authority in dental field. A patent has been applied for CROWN RELINER to protect you from imitations. After you retire your plate with CROWN, take your false teeth out for cleaning, without abrad- ing the CROWN RELINER. CROWN RELINER is guaranteed... it's harmless. NOT A POWDER OR PASTE! If not satisfied, even after 4 months, return partly used tube for full refund. RELINER TIGHTENS FALSE TEETH OR NO COST. Perfect For Partial, Lower and Uppers.

Order this **FREE**

J. Clements of Algonac writes: "My plates were so bad they rattled when I talked. Now I can eat steaks, corn on the cob." He puts your plates with CROWN. It's harmless. Has that natural pink color. Order a tube of CROWN RELINER today... enough to last a year. We include FREE a tube of CROWN plate cleaner. SEND NO MONEY. Just send name and address. For postage man \$1.00 for combination, plus postage of send cash and we pay collector's share. Act at once and enjoy this new happiness.

CROWN PLASTICS
4358 W. Philadelphia Ave., Detroit, Mich.

Dept. 7612.

SONGWRITERS

Place your song with us. Melodies supplied WITHOUT CHARGE by well known Hollywood composers. We record your song and make it presentable to the publishers. Lead sheets furnished. Send your songs or song poems for free examination. Write for details.

CINEMA SONG CO. DEPT. 1-C P. O. BOX, 670 BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF.

ANY BOOK IN PRINT!

Thousands of books
12
Price
and less

Delivered at your door. We pay postage. Standard authors, new books, popular editions, fiction, reference, medical, mechanical, children's books, etc.—all at astounding savings. Send card now for Clarkson's 1944 Catalog.

FREE Write for our great illustrated book form and free book "Patent Protection" in literature. The buying guide of 300,000 book lovers. The answer to your "patents" gift problem. **FREE** if you write now—TODAY!

CLARKSON PUBLISHING COMPANY
Dept. 1-3, 1253 S. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

PATENT YOUR IDEA

inventors read and print by free "Evidence" form and free book "Patent Protection" illustrating important mechanical principles and explaining patent procedure fully. Free!—low fees, deferred payments, 44 years' experience. Write immediately for free copy of our book.

VICTOR J. EVANS & CO., 707

Your Daily Horoscope in every issue of

EVERYDAY ASTROLOGY



Every Month—10c at All Stands

Callahan and the cop hooked arms around him and started through the door.

"This guy's a hothead," the detective said to Friml. "His rep is known in Hollywood. Plenty of scraps in night clubs. I'll bet my badge he murdered Edwards because your ham insulted his sister, and—believe it or not because he was such a rotten actor for a cameraman to have his name tied up with. I've worked Hollywood for years. There's no rhyme or reason to some of these boy geniuses."

I held Jane as the door closed. Friml gazed around blankly, a finger worrying a thick lip. Mabry was massaging his jaw. Bradford, who had remained quietly in a chair in a corner during the rioting, slowly got up. He looked around and sighed.

"Well, I suppose that's that." He put on his hat. "I'm going home to bed."

No one spoke as he went through the doorway. At last Friml hobbled out, telling Jane to lock his office when she left. Mabry followed him, the bounce gone from his big body. Jane had sunk into a chair and was crying. I went over to her.

"Listen," I said. "Callahan's off his beam. He's stuck and wants to make a quick arrest to boost his stock. We'll have Lou out of the jug by morning."

The girl looked up eagerly, then her face clouded.

"But his reputation! He's set on the Army and this might get him thrown out."

I patted her arm. I didn't have a leg to stand on, but I stuck my neck out.

"I'll clear him like the Marines cleared the Solomons. Let's take a look at his office. Maybe there's a lead there."

Jane got to her feet and led me through Mabry's office, which adjoined Friml's, and on into a smaller one whose frosted glass door carried Lou's name and title. She flipped on a light and settled in a chair.

I frisked the room and found nothing suspicious. I delved into a clothes closet and found an assortment of sports-coats hanging on hooks. On a shelf was a supply of miscellaneous photographic equipment — light

meters, flash-bulbs, bottles of developer and fixative, and stacks of black-wrapped sensitized paper for making prints. On the floor was a large envelope which apparently had fallen from the shelf.

I picked it up and found it unsealed. Inside was a photograph of Carol Jergins. I did a double-take.

Carol Jergins had been a strip tease artist, a show girl, a night club beauty—then a headache for the New York Police Department. Two years ago she had either bumped herself off or been plugged by a boy friend who, so far, had not been identified by the best of the homicide men. A missing link in the chain of circumstantial evidence was a page torn from a New York hotel register which listed the name of a young man admirer. With that page the police would have had the murderer.

IN THE back of the photograph was hand-printed:

JUST TO REMIND YOU THAT THE N. Y. COPS STILL HAVE A COPY OF THIS FILED UNDER UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

I slipped it back into its envelope and returned it to its place on the floor. I went over to Jane.

"Look," I said. "Did Lou know Carol Jergins?"

She stared at me, her face puzzled. "Yes. Over two years ago, when she was on the Coast. He was a kid then, only eighteen, but he had a crush on her. He did some professional pictures of her."

"Do you now if he kept any copies?"

Jane shook her head. "No. He destroyed those he had after she died. Her death hit him pretty hard. His interest, though, was nothing but infatuation."

"Did anyone else know about this infatuation?" I asked.

"I suppose so," Jane said. "He was working for Panamint then, and they were seen together. Why?"

"I dunno," I said, and scratched my head.

A motive was shaping itself in my mind, but I couldn't tie the strings together. I reviewed the killing. Edwards at the end of the bridge.

"Hey!" I said. "Think hard. Was there any change in the action of the

[Turn page]

AUDELS Carpenters and Builders Guides 4 vols. \$6



Inside Trade Information
Carpenters, Builders, Joiners, Building Mechanics and all Woodworkers. These Guides give you the shortest instructions that you want—helping new methods, ideas, additions, plans, systems and money saving suggestions. An easy progressive course for the apprentice and student. A practical daily primer and Quick Reference for the master worker. Carpenters everywhere are using these Guides as a helping hand to their Work, Better Work and Better Pay. To get the same course for yourself simply fill in and mail the FREE COUPON below.

Inside Trade Information On:

How to use the steel square—How to file and set saws—How to build furniture—How to use a mitre box—How to use the chalk line—How to use rules and scales—How to make joints—Carpenters arithmetic—Solving measurement problems—Estimating strength of timbers—How to set girders and sills—How to frame houses and roofs—How to estimate costs—How to build houses, barns, garages, hangars, etc.—How to read and draw plans—Drawing up specifications—How to excavate—How to use settings 12, 13 and 17 on the steel square—How to build hoists and scaffolds—skylights—How to build stairs—How to put on interior trim—How to hang doors—How to lay-lay Soors—How to paint



THEO. AUDEL & CO., 49 W. 23rd St., New York City
Mail Audels Carpenters and Builders Guides, 4 vols., on 7 days free trial. If O.K. I will send \$1 in 7 days, and \$5 monthly until \$6 is paid. Otherwise I will return them. No obligation unless I am satisfied.

Name

Address

Occupation

ReferencePAL

Help Kidneys If Back Aches

Do you feel older than you are or suffer from Getting Up Nights, Backache, Nervousness, Leg Pains, Dizziness, Swollen Ankles, Rheumatic Pains, Burning, scanty or frequent passages? If so, remember that your Kidneys are vital to your health and that these symptoms may be due to non-organic and non-systemic Kidney and Bladder troubles—in such cases Cystex (a physician's prescription) usually gives prompt and joyous relief by helping the Kidneys flush out poisonous excess acids and wastes. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose in trying Cystex. An iron-clad guarantee assures a refund of your money on return of empty package unless fully satisfied. Don't delay. Get Cystex (Sias-Tex) from your druggist today.

Cystex
Helps Flush Kidneys Only 35c.

Many Paths to 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and ability permit. Course equivalent to regular 4 or 5 year—prepare for college entrance exams Standard H.S. texts supplied. Diplomas awarded for 12 or 18 subjects already completed. 1-year subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement. Possesses an industry and socially, you'll be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. HWA, Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37

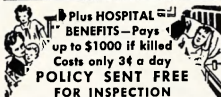
TO BE SET TO MUSIC

Send your Poems for our new offer and FREE "Rhyming Dictionary" today.

Photograph Records Made

VANDERBILT MUSIC STUDIOS
Dept. 18-W, Box 112 • Coney Island, N. Y.

\$100 MONTHLY for Sickness and Accidents



Plus HOSPITAL BENEFITS - Pays up to \$1000 if killed
Costs only 3¢ a day
POLICY SENT FREE FOR INSPECTION

A NEW sickness - accident - hospital policy that pays up to \$100 a month for disability from sickness or accident - and hospital benefits in addition - pays your beneficiary up to \$1,000 if you are killed - costs as little as 3¢ a day!

Covers ALL accidents from very first day... ALL sickness from very first day, except those specifically excluded in policy. No waiting period of 7 or 14 days.

Other benefits you will see for yourself when you send for a regular policy on FREE inspection without obligation.

This protection now offered on monthly payment plan of only \$1.00 a month - or on quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments. BUT SEND NO MONEY. Write for policy on free inspection. No agents will call - no medical examination. Write today - send full name, address, age, occupation and name of beneficiary to Postal Life & Casualty Insurance Co., 6287 Postal Life Bldg., Kansas City 2, Mo.

(SIDELINE Salesmen and Agents)

Sell our Illustrated Comic Booklet, and other novelties. Each booklet size 4 1/2 by 14 1/2. Ten different comic booklets sent for 50¢ or 25¢ assorted for \$1.00. Shipped prepaid. Wholesale novelty price list sent with order only. No C.O.D. orders. Send Cash or Stamp. Print name and address.

REPSAC SALES CO., 1 West 13th St., Dept. 4412, New York 11, N.Y.

CASH for YOUR SURPLUS, UNUSED U. S. STAMPS

Mail order Dealers Collectors: We buy accumulations and surplus UNUSED U. S. Postage stamps at 85% face value or less - minimum \$5 to 10¢. 85% and value for denominations 50¢ to 50¢. Small lots 85%. MAIL TO: AMPB BROS. TEL. RD. 10747 1st St. N. W. BARBER SERVICE, 72 Fifth Ave., Dept. 4412, New York 11, N.Y.

LODESTONE

LIVE and STRONG \$1 per Pair

7 Keys to Power, \$1. Postage extra if C.O.D. Charms, Powders, Oils, Herbs, Novelties, etc., described in FREE Catalog.

D. SMYTHE CO. Box 7, NEWARK, MO.

USED Correspondence Courses

Complete home-study courses and self-instruction books, slightly used. Sold, rented, exchanged. All goods guaranteed. Cash paid for used courses. Full details and 84-page illustrated bargain catalog FREE. Write today!

NELSON CO., 521 E. Wabash, Dept. 227, Chicago

FEET HURT

Don't groan about tired, burning feet. Don't moan about callouses. Get busy and give them a LUMCO FOOT EASE treat. Feel the comforting, soothing coolness of LUMCO driving out fiery burning, aching tiredness. Rub LUMCO FOOT EASE over those ugly hard old corns and callouses, as directed. See how this foot cream brings softness to your feet. LUMCO is not greasy or messy, vanishes immediately. Send \$1.00 today for large size trial jar, and go about your work happy again. Satisfaction guaranteed. Backed by 30 years amazing success.

LUMCO PRODUCTS Dept. 421-K KIMBALL, NEBR.

SONG POEMS WANTED

We want song poems and lyrics on all subjects. We offer the services of a noted Hollywood motion picture studios composer and arranger. Send your poem today for our consideration and liberal offer.

HOLLYWOOD MELODIES P. O. Box 21688
 Hollywood 28, California

BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS!

retake when Edwards was shot?"

Jane sniffed, swiped her nose with a hanky.

"No, except that he lay down at the end of the bridge instead of the middle of it. Before, he had been in the center. Frequently slight changes in direction are made in retakes for various reasons. Clearer lighting, better shots."

Better shots! I closed my eyes and visualized the scene. Edwards lying there, blood pumping from his temple. The hole in his head was aimed directly at the ceiling! The camera was at right angles!

I headed for the door.

"Keep your chin up, kid," I said. "Lou couldn't possibly have shot Edwards. Somebody's trying to pin a double killing on him and I'm going to prove it!"

I slammed out and high-tailed for the sound stage. If I could only reach there before the murderer removed the evidence!

The building housing Sound Stage Four was a blue-black hulk against the darker blue of the dimout. The cop on the door had been dismissed, apparently when Callahan decided Lou Mathis was the killer. I found the place unlocked.

I slipped inside the total darkness of the stage and leaned against the wall. I figured that the body had been moved so that the path of the bullet could not be traced. Also, a bullet of soft lead splatters when it hits and cannot be identified with a gun by ballistics experts. The rifling marks are destroyed.

The .38 under the camera could well have been planted, and the real murder gun fired from some other point. Hence, moving the body. On top of that, Edwards apparently had received a change of direction in his actions for the retake just before his last scene. Friml was the last man with him alone.

I felt along the wall in the direction of Sound Stage Four. I was about to flip on my flash when I heard a slight sound to my left. I froze against a flat of scenery. The noise was not repeated. Probably a rat scurrying about.

I crept forward until I figured I was over the spot where Edwards had been

shot. I turned on my flash. A pool of coagulated blood reflected from the light, and I swung the beam upward. Somewhere from above the shot had been fired—and by remote control!

Stored scenery, trailing ropes, and cobwebs showed in the light as I raked the rafters. Then there was a grating sound and something as heavy as a tank hit my shoulders. My face was smeared against the floor and my flash went skittering. An arm encircled my neck and pulled tight. I felt the blood pounding in my head and all I could do was whip back with an elbow. It struck soft flesh and for a moment the weight on my back lifted.

I MANAGED to roll over and lift my feet. I kicked out. There was a gratifying connection with my assailant's stomach and he must have sailed several feet. On hands and knees I felt frantically for my flash.

And then all the stars in the heavens exploded in the Sound Stage building as something cracked against my skull. For the second time my face hit the floor and I was out. . . .

Slowly I came back to consciousness. My whole body felt numb. I tried to raise an arm that didn't seem part of me, and a torturing stab of pain shot through my side. I moved a leg and felt the same pain. I was trussed up like a Christmas turkey.

Above me I saw a skittering of light. It was in the rafters. A hand was untying a gun from a beam. A wire was jerked and a tiny box came loose. The light was off for a moment and a body thumped to the floor. Then the light came on again in my face. It stabbed my aching head like a knife.

"I don't know just what to do with you," a voice back of the light said.

The way I felt I didn't give a hoot if he blasted my head off. However, I remember feeling some satisfaction at knowing my deduction was right. I must have been half crazy from the smack on the head, because I said:

"I know why you murdered Ronald Edwards."

The light jerked as if he were startled.

"You killed him," I went on, "because he blackmailed you into getting him a contract at Panamint. He had

[Turn page]

New Amazing 3-Volume MACHINE SHOP TRAINING COURSE



Machinist Tools completely described and fully demonstrated. Corer, Measurers, Lathes, Drill Presses, Milling Machines, Shapers, Planers, Bridge's Blueprint Reading & Drafting, and Hundreds of Other Subjects essential in your daily work leading to higher pay.

Easiest way to get MACHINIST TRAINING

World of machinery concentrated into 3-Volume Course. Vitally necessary for Machinists, quick Training Course for Beginners. Written in "easy-to-read" language by practical shop instructors in National Schools, which has operated successfully for 38 years, with 37,000 graduates. Hundreds of illustrations, diagrams, and arts and time-saving tables. You get absolutely FREE 7 Drafting Lessons, Mechanical Dictionary, and 2 Big Mathematics Texts if you MAIL THE COUPON IMMEDIATELY.

FOR BEGINNERS & EXPERTS

NATIONAL SCHOOLS

San Angeles, California

FREE 7-DAY TRIAL EXAMINATION

NATIONAL SCHOOLS, Dept. Y-12 **Pay on Proxy**
4000 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles 37, Calif. **Postcard**

Yes, without obligating myself in any way, ship to me at once, your big 3-VOLUME MODERN MACHINE SHOP TRAINING COURSE. Within 7 days after receiving the Course (and marvelous Bonus G.P. for prot-pieces) will ship return our shipment, and owe you nothing— or if satisfied, I'll send you \$2.00, and \$3.00 a month until a total of \$12.00 is paid (final \$11.25) with this Course. Same return privilege.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____
OCCUPATION _____ AGE _____

Do You Suffer With COLON TROUBLES?

Causes — Effects — Treatment Told in FREE BOOK

Are you bothered with Stomach or Intestinal troubles, Constipation, Piles, Fistula? To get information about these common ailments often caused by colon infection, write for FREE book which contains many diagrams, charts and X-Ray pictures of rectal and colonic conditions. The Thornton & Minor Clinic, Suite H1216, 926 McGee St., Kansas City, Mo.

Latest styles
EYE GLASSES

ORDER BY MAIL
16 DAYS TRIAL

**AS LOW AS
1.89
PAIR**

MONEY BACK
Guarantee
Your money refunded if not entirely satisfied with glasses.

Save money by ordering eye glasses in your own home. Money loaned some new styles. Low Prices.

SEND NO MONEY
Just order for FREE Catalog. Take advantage of big money savings. We repair broken glasses. Fill prescription.

MODERN STYLE SPECTACLES, Inc.
33 W. Jackson Blvd., Dept. H12, Chicago, Ill.

SONGWRITERS

If you're really interested in songwriting, you should write for our free book. It tells us our splendid service plan which new writers praise so highly. Let us help you as we have helped others. Write today for FREE INSPIRING BOOKLET.

ALLIED MUSIC CO., Dept. 32, 204 E. 4th St., Cincinnati, Ohio

New 3 in 1 Policy
Only \$1
A MONTH

**SICKNESS
 ACCIDENT
 HOSPITALIZATION**
 All three in one

Policy Pays Benefits Up To:

\$5,000.00
 Accumulated Cash for
 Accidental Loss of
 Life, Limbs or Sight

\$150.00
 A month for
 Accident Disability

\$100.00
 A month for
 Loss of Time

**\$7.50 EACH
 DAY**

Don't take dangerous chances! Why risk your savings, perhaps your future, when just a few pennies a day pays for real protection? 3-in-1 policy pays liberal benefits from FIRST DAY! Even covers common sicknesses and ordinary accidents. No agents, no red tape, no medical examination. Mail-plan out expenses, gives you greater insurance value, investigate at once. No obligation. Write for Free **Illustrated Catalog**.
GEORGE ROGERS CLARK CASUALTY CO.
 Dept. N-51 • **Rockaway, N.Y.**

She Got \$400.00
for a Half Dollar
I will pay CASH for
OLD COINS, BILLS and STAMPS

POST YOURSELF! I paid \$400.00 to Mrs. Dowry Ferris for one Half Dollar J.D. Martin of Virginia \$300.00 for a single Cooper Cent. Mr. Manning of New York \$1,500.00 for one Silver Dollar. Mrs. G. F. Adams, Ohio, received \$740.00 for a few old coins. I will pay big prices for all kinds of old coins, medals, bills and stamps.

I WILL PAY \$100.00 FOR A DIME!
 1894 S. Mint; \$50.00 for 1918 Liberty Head Nickel and hundreds of other passing prices for coins. Send 4 for Large Illustrated Coin Folder and further particulars. It costs more which profit to you. Write today to
B. MAX MEHL, 133 Mehl Bldg., FORT WORTH, TEXAS
 (Largest Rare Coin Establishment in U. S.)

SONG POEMS WANTED

TO BE SET TO MUSIC

Free Examinations. Send Your Poems to

J. CHAS. McNEIL, MASTER OF MUSIC

510 TF So. Alexandria **Los Angeles, Calif.**



OLD LEG TROUBLE

Easy to use Viscose Method heals many old leg sores caused by leg congestion, varicose veins, swollen legs and indigestion or no cost for TRIAL. Describe your trouble and get FREE BOOK.

T. G. VISCOSE METHOD COMPANY
 140 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois

FREE!
FAMOUS
BLUE BOOK
CATALOG



DICE - CARDS

Perfect Dice, Magic Dice, Magic Cards—READ THE BACKS—Inks, Doubs, Poker Chips, Gaming Layouts, Dice Boxes, Counter Games, Punchboards. WRITE FOR CATALOG TODAY.

K. C. CARD CO., 1223 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

the missing page from the hotel register in New York with your name on it. It would complete the evidence the cops need to pin the murder of Carol Jergins on you.

"His contract was up next month, and he demanded you get a renewal. You knew there was no justification for urging it, no chance of getting it. His pictures smelled to high heaven. So you got up nerve enough to kill him."

"Go on," the voice said, softly, coldly.

I felt icy sweat on my face, and I was sick at my stomach. My head seemed about to explode any moment, and my bound hands and feet were like molten steel. I went on talking, almost babbling. It helped ease the pain.

"You rigged up the photo-electric cell that was used to turn on the studio lot lights. It operates by a beam flashing across the circuit. You hooked the relay to the gun, aimed the gun at the spot you directed Edwards to lie on, and then let the searchlight effect of the war scene do the dirty work. When that beam broke the contact, the relay pulled the trigger. You even put soft lead bullets in the gun so they couldn't be traced to any specific pistol."

The light held in my face had become a shivering red ball of heat.

"And, you dirty killer," I yelled, "you thought you had a perfect suspect in Lou Mathis! You knew he was sore at Edwards for making a pass at his sister. You also knew he was crazy about the Jergins dame a couple of years ago and could have been the unknown admirer. So you placed a picture of the dead girl in his office, stole his gun, and planted it near the camera."

I was getting delirious. I remember snickering at his stupidity. My head was floating toward the ceiling. My arms and legs were no longer a part of me. Words flowed from my mouth like ticker tape.

"You idiot!" I howled. "You made your colossal mistake in not knowing Mathis' history. At least you should have chosen someone who had been in New York at the time of the murder. Mathis has never been out of California!"

SOMETHING pressed against my temple. It was the nose of a pistol and the cool metal felt good. My head was an inferno. A breeze fanned my face with a gentle swishing. He was wrapping a cloth around his gun to muffle the report.

"You are clever, Jimmy Lee," he said. "Too clever to stay alive."

My mind cleared for a moment. It was the subconscious desire to live making a desperate effort to push through. I jerked my head. A muffled roar blasted my ear and a single of fire creased my scalp. The man cursed and pistol-whipped me across the face. I faded again. . . .

I came to in the midst of a babble
[Turn page]

*Read the Best in
Mystery Fiction!*



*Exciting Novels, Novelets and Short
Stories by Popular Writers in*

- THE PHANTOM DETECTIVE
- THRILLING DETECTIVE
- POPULAR DETECTIVE
- EXCITING DETECTIVE
- G-MEN DETECTIVE
- DETECTIVE NOVELS MAGAZINE
- BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE

Each Only 10c Everywhere

MACHINE SHOP MEN Needed Now!

Learn to set up and run ANY kind of machine: **MAKE MORE MONEY NOW** by learning quickly **HOW TO DO THINGS** which usually take years of study and practice! The demand for SKILLED men is ALREADY ahead of the supply, then **WHAT WILL IT BE** a month or two from now?

Bigger Pay Don't miss this chance to qualify for promotion, don't miss this Big Opportunity which is yours almost for the asking. Eight Big Books chockful of important mechanical facts told simply and clearly. Over 2000 pages, nearly 8000 illustrations cover every subject fully, including Tool Making, Pattern Making, Foundry Work, Mechanical Drawing, Forging, Machine Shop Practice and Management, and hundreds of other subjects.

8 Big Books (Up-to-date Edition) Sent FREE to you for examination. With them we send a Big Binder of nearly 200 pages with 200 shop tickets and over 1300 illustrations. These show, step by step, how to set up and run almost any kind of job and are in addition to the 8 books. Do this in your own home or place of business whether or not you want to keep them, check up on any facts you want to. Note their great **MONEY MAKING** value, then, if you want them, pay on the easiest kind of payments. A year's consulting privileges with your earnings now given with these books without extra charge. American Technical Society, Vocational Publishers Since 1880.

American Technical Society, Dept. 8949, Drexel at 58th St., Chicago 37
You may send me the 8 big books and binder of shop tickets for free examination. I will pay the delivery charges only, unless I decide to keep them in which case I will send \$2.00 in ten days and \$3.00 per month until the total price of only \$34.95 is paid. If I return them in 10 days I will owe you nothing. You also agree to send me a certificate outlining me to consulting privileges with your experts for one year without extra charge.

Name

Address

Please attach a letter stating age, occupation, employer's name and address and that of at least one business man as reference. Men in service, also please give home address.



DRAW for MONEY

Be An ARTIST!

TRAINED ARTISTS ARE CAPABLE
OF EARNING

\$30 - \$50 - \$75 A WEEK

Prepare in your spare time for
a profitable Art Career

NOW is the time to plan your future in Art. COMMERCIAL ART. ILLUSTRATING. CARTOONING—all in ONE complete home study course. No previous Art experience necessary—hundreds have profited by our practical method since 1914. TWO ART OUTFITS furnished. Write today for FREE CATALOGUE, "Art for Pleasure & Profit"—tells all about our course, service—and opportunities for you in Art. State age.

WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF ART
Studio 6212F, 1118-15 St., N. W., Wash. & D. C.

TOOTHACHE?

GET quick relief with Dent's Tooth Gum or Dent's Tooth Drops! "Cavity toothache" frequently strikes at night. Be prepared! Buy a package from your druggist. Keep it handy. Follow directions.

DENT'S TOOTH GUM 25¢
TOOTH DROPS

SONGWriters

Songs & poems wanted. NO CHARGE FOR MELODIES. Your chance to write a song with writer of "Goodnight Sweetheart," "Show Me Way to Go Home," "Organ Played at Twilight." Send your material today for free exam. and details.

SONGLAND • DEPT. 2 • P. O. BOX 190
Beverly Hills, California

Acid Indigestion

Relieved in 5 minutes or
double your money back

When excess stomach acid causes painful, suffocating gas, sour stomach and heartburn, doctors usually prescribe the fastest-acting medicine known for symptomatic relief—medicines like those in Bell's Tablets. No laxative. Bell's Tablets brings comfort in a fifty or double your money back on return of bottle to us. 25¢ everywhere.

FALSE TEETH

60 DAY TRIAL

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE OF
SATISFACTION protects you

SEND NO MONEY
J. B. CLEVELAND DENTAL PLATE CO.
DEPT. 2-73

7th YEAR

We make FALSE TEETH for you from your own impressions in strict accordance with new U. S. Law.



LOW
AS

995

Write Today for Free
Booklet and Material
EAST ST. LOUIS, ILLINOIS

Protect Entire Family for \$1 a Month

Certificate Paying Benefits up to \$1,000.00.
Sent for FREE inspection FREE

Covers accidental or natural death. No medical examination. Age limits 2 to 75 years. SEND NO MONEY—Just your name and address. No obligation. No salesman will call. Postcard will do. Atlas Mutual Benefit Ass'n, Dept. 104, Wilmington, Delaware.

HOME APPLIANCE REPAIRING

AMERICA'S FASTEST GROWING INDUSTRY

Manufacturing restrictions have boomed the always profitable home appliance repair business. New course, profusely illustrated, written in simple, easy-to-understand language, quickly prepares mechanically inclined men for repairing refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, motors, washing machines, sewing, nickel plating, etc., etc. Shows you how to make power machines, how to get business. Get into the big money now and have a business of your own. Write the way to our end today for FREE literature. Carsty Supply Co., 2835 N. Central Ave., Dept. D-104, Chicago.

SONGWRITERS

We are offering a new and BETTER service to you. Our complete service includes revision, completion of your song, recording, radio broadcast and promotion. Send your song or song poem today for our liberal offer.

SCREENLAND RECORDERS

Box 1247C

Hollywood, California



WILLIAM W. LORD

"SUPER-MIND"

DISTINGUISHED
PSYCHO-GRAPHOLOGIST
30 Successful Years of
Personal-Relations Counsel

3 PERSONAL QUESTIONS

CONFIDENTIALLY ANSWERED

upon receipt of letter in your handwriting and \$1.00

LORD, 20 West Jackson Boulevard, R-12, Chicago 4, Ill.



Excellent Over-the-Picture Ring—made from
and photo. Send No Money! Mail photo with paper
strip for ring size. Pay postage only \$1.00 plus postage.
Send actual size strip. Photo returned with ring.
Money back guarantee. Send photo and ring size now.
PORTRAIT RING CO., Dept. L-25, CINCINNATI, O.

of voices. The lights in the sound stage were on like a pre-war Carthage Circle opening. Callahan stood over me with a wet towel. He had been wiping my face with it. He beamed when I opened my eyes.

"Jimmy Lee!" he shouted. "You filled in the missing clue! The motive! I was planted in the building and heard everything you and the murderer said. My taking Mathis out was an excuse to get back to the sound stage. I figured the answer was here. Boy, have we got an air-tight case!"

I flexed my arms and legs which had been freed and now only tingled. I pushed to my feet. My head felt a hundred per cent better. I squinted a bleary eye at the lieutenant.

"Listen," I said groggily. "Did you sit in a cozy corner watching Art Mabry beat my head into a pulp and try to amputate my legs and arms with baling wire?"

Callahan shrugged, smiling broadly. "Well, of course, we had to get the evidence. After all, we jumped him before he finished you off, though I'll admit it was close. He'll fry, don't worry." He patted my shoulder.

I glanced to my left where a cop had Mabry handcuffed. His face seemed pushed to one side where something had connected with it.

"What did that to his map?" I asked Callahan.

The lieutenant swelled a bit. "This good old right," he said, hefting his fist.

"Like this?" I asked.

I swung a haymaker for Callahan's jaw and landed. His head whipped back and he rode his heels for ten feet before he hit the floor. I shook my tingling hand.

"That," I said, "was for letting me get the brains beat out of my skull by Mabry. If you get your Beau Brummel self off the floor, I'll give you another one for letting him put my legs and arms on the bum."

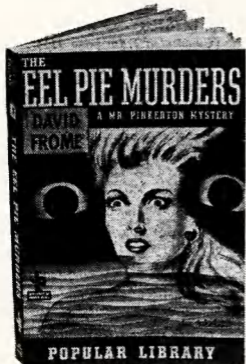
Callahan got up, shaking his head. He was grinning as he felt his chin tenderly.

"Jimmy," he said, "we're square. Maybe I deserved it. But not a second one. There's nothing wrong with your arms."

Read **THRILLING MYSTERY** Every Issue!

Mystery Fans!

Here's Your Chance to Obtain
World-Famous Best Sellers
AT ONLY 25¢ PER COPY!



Current POPULAR LIBRARY Hits

- THE EEL PIE MURDERS.....by David Frome
TO WAKE THE DEAD.....by John Dickson Carr
DEATH FOR DEAR CLARA.....by Q. Patrick
DEATH DEMANDS AN AUDIENCE.....by Helen Reilly
THE STONEWARE MONKEY.....by R. Austin Freeman
DEATH SITS ON THE BOARD.....by John Rhode

Formerly priced at \$2.00 and more, these masterpieces of mystery are now only 25¢ each at all stands in the new POPULAR LIBRARY EDITION—complete and unabridged—packed with thrills, suspense, surprises, and action!

POPULAR LIBRARY books are easy to read and easy to carry—they represent America's biggest entertainment value!

Only books of proven merit are selected—and they are printed and bound attractively for your permanent enjoyment.

Ask your newsdealer for Popular Library books

Or, to order direct, send 30¢ for each title (which includes cost of mailing and handling) to POPULAR LIBRARY, Dept. TM 12, 11 East 39th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

ELECTRICITY Learn at Home

BIG WAR WORK FIELD—BIG FUTURE!

For Beginner or Old Timer—a simple, practical training and reference set. See it now.



7 Day FREE TRIAL

Costs You Nothing to Examine this 3-Vol. Set of COYNE ELECTRICAL BOOKS!



Say, do you like Electricity? Do you want to learn about Electricity, Radio and the developments and progress of Electronics? Are you interested in these subjects as a hobby, or as a vocation?

Would you like to have this knowledge at your finger tips, available to you so that you can quickly locate any branch of any of these subjects? Then you need the 3-volume COYNE REFERENCE ENCYCLOPEDIA.

Contains over 2000 Illustrations—over 2000 subjects all plainly indexed so you can locate any of them in a moment's time. It can add money to your pay check as well as keeping you up to date.

You can be the authority on any subject in Electricity—Radio—Television and Electronics covered in this remarkable set. Doesn't cost you a cent to see and examine it in your own home for 7 days.

Read the coupon below—then fill it in and send it to me. I'll send you your set. If it isn't something you'll value all your life then send it back. It will not have cost you one penny to have seen it.

Do it right now before you lay this ad aside.

Then you decide if you want it at the low price I'm making and the very liberal terms I'm offering.

H.C. Coyne

H. C. LEWIS, Pres., Dept. 83-75
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
560 S. Paulina St., Chicago 12, Illinois

Send me postpaid, the big 3-volume NEW EDITION COYNE ELECTRICAL and RADIO REFERENCE ENCYCLOPEDIA, and 150 FREE COYNE SHOP PRINTS. Within 7 days after receiving the books, I'll either return them or send you \$3.00 and then \$3 a month until the total price of \$13.95 is paid.

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
CITY..... STATE.....
OCCUPATION..... AGE.....
SAVE 10% Send cash price, \$12.50, with order. If preferred, you save \$1.40. Same 7-day free trial and return privilege.

FREE With This Training!



Big \$3x11 in. book of 150 Coyne Shop Prints. Actual wiring diagrams, motor windings, radio book-ups, etc. For daily use on job. Limited quantity, so ACT NOW, 1 yr. Personal Technical Service by mail from the Coyne Staff on any Electrical or Radio problem, FREE with set.

Free Book On Many Ailments

Learn Facts About Colitis and
Constipation

Here is good news. A new 122-page up-to-the-minute book on Piles, Fistula and related rectal and colon ailments—will be sent free for the asking. It may save you much suffering, time and money. Write today—The McCleary Clinic, 1297 Elms Blvd., Excelsior Springs, Missouri.



GOOD MONEY FOR YOUR SPARE TIME!

Be our Dealer in your locality for **STRONG UNION MADE WORK AND SPORT GARMENTS**. No experience necessary. Easy work. Millions of defense workers buy work uniforms. Advertising on garments big sales feature. We supply everything needed. Write immediately for **FREE** Outline. **ROBT. STRONG GARMENT CO.**
2330 W. Cermak Rd., Dept. A12, Chicago, Ill.

ASTHMA Symptoms Believed.
Write today for free information and special money back offer.
W. K. STERLINE, 830 Ohio Ave., Sydney, Ohio

POEMS WANTED

For Musical Setting

Mother, Home, Love, Sacred, Patriotic, Comic or any subject. Don't Delay—Send us your Original Poem at once—for immediate examination and **FREE** Rhyming Dictionary.

RICHARD BROTHERS 74 WOODS BUILDING
CHICAGO, ILL.



DICE. CARDS.

Specialties for Magicians use. Inks. Shiners, Check-Cop, Dabbs. Catalog ten cents, stamps or coin.
WILL BROS., Box T, Salida, Colo.

Over 200,000 Satisfied Users



STOP TOBACCO?

Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have. Make yourself free and happy with Tobacco. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and of a treatment which has relieved many men.

FREE BOOK

THE NEWELL COMPANY
110 Clayton Station, St. Louis, Mo.

Over 30 Years in Business



Most Amazing Books in the World
Send for Giant 500-Page Catalog
OCCULT—CABALISTIC MAGIC

Benefit from the work of ancient and modern Masters in utilizing the powers of Nature. Learn their Discoveries, Laws, Rules, Codes, Esoteric Practices and Ceremonies. Enjoy the

fascinating study of Spiritualism, Hypnotism, Mediumship, Clairvoyance, Divination, and the numerous kinds of "Magic." Free "Good-Luck Talismans." All types of Supplies and Equipment for study and practice of the Occult Arts and Practices. **Spiritual Development "Triangle" device FREE with Catalog** only on receipt of 25c. Address:

DeLAURENCE CO., 179 No. Michigan Ave., Dept. 3, Chicago 1, Ill.



FOR VICTORY
Buy
U. S. WAR SAVINGS
BONDS • STAMPS

MYSTERY-SCOPES

(Concluded from page 11)

Dear Mr. O'Rourke: The bridge is located in County Sligo, Ireland. A sign advises that any O'Rourke passing it, will die. One O'Rourke did defy the curse, and died. Since then no O'Rourkes have volunteered to try it.

Dear Chakra: I have heard that there is a pile of huge stones in Holland which cannot be accounted for and which the Nazis will not touch for fear of a curse. Is this true?—**Hazel Mickey.**

Dear Miss Mickey: It is called The Hunnebed. No one knows where these giant stones came from. Hollanders have spread the belief that any Nazi who touches them will die. Chunks of these stones have been used to kill Nazi guards in the night, and the slightest touch brings death to the Hun.

Dear Chakra: Where can I get the account which claims that Mrs. Houdini did contact her dead husband? I've heard it is obtainable.—**Charles Dumas.**

Dear Mr. Dumas: From The Psychic Observer Institute, Lily Dale, N. Y.

—CHAKRA.

Special FREE Offer

Send this coupon to Mystery-Scopes, THRILLING MYSTERY Magazine, 11 East 39th St., New York 16, N. Y. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. You will receive a Chakra-Crystal-Scope giving you a complete analysis of yourself—your lucky number, good and bad traits, lucky color, best occupation and other vital information.

MYSTERY-SCOPES,
THRILLING MYSTERY,
11 East 39th St., New York 16, N. Y.

Please send **CHAKRA-CRYSTAL-SCOPE**, free of charge, to:

.....
Print name on this line

Address

City..... State.....

Date of birth.....
Day Month Year

(Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope)

12-43

Next Issue's

CALENDAR OF MYSTERY



HE old lawyer was tired. He was too far along in years, he reflected a trifle sadly, for all this bustling about. Four trips to New York City from his comfortable little home in Montclair inside of one week had eaten heavily into his slim reserve of vitality. His name was O'Connell, and he had once been a renowned jurist. Tall, white-haired, he was a

living waxwork figure—a survival of an era already buried in the pages of history.

But he wasn't sufficiently of the dead past. So somebody tried to run him down with an automobile as he crossed the street. Only the scream of a plump woman wearing a foolish little red hat saved his life from this attempt—and permitted Mr. O'Connell to live to bring a mysterious business into the life of Breck Barnum, press agent. One thing only leads to another, until Barnum is up to his inquisitive ears and energetic eyebrows in a thorough mess of peril and intrigue.

In **THE STONES IN THE SCRIPT**, by Sam Merwin, Jr., you will find one of the most absorbing mystery yarns of the year—and with a smashing climax that will surprise you. Follow the unfolding drama of mystery for yourself in the next issue of **THRILLING MYSTERY** which will contain this complete novel in its entirety. It will hold you completely engrossed to the very last line.

There is a splendid companion novelet to go along with this main novel. **MURDER ON DELIVERY**, by Lee E. Wells, is an enthralling story with its setting in the placid country section of Indiana. Val Jones, oil-painting artist in the artistic colony of Brown County, suddenly finds himself sheriff of the county. This is not so bad in spite of its incongruity—until he finds himself confronted with grim and perplexing murder mystery which he has to solve.

From this point on things pick up and move with a deadly speed and purpose that will hold you breathless. Author Wells has done an excellent job on this story. And the final answer will surprise you, too!

There will also be several unusual short stories which will grip your interest in the telling and amaze you in the final solution.

If you enjoy the different sort of stories you find in **THRILLING MYSTERY**, won't you please write in and tell us? We are always open to suggestions, and we welcome complaints as well as praise. Just address your letter or postcard to The Editor, **THRILLING MYSTERY**, 11 East 39th Street, New York 16, N. Y. We promise you that your communication will be read and appreciated.

And so, until next issue—good reading to you!

—THE EDITOR.

PLASTICS

Car in the Street—and Car
Needs in a new industry which the plastics user
 needs is forcing to quick maturity. Already **Plastics** are indispensable in practically every branch of the **Business**. **Marine, Signal Corps, etc. Opportunities!** Nearly everything, from homes to clothing, from gadgets to tools, will be affected by **Plastics**.

Spare Time Training Now Ready

The time to get started is now. You can prepare at home, in your spare time, to take your place in an infant industry that even now is leaping into prominence. A new, practical training plan is now ready to help you realize your ambitions and build your future security. Act now. Don't delay. Mail this coupon today.

AMERICAN SCHOOL, Dept. P558,
 800 West 37th St., Chicago 37, Ill.

Send me FREE information covering special training in subjects checked below. No obligation on my part.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Accounting for Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting and Design for Men and Women | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture & Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Shipbuilding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation | <input type="checkbox"/> Home School Course |

Name.....

Address.....

WORLD'S LARGEST **TEETH** MAKERS Now

FALSE TEETH by Mail \$0.95
 Dental Plates made to measure, but
 taken out of your mouth
 and made in our
 factory. Over
 100,000 men &
 women wear
 teeth we made

**MONEY-BACK
 GUARANTEE!**

SEND NO MONEY!

FREE Impression Material, Information, Catalog, Low Prices.
 UNITED STATES DENTAL CO.
 1828 MILWAUKEE AVE., DEPT. C-52, CHICAGO, ILL.

***SONG POEMS WANTED**
 TO BE SET TO MUSIC

* Publishers need new songs! Submit one or more of your best
 * poems for immediate consideration. Any subject. Send poem.
 PHONOGRAPH RECORDS MADE
 * FIVE STAR MUSIC MASTERS, 611 Beacon Bldg., Boston, Mass.

730 SHAVES FROM 1 BLADE

**AMAZING NEW
 BLADE SHARPENER**

New sharpener for all makes of
 double-edge razor blades
 performs miracles! "Not
 necessary to change blades,"
 writes one user. Another says,
 "Have used 1 blade over 70 times." **RAZOROL!**
 really sharpens blades because it shaves on inside
 of blades, smooth shaving edge. No pressure.
 Blade held at right angle and proper
 pressure automatically. Just touch to electric
 blade. No gears. Will sharpen blades, compass, straight
 razor, file, law mowers, blades, hand saws.

Only \$1.00

SEND NO MONEY! Write today. For postage only
 RAZOROL for 6 days as follows: **RAZOROL** for
 smooth, moist shave you get, returns \$5.00. And we'll return
 your dollar! Hurry—order today!
RAZOROL, or **SHARP**
 629 North Michigan Avenue, Dept. 2012, Chicago, Illinois

READY TO WORK—



FOR YOU!

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

BOX 3968-Y, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of booklet and full particulars about the course below which I have marked X. Special tuition rates for members of the Armed Forces.

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Brake | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrician | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Operating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Servicing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aniline Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundryman | <input type="checkbox"/> R. R. Section Foreman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Heating | <input type="checkbox"/> R. R. Signaller |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Heat Treatment of Metals | <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Engine Tune-up | <input type="checkbox"/> Highway Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Locksmith | <input type="checkbox"/> House Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Metal Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation Mechanics | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Metallurgy | <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Drafting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blueprint Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspector | <input type="checkbox"/> Shipfitting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Shop Practice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Machinist | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Electric |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Engine | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Fitting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coal Mining | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Drafting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Mine Foreman | <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contracting and Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Mold-Set Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation | <input type="checkbox"/> Telegraphy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasteurizing | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasteurizing | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Pulp and Paper Making | <input type="checkbox"/> Welding |

BUSINESS COURSES

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Managing Men at Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> C. P. Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Railway Postal Clerk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence | <input type="checkbox"/> First Year College | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Foremanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cartography | <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Show Card and |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Good English | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign Lettering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Preparatory | <input type="checkbox"/> High School | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Management |

HOME ECONOMICS COURSES

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Dressmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Dressmaking and Designing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foods and Cookery | <input type="checkbox"/> Tea Room and Cafeteria |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home Dressmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Management, Catering |

Name.....Age.....

Home Address.....City.....

State.....Present Position.....

Send no money. Send coupon to International Correspondence Schools, Scranton, Pa. Send no money. Send coupon to I. C. S., 11 Avenue, London, W. C. 2, England.

Do YOU want increased pay, larger responsibilities, a real career instead of just a job? Put the famous International Correspondence Schools coupon to work for you!

Marked and mailed, the coupon will bring you full information on I. C. S. training for success in the field of your

interest. It's a messenger prepared to place you in communication with a richly rewarding future.

Thousands who have employed it are leaders of American industry and business. What they have done, you can do. Start now as they did by sending the coupon on a mission for you.

BENRUS Shockproof WATCHES

BUY BY MAIL • EASY TERMS • MONTHS TO PAY

BUY NOW
for
Christmas

\$2975

T606—A Benrus Feature, 15 Jewels; 10K yellow rolled gold plate case. Send \$1.00. Pay \$8.90 after examination—\$5.00 a month

\$3375

T656—17 Jewel Ladies' Benrus; 10K yellow rolled gold plate case. Send \$1.00. Pay \$10.75 after examination—\$5.00 a month

\$4950

T757—"Lady Ruby"—a 17 Jewel Feature with two rubies in 10K coral rolled gold plate case with matching bracelet. Send \$1.00. Pay \$18.50 after examination—\$5.00 a month

I'll send you the Benrus Watch you want for 15 Days Trial on our Money Back Guarantee

Here's the watch you heard announced over the radio—"BENRUS—the Shockproof Watch of Guaranteed Accuracy". Now is your chance to own one. I'll send your choice for examination and 15-Day Trial. Just indicate selection on the Coupon below, giving number and price, and send it with a dollar bill and a brief note telling me who you are, your occupation, draft classification, age and a few other facts about yourself.

I'll open an account for you and send selection by Express subject to your examination. If satisfied, you pay the expressman the balance of one-third of purchase price (required by Federal Regulations) otherwise return selection and your \$1.00 will be refunded. All prices include Federal Tax. Send order to me personally.

Jim Feeney
Sales Mgr.

Free to Adults—a postcard brings 32-Page Catalog with Diamonds, Watches and Jewelry—no obligation.

T715—**\$4250**

15 Jewel Benrus. 10K coral rolled gold plate case with matching bracelet.

Send \$1.00. Pay \$13.17 after examination—\$5.00 a month

\$3375

O455—15 Jewel Benrus for Men. 10K coral rolled gold plate case. Send \$1.00. Pay \$12.35 after examination—\$5.00 a month

\$3975

O702—Man's Benrus; radium dial; 17 Jewels; 10K coral rolled gold plate case.

Send \$1.00. Pay \$12.25 after examination—\$5.00 a month

O758—Attractive square 17 Jewel Benrus. 10K yellow rolled gold plate case. Send \$1.00. Pay \$16.30 after examination—\$5.00 a month

\$2975

O605—15 Jewel Benrus Feature, 10K coral rolled gold plate case. Send \$1.00. Pay \$8.90 after examination—\$5.00 a month

\$5250

SEND \$1 with COUPON—pay BALANCE OF 1/3 DOWN AFTER EXAMINATION

JIM FEENEY
L. W. Sweet, 25 West 14th St. (Dept. 723-M)
New York, N. Y.

Enclosed find \$1 deposit. Send me No. _____
Price \$_____ and \$5.00 monthly thereafter until full price is paid, otherwise I'll return selection and you will refund my dollar.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____

L.W. Sweet

MAIL ORDER DIVISION OF FINLAY STRAUS, Inc.
Dept. 723-M 25 WEST 14th ST., NEW YORK

In times like these, a washer's rare,
Appliances need your tender care!

**FIX IT UP—
MAKE IT DO
OR DO
WITHOUT!**



When things wear out, or fail to go —
Try patching first, and save your dough!



A SUGGESTION FROM

Calvert

Makers of the whiskey with the "Happy Blending"

Although we are distilling only war alcohol, a limited amount of choice whiskey is available from reserves. Every drop is the same prewar quality that made these whiskeys America's favorites.



Calvert Distillers Corp., New York City. BLENDED WHISKEY Calvert "Reserve" 86.8 Proof—65% Grain Neutral Spirits. Calvert "Special": 86.8 Proof—60% Grain Neutral Spirits.