



# TERROR ISLAND

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## CHAPTER I. A CROOK IS TRAPPED

AN elderly man was seated, stoop-shouldered, at a massive desk. Behind him was a closed safe; to his left, a pair of French windows, wide open, that led to a screened veranda. The room was lighted, for it was after dusk; and there was a reason for the open windows, because the night was excessively warm. When occasional breezes came, they floated in from the veranda.

The light from the room repaid that service by casting its soft glow beyond the outside screen. The illumination revealed the long, crinkly leafed branches of palm trees against the porch.

The man at the desk was James Tolwig, a New York millionaire. The room in which he sat was the study of his spacious Florida bungalow. Though less than a dozen miles from Miami, James Tolwig enjoyed a most secluded location; and that fact pleased him. It was one reason why he had chosen to stay in Florida during the off season.

James Tolwig's forehead was furrowed in a puzzled frown. The elderly man was studying a telegram; he

stroked his chin as he read the message. The wire was from Havana; its message simply read:

POSTPONE PURCHASE UNTIL NINE O'CLOCK.

S.

There were footsteps from the hallway. Tolwig pushed the telegram beneath a book; he looked up to see a stolid-faced servant enter, bringing a tray with two tall glasses. Ice clinked as the servant approached the desk. Tolwig gestured.

"Place the tray here, Lovett," he ordered, in a testy tone, "then tell Mr. Bagland that I want to see him. Where is Bagland, anyway? Bah! He claims to be an efficient secretary, but he is never about when I need him -"

Tolwig cut his denunciation short as a tall, smiling-faced man stepped in from the veranda. The arrival was the missing secretary; out for a stroll, Bagland had arrived just in time to hear his employer's words. Tolwig indulged in a slight smile of his own; he motioned for Bagland to be seated.

Lovett stopped at the door; there, the servant turned about and adjusted his ruffled white jacket. He was waiting for further orders. Tolwig dismissed him with a wave of his hand. As soon as the servant's footsteps had faded in the hallway, Tolwig pointed to the door.

Without a word, Bagland arose and closed the door; the secretary came back to the desk and picked up one of the tall glasses. Tolwig took the other glass.

APPARENTLY, Tolwig and his secretary were on most friendly terms, despite the millionaire's harsh statement a few minutes before. As further proof of their accord, Tolwig produced the telegram that he had hidden from Lovett's view. Handing the wire to Bagland, Tolwig spoke.

"This arrived while you were out," stated the millionaire quietly. "What do you make of it, Bagland?"

The secretary studied the telegram. He smiled.

"You must have talked too much," decided Bagland, "when you made that short trip to Havana a few days ago."

"I did mention my intended purchase," nodded Tolwig, "but I did not state from whom I intended to buy. I said nothing concerning George Dalavan.

"Neither does this telegram," observed Bagland. "Probably the man who sent it has never heard of Dalavan. But he may know about the Lamballe tiara; if so, he knows that someone intends to swindle you."

"Unless the telegram is a hoax," rejoined Tolwig. "What should I do about it, Bagland?"

For reply, the secretary crumpled the telegram and threw it into the wastebasket.

"Forget it," he declared. "We already have the goods on Dalavan. We can handle him ourselves. It is after half past eight; Dalavan is already overdue. If we happen to wait until nine o'clock, all right. If not -"

Bagland paused. A bell was tingling; Lovett's footsteps answered, outside the door. The servant was on his way to the front door to admit the visitor. Bagland's smile broadened; in low tones, the secretary whispered:

"George Dalavan."

TWO minutes later, Lovett ushered the visitor into the study. George Dalavan was a man of heavy build, brisk in manner and of military appearance. His hair was short clipped; so was the black mustache that he wore. His whole face was ruddy; the color was natural and not the effect of sunburn. Most conspicuous, however, was the narrowness of his eyes.

They peered sharply from each side of a thin-bridged nose, as Dalavan darted a look toward Bagland, who was now seated at a table in the corner. Then Dalavan concentrated upon Tolwig; he gave a cheery smile as he reached across the desk to shake hands with the millionaire.

"I've brought it," announced Dalavan, in a smooth tone. He lifted a square-shaped suitcase and placed it upon the desk. "The tiara once owned by the Princess de Lamballe, favorite of Marie Antoinette."

Opening the case, Dalavan removed a glittering coronet. Diamonds gleamed brightly in the light. Tolwig received the tiara with both hands; he nodded as he studied the magnificent crown-like object.

"I saw this tiara once before," remarked Tolwig, dryly. "That was in Paris, when the tiara was the property of the Duke of Abragoyne. I doubted that he would ever part with it."

"You know those French nobility," returned Dalavan. "They hang on to their jewels, until they go broke. Then they part with them for a song. Fifty thousand dollars is small money for a piece like this one, Mr. Tolwig."

"Quite true," agreed Tolwig. He opened a desk drawer and drew out a sheaf of bills. "Here is the exact amount. Count the money, Dalavan, and give me a receipt for it."

Dalavan counted the money, which was all in bills of high denomination. He threw a restless glance toward Bagland. The secretary's back was turned; for Bagland was busy at his table.

Dalavan reached into his pocket and pulled out a sheet of paper. Hurriedly, he thrust it out of sight; found another sheet and used it to write a receipt. Tolwig received the written paper and slowly shook his head.

"This is not sufficient," declared the millionaire. "The receipt merely states that you have received fifty thousand dollars for a jeweled tiara. You should specify more than that, Dalavan. You should call it the Lamballe tiara."

"Why?" laughed Dalavan. "You, yourself know that it is the Lamballe tiara."

"Suppose," conjectured Tolwig, "that I should show the tiara to the Duke of Abragoyne? Suppose that he should tell me that it had been stolen from him?"

DALAVAN'S lips tightened; then the mustached man demanded:

"Why should you show the tiara to the duke?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Tolwig. "You admit, then, that the tiara was stolen?"

"I admit nothing, Mr. Tolwig. I have sold numerous curios. People never question where and how I obtained them."

Dalavan paused, then resumed in a purring tone.

"Listen, Mr. Tolwig," he urged, "you're not the first big buyer that I've reasoned with. You want this tiara. You'd never have had a dog's chance to get it, if someone hadn't lifted it from the French duke's

strong-box. It's yours now; bought and paid for, at less than half its value.

"I've convinced others before you. You've heard, no doubt, of Cholmley Clayborne, the big steel man from Chicago. He bought a swell tapestry that came straight from Buckingham Palace. He's keeping mum. Tyler Loman, the movie magnate, bought a collection of rare gold coins from me. They came from the Munich Museum and he knows it. That doesn't matter.

"I didn't steal this tiara. I saved it. The fellows who had it were going to smash it up and sell the chunks. What you are actually doing, Mr. Tolwig, is to save this fine tiara from destruction. You should thank me for giving you the opportunity."

Dalavan's smooth talk had no effect upon Tolwig. Hunched behind his desk, the millionaire clasped both hands and tilted his head. Quietly, he put a single question:

"Then you admit that the tiara was stolen?"

"Sure," returned Dalavan. "I admit it. I've told you what other collectors do. They keep what they know to themselves -"

James Tolwig gestured an interruption. He swung about in his swivel chair, snapped quick words to the corner where Bagland was seated. The secretary spun about; his face showed a wise smile.

Before Dalavan could guess what was due, Bagland pulled a revolver from his coat pocket and leveled it straight at the visitor.

"You have met Bagland before," chuckled Tolwig, to Dalavan. "You took him for what he pretended to be - an ordinary private secretary, and a rather dull one. Actually, he is a private investigator, who has been looking for gentlemen of your ilk."

"I'm not such a bad secretary, either," added Bagland, using his free hand to hold a sheaf of papers in front of Dalavan's ugly eyes. "I've taken shorthand notes on all this conversation, Dalavan. All right, Mr. Tolwig" - Bagland nodded briskly to the millionaire - "you can call the police."

Chuckling, glad that he had trapped a rogue, James Tolwig reached for the telephone on his desk. To gain the telephone, his hand was forced to brush a small desk clock that showed the time as ten minutes before nine.

Tolwig scarcely noticed the clock. Hence he did not think of the telegram that had specified the hour of nine. Even if he had recalled the telegram, it would scarcely have mattered at this moment. James Tolwig had ignored that message, to act on his own initiative.

The time was past when proper recognition of that telegram could have proven of vital value to James Tolwig.

## **CHAPTER II. A POSTPONED TRAIL**

IF ever a man behaved as a cornered rat, George Dalavan displayed the part when James Tolwig placed a hand upon the telephone receiver. All of Dalavan's smoothness wilted; the fellow cowered away from the desk and raised trembling hands, as he looked toward the muzzle of Bagland's gun.

"You can't arrest me!" whined Dalavan. "I've done nothing. I sold you the tiara. That's all."

"That was enough!" announced Tolwig, sternly. "Your racket is finished Dalavan."

The narrow-eyed rogue turned his beady gaze toward Bagland; in despairing fashion, Dalavan pleaded with the investigator.

"Don't turn me over!" he gasped. "Maybe - maybe I can help you out with other facts! Give me a chance, Bagland!"

The investigator nodded. Tolwig let the telephone receiver drop back upon its hook. With a quick, wise look toward Bagland, Tolwig returned the nod, then leaned forward to hear what Dalavan might have to say. The crook started in with the promised facts.

"This racket is bigger than you think!" blurted Dalavan. "It goes into millions of dollars! I'm only a front for it - sort of a mouthpiece. I freeze the stuff that's hot. You've probably guessed that, Bagland."

"I have," returned Bagland, steadily. Then, to Tolwig, the investigator added: "We'll hear all that he has to say. This stolen tiara represents but one item, Mr. Tolwig. The racket must involve huge robberies abroad; some smuggling system in addition; a perfect hideout, where the stuff is stored."

Dalavan nodded at each point. Bagland saw it and made a final statement.

"Behind it all," declared Bagland, "must be a master crook, far more dangerous than you, Dalavan. Wait a moment! I have an idea!"

Planting his notebook on the desk, Bagland stepped forward. Dalavan's arms went higher; Bagland shoved the revolver's muzzle against the crook's ribs. Reaching into Dalavan's pocket, Bagland whisked out the piece of paper that the crook had so hurriedly thrust from view, just before writing his receipt.

"Take a look at this, Mr. Tolwig."

WHILE Bagland continued to cover Dalavan at close range, Tolwig studied the paper. It was a piece of stationery; it bore no writing, but at the top was an embossed seal. The imprint represented a pair of gryphons, each supporting a side of a white shield.

Bagland managed a side glance that enabled him to see the gryphon shield. Facing Dalavan, he snapped the question:

"Who did that come from?"

"The big shot," returned Dalavan. "He used it, as sort of a coat of arms. Perhaps you'd like to know his name, and where he could be found?"

"I would!" snapped out Bagland. "You're going to spill it, Dalavan, without getting any promises from us -"

A sharp interruption came from Tolwig. Looking up from the sheet of paper with the gryphon shield, the millionaire saw straight beyond Bagland and Dalavan.

Tolwig's eyes caught a flash of white in the doorway; with it, the glitter of an aiming revolver. Tolwig's cry was a warning; heeding it, Bagland spun about. The investigator was too late.

A revolver barked. It was aimed straight at Bagland. The man who gripped the gun was Tolwig's own servant, Lovett. The white-coated arrival had taken accurate aim. He fired a second shot; a third. A fourth was unnecessary.

The first bullet had dropped Bagland; the other shots were vicious additions that Lovett gave to insure

Bagland's prompt death. Staring across the desk, Tolwig saw the investigator twist in agony and lie still.

Madly, Tolwig bounded from behind the desk. In his left hand, he clutched the sheet of paper with the gryphon shield. With his right, he made a wild grab for the revolver that had dropped from Bagland's hand. Tolwig was a perfect target for Lovett; but the servant added no bullets. It was Dalavan who acted.

The mustached man whipped out a gun of his own. He let Tolwig get hold of Bagland's revolver; then with a vicious snarl, Dalavan opened fire. At a four-foot range, he delivered three bullets into Tolwig's body. The effect of those shots were immediate. James Tolwig sprawled dead across Bagland's body.

George Dalavan's ruddy face showed demonish as the murderer leaned within the focused area of the desk lamp. With eager hands, Dalavan snatched the Lamballe tiara and placed that treasure back into its case. Bundling the fifty thousand dollars, Dalavan added it with the tiara. His hand slid against the desk clock; the timepiece had almost reached nine o'clock.

It was not that fact, however, that made Dalavan turn about. The murderer knew nothing of the telegram that Tolwig had received from Havana. Dalavan's ears caught a faint sound. On that account, the murderer swung toward Lovett.

"Did you hear that?" demanded Dalavan, in a tense tone. "It sounded like a motor, somewhere outside the house."

Lovett listened, then shook his head.

"Nobody would be going by here," remarked the accomplice. "What's more, the main road is too far for anyone to have heard the shots."

"Was Tolwig expecting any other visitors?"

"None that I know about. I kept close tabs on him, like you told me to. There was a telegram that came for him, from Havana -"

"That wouldn't mean anything."

DALAVAN'S tenseness lessened. The murderer was confident that Lovett had kept good check on Tolwig. Dalavan had used Lovett as the inside man before; it was a precaution that he always adopted. The fact that Lovett had not learned that Bagland was an investigator did not detract from Dalavan's opinion. He guessed that Bagland had been careful enough to keep his real identity a secret.

"You'd better slide out and take a gander," decided Dalavan. "Peek from the front door; if anyone comes in by the gate, meet them like nothing happened. Tell them Tolwig is out."

Lovett nodded. He walked from the study. Dalavan snatched up Bagland's notes, put them into the case that held the tiara and the money. He found the receipt that he had given Tolwig; he put that with the other objects.

Looking toward the bodies, Dalavan grinned. He stooped and carefully placed his fingers upon the sheet of stationery that still rested in Tolwig's grasp. Dalavan was prepared to pluck away that bit of evidence.

Dalavan's right hand held its revolver; his left was on the paper that bore the imprint of the gryphon shield. Suddenly, his motion ceased. Rigid in his stooped position, Dalavan listened. With a sudden snarl of alarm, he spun about, to face the opened French windows that led to the porch.

Dalavan was too late in his move.

On the threshold stood a figure that froze the murderer. Dalavan's lips widened; his arms were chilled to numbness. His right hand released its hold upon the revolver; the weapon clanked to the floor. Dalavan's left hand opened also; but it dropped nothing, for the murderer had postponed his effort to pluck away the paper that Tolwig's fingers held in a death grip.

There was ample reason for Dalavan's new rigidity.

The figure on the threshold was clad in black - a cloaked arrival whose identity was unmistakable. To Dalavan, a crook by trade, the presence of that weird intruder was more formidable than a squad of police.

Eyes burned from beneath the brim of a slouch hat. Below was a thin-gloved fist that held a leveled automatic. Light showed the barrel of the .45, a looming tube that was ready to deliver withering blasts. The being on the threshold was The Shadow.

Superfoe of crime, The Shadow had learned of Tolwig's intended purchase. The Shadow had sent the telegram from Havana, confident that Tolwig would heed the warning and delay the purchase of the tiara until his unknown advisor had arrived. Tolwig had not done so; The Shadow saw the result as he surveyed the two bodies at Dalavan's feet.

SLOWLY, The Shadow stepped in from the threshold. Shivering; Dalavan backed away, almost stumbling over the bodies. The Shadow saw the object that the murderer had tried to gain; that telltale paper in Tolwig's grasp. He also spied the packed case on the desk. With a gliding sidestep, The Shadow edged between Dalavan and the desk; his move forced the murderer toward the front door of the room.

Dalavan's lips moved helplessly. With Tolwig and Bagland, Dalavan had staged a bluff; but with The Shadow, his fear was unfeigned. Dalavan knew why The Shadow had cornered him toward the door. The Shadow suspected an accomplice, such as Lovett. He would be ready for the man when he returned. Dalavan saw The Shadow's left hand go to his cloak, to draw forth a second automatic.

Then came the unexpected counter-move, for which Dalavan had not dared to hope. There was a sudden clatter from the veranda. An attacker hurtled into the room. It was Lovett; the servant had gone out by the front door, to return by way of the veranda.

Gun in hand, Lovett had spotted The Shadow; but the accomplice had been too wise to take out time for aim. Instead, he had launched into a driving attack, covering the dozen feet from the veranda to the desk.

The Shadow's move was proof that Lovett had played the best bet. Wheeling instantly, The Shadow whipped forth his left-hand gun, pulling the trigger as he made the draw. The .45 boomed; its bullet would have dropped Lovett, had the servant been the fraction of a second slower. As it was, Lovett was making a dive as The Shadow fired. The bullet seared the top of the crook's left shoulder.

Lovett landed on The Shadow. Viciously, the servant swung his revolver. The Shadow parried it; drove a blow toward Lovett's head. Only a lucky bob saved Lovett at that instant. Clutching The Shadow, the crook skidded away from the desk, dragging his black-clad foe with him.

Dalavan saw instantly what the result would be. Despite Lovett's fury, The Shadow had full control. He was swinging the servant about, in order to take aim at Dalavan. A lucky twist of the servant gave Dalavan a second's chance. The murderer took it. He leaped for the desk; grabbed up the suitcase that

held the tiara, money and incriminating evidence.

The Shadow's right-hand gun spoke.

A bullet chipped woodwork from the desk's edge. Dalavan dived for the French windows. Twice, a .45 responded, shattering glass from the open windows. Lovett, fighting like a fiend, had managed to offset The Shadow's aim. Dalavan gained the clear.

Balked by Lovett's tenacity, The Shadow wrenched away from the servant, spilling the fellow to the floor. Twisting, he made after Dalavan. His first step brought trouble. The Shadow's foot caught upon one of Bagland's outstretched ankles.

Head foremost, The Shadow hit the floor. Lovett, coming to hands and knees, saw the disaster. Wildly, the crook pounced upon The Shadow, swinging his gun as he came.

The Shadow rolled as Lovett struck. Face upward, he shifted his head to the right. Lovett's blow glanced from the side of the slouch hat; simultaneously, The Shadow pulled a trigger. Lovett's lips coughed a gasp; the servant rolled from The Shadow's shoulder.

GROGGILY, The Shadow came to his feet; swung toward the veranda, ready with a gun. Lovett's blow had partly dazed the cloaked fighter. The Shadow was steadying himself, to take up the pursuit of Dalavan. As he stood by the desk, The Shadow heard a motor's rising roar, some distance from the bungalow.

It was the sound of a departing plane. Dalavan had come here by air, taking advantage of a clearing that must have given him an excellent landing field. The murderous crook was off to a speedy get-away, carrying his spoils with him. Pursuit was useless.

Looking past Lovett's body, The Shadow saw the form of James Tolwig. Stooping, he plucked the paper that Dalavan had wanted. The Shadow's lips phrased a whispered laugh as his eyes saw the gryphon shield. The sheet of paper went beneath The Shadow's cloak.

Though The Shadow did not know the name of the murderer who had escaped, he had seen George Dalavan face to face; hence he would know the man when he met him again. Moreover, The Shadow knew Dalavan's part; that the man was merely the representative of a hidden big shot. The paper with the gryphon shield must have some bearing upon the mastermind who had given Dalavan orders for tonight's crime.

From this single shred of evidence, The Shadow could hunt down evil men. It was a quest that would challenge his full ability; but The Shadow had met such tests before. For the present, however, he was forced to postpone the quest.

Striding from the room of death, The Shadow departed by the veranda. He found his parked car, boarded it, then set out in the direction of Miami. Present plans called for The Shadow's return to Havana, where he had left one mission in order to make his expedition to Tolwig's Florida home.

The Shadow had postponed a trail. He intended to return to it as soon as a definite mission was accomplished. That return would come sooner than The Shadow supposed. Oddly, his postponement was to prove the shortest route by which The Shadow could reach George Dalavan and the supercrook who ruled that man of murder.

### **CHAPTER III. OUTBOUND FROM HAVANA**



IT was the next afternoon in Havana. A trim yacht was docked beside a harbor pier; on the deck stood a firm-faced man whose shocky, black hair was streaked with gray. He was Kingdon Feldworth, owner of the yacht; the vessel was the Maldah, from New York, as the name on the stern testified.

Trucks had pulled up at the pier. Dark-faced Cubans were unloading crates and boxes. As stevedores took charge of these objects, Feldworth called an order in English. The stevedores were acquainted well enough with the language to understand that they were to take the boxes to the main cabin.

While the boxes were being carried aboard, a man strolled up to the pier. He was an American, about forty years of age, dressed in youthful style. His eyes were sharp and quick of glance; his lips wore a smile that looked like a fixed expression. This arrival peered upward toward the deck, saw Feldworth go below.

Hands in his pockets, the man with the fixed smile waited until the boxes were all aboard; then he went up the gangplank. He was a guest aboard the yacht - one who had taken the cruise from New York.

His name was Bram Jalway; he was a business promoter who had traveled to many places in the world. Because of that experience, he had easily formed an acquaintance with Kingdon Feldworth. The yacht owner was a great traveler, and always made friends with other globe-trotters.

Not long after Jalway had gone aboard, the stevedores reappeared with empty boxes. These were loaded back upon the trucks; as the vehicles pulled away, two other persons arrived at the pier. One was a quiet, solemn-faced man who was puffing at a cigarette. The other was a girl, a striking brunette, whose eyes were large and dark.

The man was Seth Hadlow, a sportsman who was reputed to be a millionaire. Like Bram Jalway, Seth Hadlow was a guest aboard the yacht. The girl was Francine Feldworth, niece of Kingdon Feldworth. She always accompanied her uncle when he made a cruise aboard the Maldah.

Hadlow and Francine stopped when they reached the deck. The sportsman lighted another cigarette; the girl looked ruefully across the rail and studied the Havana sky line.

"We'll be leaving Cuba soon," declared Francine. "I wish we could stay longer here, Seth."

"So do I," agreed Hadlow.

Sailors were coming to the deck. They began to prepare the yacht for departure. It was Francine who spoke suddenly. The girl was looking across the rail. She laughed as she pointed.

"There goes Professor Marcolm, Seth."

An elderly man was jogging toward the pier, panting as he ran. His chin was tilted against his chest; his white hair was shaggy beneath the old felt hat he was wearing. In one hand he had a large carpetbag; in the other, he was lugging a cylindrical bundle rolled in oilskin.

Professor Marcolm gained the top of the gangplank. The old man smiled as he nodded to Hadlow and Francine. Puffing, he went below.

VARIOUS delays prevented the prompt departure of the yacht. The sun had set when the Maldah finally started from its pier. Hadlow and Francine went below, for the girl said that she felt unhappy about leaving Havana and did not care to be on deck when the yacht cleared port. They came to the door of the main cabin. It was closed. Francine knocked; she heard her uncle give the word to come in.

Entering, Francine and Hadlow found Kingdon Feldworth seated in a chair at the end of the elegant

cabin. His back was toward a wall that displayed a series of heavy oak panels. With the grizzled yacht owner was Bram Jalway. The sharp-eyed promoter was puffing at a briar pipe; his lips, as they held the pipe's stem, still kept their half-smile.

Francine looked anxiously toward her uncle. She noticed that his face was grim.

"What is the trouble?" inquired the girl. "You look worried, uncle."

"Nothing at all," protested Feldworth.

"I don't believe you, uncle."

Feldworth seemed at loss for another statement. Bram Jalway supplied one. Removing his briar pipe from his lips, the promoter remarked:

"Your uncle has reason to be worried, Francine. Storm warnings are being posted. The captain gave us the news a short while ago."

Feldworth managed a pleased smile.

"Yes," he agreed, "that is the trouble, Francine. We may run into a hurricane. I did not want to tell you, to alarm you. That is the real trouble."

The statement satisfied Francine. Kingdon Feldworth looked relieved; to Bram Jalway, he nodded his head in appreciation. The promoter smiled in response and went back to puffing his briar pipe.

IN proof of the weather prophecies, the Maldah encountered heavy swells just a little before dinner. When the meal was over, passengers retired somewhat early.

Kingdon Feldworth, however, remained in the main cabin. He stood there alone; his face showed signs of nervous twitching. Finally satisfied that he was unwatched, the yacht owner went to the heavy oak panels at the end of the room; he found a catch and opened the woodwork.

A fabulous sight was revealed. Hanging within the compartment were jeweled tapestries - shimmering decorations done in cloths of gold. Feldworth opened a small chest; the raised lid revealed gold itself, in the form of coins. Feldworth opened another box; jewels sparkled. Suddenly, the yacht owner turned about; he eyed the door suspiciously.

Feldworth had fancied that he heard a noise at the door. Finally satisfied that it was his imagination, he closed the boxes. Shutting the panel, Feldworth eyed it; then, reluctantly, he turned out the light. He opened the door in darkness and went through a dimly lighted passage.

A few minutes after Feldworth was gone, a blackened shape materialized from a corner of the passage. A cloaked figure came into view. There, in this portion of the heaving yacht, stood The Shadow.

With a gloved hand, The Shadow opened the door of the main cabin. He entered, closed the door behind him. Using a flashlight, The Shadow approached the panels at the end of the room.

The woodwork clicked under the touch of a skilled hand. The panels came back; The Shadow's light revealed the interior of the secret compartment. The Shadow eyed Feldworth's treasures; he studied the contents of the boxes. A brief estimate told him that these belongings were worth in excess of a million dollars.

There was a small, flat box that Feldworth had not opened. In it, The Shadow found letters and other

documents that carried signatures. He studied these carefully; he was satisfied with his scrutiny. The papers explained the wealth that Feldworth had brought aboard.

All these valuables had belonged to a Cuban who had fled Havana at the time of the revolution. The Cuban had sold them to Feldworth for two hundred thousand dollars. With the sale, the Cuban had supplied information, telling where the wealth was hidden in Havana. Feldworth had managed to obtain the valuables, but only after an enforced delay.

With the documents were customs blanks. It was plain that Feldworth intended to follow an honest course to declare his wealth once the Maldah reached New York. He had bought the property in good faith; his reason for keeping it hidden was to avoid any trouble on the yacht.

Feldworth trusted his guests. The Shadow knew that fact, for he was one of them. Evidently, Feldworth feared followers from Cuba; or possible trouble from the crew, if it should be learned that a million dollars' worth of valuables happened to be on board. Therefore, to The Shadow, Kingdon Feldworth was a man who needed protection.

THE SHADOW had known this for a long while; from the time when he had come aboard the yacht in New York, for a cruise to Havana and return. He had not, however, learned what Feldworth planned until tonight.

That was why The Shadow had decided to return to New York on the Maldah; why he had made a hurried flight back to Havana from Miami, instead of taking up the trail of the murderer, George Dalavan.

The Shadow extinguished his flashlight. He moved in darkness from the main cabin. He followed the dim passage, then merged with other blackness. Soon, a door closed behind him. The Shadow was in his own quarters. His visit to Feldworth's treasure chest would never be known.

The Maldah was ploughing northward through heavy seas, carrying its secret cargo of wealth. Where treasure lay, intrigue could always follow. Perhaps there was someone on board who planned to capture Kingdon Feldworth's newly acquired wealth. That could be a matter of speculation. One fact, however, was evident.

The Shadow was aboard the Maldah. Camouflaged as a guest, he had undertaken a campaign of vigilance. Once he was sure the treasure was safe, he would be willing to leave and undertake other tasks. Should crime come, either on the yacht or elsewhere, The Shadow would reveal himself.

Until that hour, he would remain in the disguise that he had chosen for this adventure. No one would suspect his presence. To the world, The Shadow was a being cloaked in black. When he chose to appear in some ordinary guise, he did so without the knowledge of enemy or friend.

Should strife strike aboard the Maldah, The Shadow would be prepared for it. There was one peril, however, against which The Shadow could not cope. That was the hazard of the hurricane that threatened the yacht's course.

## **CHAPTER IV. THE STORM STRIKES**

SLEEK and speedy, the Maldah kept ahead of the rising hurricane for many hours. Kingdon Feldworth congratulated himself as the next day passed. He was confident that the yacht would escape the worst weather. His surmise, however, proved wrong.

Sweeping up from the West Indies, the storm overtook the Maldah off the Florida coast. The blow

increased; from then on, it was a battle for existence. The crisis came when the Maldah was swept in toward the Georgia coast. Surrounded by darkness, pounded by huge waves, the yacht was making a last struggle.

The fact that the Maldah had neared the shore was proven by a strange phenomenon. The captain believed that his ship was near a desolate location. The wireless was out of commission; it seemed impossible that anyone would sight the rising and falling line of the yacht's lights, as they glimmered pitifully above the waves. It was a sailor, stationed at the bow, who first learned otherwise.

A sudden line of sparks flashed from a mile distant on the lee of the yacht. A sizzling rocket whizzed upward from the shore, to burst into a myriad of colored sparks that were swept into instant oblivion. Word went to the captain of the Maldah; he ordered an answering signal. Soon, a streaking rocket shot up from the yacht's deck into the night.

While this was happening above, the passengers were assembled in the main cabin. Kingdon Feldworth was seated with his back to the oak panels that hid his treasure; but his thoughts were far from the Cuban wealth. Feldworth had cause for greater concern tonight. He was deeply anxious about the safety of those aboard his yacht.

NONE of the passengers showed great worry. Bram Jalway was seated near Feldworth; a traveler who had been everywhere. Jalway was undisturbed by the storm. His lips had their usual smile; his eyes were sharp as they roved about the cabin. Jalway seemed to consider the storm with a half-amused indulgence.

Professor Thaddeus Marcolin was half asleep. The white-haired professor's head was drooped toward his chest; it bobbed with the heaving motion of the yacht. Marcolin's fists were tight upon the arms of his chair; but only for the purpose of holding himself in position.

Seth Hadlow was solemnly puffing a cigarette. His face looked anxious; but it usually had something of that expression. Hadlow's manner was proof that he was untroubled by the elements. A sportsman always, Hadlow was taking the hurricane as a game.

Francine Feldworth actually felt worried; but the composure of her companions quelled her alarm. Though her face was troubled, Francine's lips were set; her dark eyes sparkled their trust in the men about her.

Kingdon Feldworth surveyed his guests with approval. The yacht owner was pleased with the stoutness that three men had shown during the storm. Feldworth would hardly have been surprised had he learned that one of the trio was The Shadow, who was used to dangerous adventures. But Feldworth would have had trouble in picking out The Shadow, had he known of that master's presence. Since all had confidence and quiet courage, there was no way to choose between them.

Kingdon Feldworth had come to a decision. Whatever might occur, he would stay aboard the yacht. As owner, he felt that he had that privilege. Because of the Cuban wealth, he was determined upon his purpose. Should occasion come to take for the shore, Feldworth intended to insist that the others go while he remain.

Meanwhile, The Shadow had come to an opposite decision. He had not been idle during the voyage north from Havana. He had come to the conclusion that all of Feldworth's crew stood loyal to the master of the yacht. Feldworth's treasure would be safe on board.

Should persons seek the shore, however, they might encounter danger there. They would need The Shadow's aid; hence he was prepared to go along with any party that might be ordered to the lifeboats.

Conversation had lulled when the door of the cabin swung open. The captain heaved through the doorway, with rolling gait; he caught himself and thrust the door shut. He turned a rugged face toward Feldworth.

"What is it, captain?" questioned the yacht owner. "Is the hurricane increasing?"

"Yes," returned the captain. "We're in for it. I'm counting on the engines, though. Maybe we'll pull through."

A SIGH of relief came from Feldworth. The owner looked anxiously over his shoulder, toward the paneled wall. Hadlow puffed his cigarette and watched Feldworth. Jalway also eyed the yacht owner, then turned to speak to Francine. Professor Marcoln awoke from his doze and blinked.

"We're off the Georgia coast," informed the captain. "You know what that means, Mr. Feldworth. Islands. Sand. If we beach the ship, she'll be pounded to pieces. But if we can limp to any kind of an inlet, I can beach her where she won't break up."

"Good!" exclaimed Feldworth. "We must save the yacht, captain! This ship means much to me -"

"Not as much as human lives," put in the officer. "Remember this, Mr. Feldworth: the storm is increasing. The longer we stand by the ship, the greater the danger. We can launch the small boats at present. But later on -"

"You mean we should abandon the yacht?" interrupted Feldworth. "I refuse to do so, captain. As for you, it is your duty to remain."

"That is what I intend to do," retorted the captain. "Likewise the crew. I am speaking for the safety of the passengers. This will be their last chance to get ashore. With the engines working" - the speaker paused as the ship quivered with increased throbs - "I'm going to drive away from shore."

"But this coast is desolate!" exclaimed Feldworth. "If the small boat should survive the waves, where would it land?"

"Near human habitation," assured the captain. "We have seen lights on the shore. The yacht has been observed. We received a rocket signal from the beach."

"You answered it?"

"Yes. Rescuers are waiting. Our lifeboats are unsinkable. That is why I propose that you and your passengers should take this opportunity for safety. I shall stand by the ship."

FELDWORTH arose. Swaying unsteadily with the motion of the yacht, he clapped his hand upon the captain's shoulder.

"Fine news," declared the owner. "You are right, captain. We shall launch the small boat for the passengers. But I, like you, intend to remain aboard."

"No, uncle!" exclaimed Francine. "You must come with us!"

"I shall stand by," returned Feldworth.

"Then I shall remain," decided the girl. "And I believe" - she looked about the cabin - "that the others will do the same."

"What about it, captain?" queried Feldworth, with a smile.

"The lifeboat will be ready in ten minutes," asserted the officer, steadily. "All passengers will go ashore. That is my order. It must be obeyed!"

"But my uncle!" protested Francine. "He will have to go with us!"

"Mr. Feldworth is owner of the Maldah," returned the captain. "I cannot force him to leave the ship. But the rest of you will obey my command. I shall use force, if necessary."

"Be calm, Francine," insisted Feldworth, swaying toward the girl's chair. "From the shore, you can inform the coast guards. They may bring us aid. With our wireless out of commission, we shall need assistance of that sort."

"Your uncle is right, Francine," stated Hadlow, quietly. "We shall take to the lifeboat. What about it, Jalway?"

"I should prefer to remain aboard," returned the promoter, still wearing his fixed smile. "But the captain has ordered otherwise. He must be obeyed. Moreover, Francine" - he turned to the girl - "I cannot forget your safety."

"You are ready, professor?" inquired Hadlow.

Professor Marcolm responded with a solemn nod of his white-haired head.

"Two crew members will go with you," declared the captain, deciding that the matter was settled. "You, Mr. Hadlow, and you, Mr. Jalway, are as capable as any man aboard this yacht. Four able-bodied men are all that the lifeboat will require.

"Bring most of your luggage to the deck. It will serve as ballast. The crew members - I am sending Hoskins and Dashler with you - have arranged provisions and firearms. Ten minutes."

With that, the officer swung about and went out through the door that he had entered. Hadlow arose; Jalway did the same. Together they aided Francine from her chair. The trio headed toward an inner door at the right of the oak paneling.

FRANCINE looked hopelessly toward her uncle. He smiled encouragingly. The girl departed with her companions. Professor Marcolm staggered to his feet. Gripping a corner of the inner doorway, he clung there and extended his hand to Kingdon Feldworth.

"A sorry ending to our cruise," observed the owner. "If we had left Havana a day sooner, professor, we might have escaped this storm. I should like to go with you; but my place is here."

"The captain is right," declared the professor, in a crackly tone. "We must obey his order. Your niece will be safe, Mr. Feldworth. We shall take good care of her."

"I am counting on all of you, professor," smiled Feldworth. "Cheer her up as much as possible. Keep assuring her that I am safe."

The professor turned and went through the inner door. Feldworth swayed across the cabin and found a chair. He was solemn as minutes passed. The outer door opened. Hoskins and Dashler entered. Both were brawny-looking fellows.

"The luggage, sir?" questioned Hoskins, speaking to the owner.

Before Feldworth could reply, Seth Hadlow appeared with two large suitcases. Then Francine arrived;

behind the girl came Bram Jalway, staggering with the burden of a small but heavy steamer trunk.

As the sailors relieved him, Jalway went back and returned with a small valise. A moment later, Professor Marcolm arrived with his carpetbag and cylindrical oilskin bundle.

Donning slickers and overcoats, the passengers followed the sailors to the deck. Engines were pounding, holding the yacht in position for the launching of the lifeboat. Lanterns, held by crew members, threw a strange glow amid spray from sweeping waves.

No words were spoken. The howling of the gale made voices hopeless. The two sailors were in the lifeboat; others of the crew helped the four passengers aboard. Then came the creak of davits. The little boat lowered toward the teeming ocean.

The captain had gone to the bridge. Pounding engines were forcing the Maldah into the waves, bringing temporary shelter to the side where the boat was being launched. From a larger vessel, the lowering of the lifeboat might have been, disastrous. But the skipper had calculated upon the low build of the yacht.

NESTLED deep among bags and wraps, Francine Feldworth saw the white side of the yacht rise ghostlike in the wind-swept darkness. For an instant, the girl shrank back, fearing that the lifeboat would crash against that threatening wall of steel. Then the swell ended. The tiny boat twisted away.

The yacht dipped downward. The funnel loomed, distinguished by the wraith-like cloud of smoke that eddied in the wind. A wave hoisted the lifeboat like a cockleshell, hurling it clear of the disabled Maldah.

The menace of the launching was ended. The lifeboat, clear away, was dipping deep into the valley of the waves. It was heading toward the darkness of the shore, leaving the Maldah as a row of fading lights that flickered and went out with every surge of the tumultuous sea.

Yet the hazards which the voyagers faced amid the waves were small compared to the strange menace that would lie beyond. Death was to strike amid the storm. It was fortunate that The Shadow had chosen to accompany the others to the shore.

## **CHAPTER V. STRANGE WELCOMES**

BLACKNESS lay ahead as the lifeboat neared the shore. Four oarsmen were at work, timing their strokes as the little craft poised upon the crests of waves.

Francine had been stationed near the bow. One of the sailors had given her a flashlight. The girl was blinking the torch as signal to those on land. In response, she could see the wave of lanterns, moving toward the right along the beach.

Hadlow and Jalway were plying oars, along with the sailors. Professor Marcolm was at the stern, handling the helm. Francine could not see him through the darkness; nor could she turn the light in his direction, for its gleam would be lost to those ashore.

The girl knew that the professor was observing the lanterns from the beach. Plainly, they were signaling that safety lay to the right. The professor was handling the rudder to bear the lifeboat in that direction.

The roar of surf came from ahead. The climax of the danger would be found when the boat struck the crashing breakers. As they veered farther to the right, Francine noticed that the roar was dulling. The lights, however, were closer than before.

They were swinging a new signal, calling for the boat to cut in to shore. White breakers foamed in the darkness. All were to the left, the boat was escaping them. The professor was responding with the tiller.

The pitch of the lifeboat lessened.

Sweeping strokes came from the oars as the craft entered the area of an even swell. Shining the light toward the water, Francine suddenly realized that they had been guided to a haven. Those signaling lights had drawn them past the end of a sandbar that must mark the entrance to a shallow inlet. They were safe from the surge of the surf.

The boat was circling the moving lights. The arrivals from the yacht passed inside the line of the beach. Hails came above the whistle of the wind. The men in the boat answered the calls from the shore.

Professor Marcoln swung the helm. The bow of the lifeboat was cutting toward the left. The boat scraped suddenly upon the sand of the bar. A slow, heaving swell drove it almost to land.

Dropping their oars, the two sailors sprang overboard, leaving the control of the boat to Hadlow and Jalway. Waist deep, they splashed past the bow, outlined by Francine's flashlight as they seized a rope to haul the boat up to the bar.

A few moments later, they were clear of the water. The bow of the boat jolted upward as Hadlow and Jalway plied the oars while the sailors pulled.

Lights were coming toward the boat. Dropping the oars, Hadlow and Jalway swung about, ready to aid in the landing. An electric lantern gleamed from among the men ashore. It showed one of the sailors - Hoskins - moving forward to meet the advancing throng.

THEN came a crackly cry of warning from the stern of the lifeboat. Professor Marcolm issued it. The others became rigid. From the group on shore, a man had sprung forward, leaping upon Hoskins. A knife blade glimmered in the light. The sailor staggered.

With that attack came spurts of flame from beside the electric lantern. Gunshots, puny in the whirl of the wind, accompanied those bursts. Francine dropped into the boat as a bullet struck the gunwale. The rescuers on the shore were opening fire on the castaways from the yacht!

Dashler, the second sailor, was leaping forward squarely into the lantern's glare. Maddened when he saw Hoskins fall, Dashler was foolishly rushing to the side of his companion. He was heading into what would have been his own doom, but for the prompt action of the three men in the lifeboat.

The captain had placed loaded rifles aboard. Three guns were in the center of the boat. Hadlow, seizing two of the rifles, hurled one to the professor. Jalway, grabbing another, was the first man to open fire.

Hadlow's rifle spoke next; the professor, clutching the weapon thrown to him, also managed to join in the outburst.

As Dashler, unarmed, was suddenly pounced upon by the man who had murdered Hoskins, a quick shot from the boat brought rescue to the foolhardy sailor.

The man with the knife went staggering, just as he tried to plunge the blade into Dashler's body. The sailor tripped upon the beach as he sought to grab his crippled enemy. He formed an easy target for the fiends upon the shore. Death would have been his lot but for another timely shot from the lifeboat.

A rifle bullet found a perfect target: the electric lantern. Out went the light. All that remained were the bobbing glimmers that had been seen before. Hadlow, springing to the bow of the lifeboat, dashed the flashlight from Francine's hand. Again his rifle barked, to mingle with Jalway's fire. A flash came from the professor's gun.



Bobbing lanterns now were targets. Shots from the men on shore were wide; but the marksmen in the lifeboat were able to take aim. Lanterns went bounding to the sand as their holders threw away the telltale objects. Flashes from guns were receding. The enemy was in retreat.

In the darkness, Hadlow and Jalway each found the same idea. The two sprang overboard and floundered to the sand bar. When they reached there, they stared in vain for new flashes from the night. The enemy had fled.

The two men gave the lifeboat another drag. Francine came over the bow; Jalway carried her to the sand bar. The professor followed, gripping his rifle. He had fired only a few shots; he had ceased when the foe had fled. Dashler came stumbling back through the darkness.

"Got another gun?" queried the sailor, gruffly.

"How many were there?" demanded Jalway, in the darkness.

"Three, I think," recalled Dashler.

"Then there's no more," put in Hadlow. "What about ammunition? We've emptied our rifles."

"I don't think there's any extra cartridges," returned the sailor.

"There's some here," crackled the professor, thrusting his rifle into Dashler's hands. "I only fired three shots."

DRIZZLY wind beat upon the castaways as they realized their plight. It was lucky for them that the opposition had ended. The gun now held by Dashler was the only rifle that could be used. Huddled in a group, they waited, almost ready to return to the lifeboat. The mercy of the storm seemed better than the fierce welcome of the fiends who had awaited them.

As minutes passed, eyes strained through the darkness. Discarded lanterns had been extinguished by the wind and rain. There was no indication that the attackers intended to return. Staring seaward, the castaways saw no sign of the Maldah. The yacht had hoisted anchor to drive out into the storm.

A flashlight clicked. Jalway had produced it. The promoter glimmered the rays upon the lifeboat. Wading into the water, he began to bring out luggage. Hadlow aided him, Professor Marcolin remained with Francine while Dashler stood guard with the rifle.

Dragging and carrying their possessions, the little group advanced. Jalway, leading with the flashlight, came upon the body of Hoskins. The sailor was dead. Blood from his knife wound stained the dark, water-soaked sand.

The castaways moved forward. Jalway's light revealed no sign of any attackers. Evidently the fleeing men had taken their wounded along with them. Slowly, the little group neared the wide stretch of the long beach. Crossing it, they came suddenly to a fringe of trees.

They were on the edge of a thick Georgia woods, almost tropical in its density. Trees above were creaking as the wind sighed through heavy branches. Below, where the people stood, the shelter produced a lull. Voices could be understood without shouting.

Jalway threw his flashlight about the group. Francine had slumped upon the little steamer trunk; Hadlow had dragged it along from the sand bar. The professor was beside her, his hand upon the girl's shoulder.

Hadlow was extracting a cigarette from beneath his slicker, while Dashler was standing amid a cluster of

luggage. The sailor had his rifle in readiness. He had brought along the two emptied weapons. They were lying on the fringe of the sand.

"These woods are our best refuge," informed Jalway, in a voice that was steady in the lull. "If we can find some sort of opening among them, we can make camp for the night. You hold the flashlight, professor. Francine can remain with you while we scout about."

Professor Marcoln received the flashlight. He extinguished it as the other men moved off through the darkness. Then he flashed it with intermittent blinks. Five minutes passed. Suddenly Hadlow returned.

"Wave the light, professor," he ordered. "Bring in the others. I've found something."

"A path?" questioned Francine.

"Better than that," replied Hadlow. "A house. I saw the lights in the woods."

JALWAY and Dashler arrived while Hadlow was pointing out the direction in which he had investigated. The professor's waving of the flashlight brought them in. The sailor offered an objection when he heard Hadlow's plan to proceed to the house.

"Maybe that's their hang-out," he insisted. "They might get us like they got Hoskins. I'd like to get square with the fellows that killed my matey; but it ain't policy to walk into their camp."

"The rogues fled along the beach," reminded Hadlow. "This house is in the direction of the inlet. In my opinion, it offers safety rather than danger."

"That sounds likely," put in Jalway. "What is your opinion, professor?"

"The same as Hadlow's," crackled Marcoln. "Come, my friends. Let us fare toward this habitation."

Leaving the luggage, the group followed Hadlow's lead. Using the flashlight, the sportsman picked out a path at the entrance to the woods. The glare showed a narrow but clean-cut passage. Hadlow turned out the light and spoke.

"There's the glimmer." His voice was solemn beneath the shelter of the swaying, creaking oaks.

"Unquestionably a house. Suppose that Jalway and I go in advance. You follow, professor, with Francine."

"What about me?" asked Dashler.

"Stay in the background," ordered Hadlow. "Cover with your rifle. If we run into trouble, you can open fire to protect us."

SHOULDER to shoulder, Hadlow and Jalway advanced. They came to a clearing where the white tabby walls of an old building showed its spectral bulk among the trees. The lighted windows had been at the side. Here, only the whiteness of the house was visible. Reaching a stout oak door, Hadlow knocked.

A long pause. The wind sighed heavily through the trees, then whistled eerily as its angry gusts rose violently in the night. Hadlow rapped again. The drawing of bolts followed. The door opened.

Just within the threshold stood a huge, big-fisted man whose face was fierce and challenging. Light from the hall showed the water-soaked visitors. The big man eyed them with a glare that was not pleasant.

Close by the trees, Marcoln and Francine could see the man's face plainly. So could Dashler. The sailor shifted his rifle. The professor stretched out a hand to withhold him. Listening, they could hear the

growled challenge of the man within the door.

"What you want here?"

The voice was thick and uncouth. Hadlow's reply was a quiet one that the listeners could not hear; but they caught snatches of Jalway's steady tone. The castaways were explaining their plight. Their story brought results. The big man stepped back and motioned them to enter.

Jalway turned and signaled. Professor Marcoln led the others to the house. They followed Hadlow and Jalway into a lighted hallway. The big guardian eyed Dashler's rifle in suspicious fashion, then closed the door and bolted it. He departed through the hallway, leaving the little group talking in puzzled whispers.

A few minutes passed. Then the big man returned from the rear of the hallway. He opened a door on the right, turned on a light and ushered the arrivals into a living room. Francine gasped in amazement. The others looked around in surprise.

They had expected to find small comfort in this island home. Instead, they discovered a living room that was almost sumptuous. Comfortable chairs and lounges stood upon handsome Oriental rugs. Heavy oak bookcases were filled with volumes; these stood upon either side of a fireplace.

EACH viewer studied a different portion of the room, admiring its contents. One pair of eyes, however, found a focal spot that others scarcely noticed. Those eyes were The Shadow's. Still maintaining his guise of a castaway, the master sleuth gave no expression that anyone could have detected.

The Shadow was looking toward a mantelpiece above the fireplace; he was viewing an object that hung from the wall over the mantel. To others, it was but an ornament - tasteful and inconspicuous. To The Shadow, it was a symbol that marked the end of an important quest which he had not yet undertaken.

The Shadow had left the Maldah knowing that all was safe on board. He had wanted to reach shore, that he might fare forth in search of George Dalavan, the murderer whom he had encountered near Miami; through finding Dalavan, The Shadow had hoped to uncover the supercrook whom the murderer served.

There had been murderers on this shore; but even to The Shadow, their presence had not signified a link to the coming quest. Until he viewed this living room, The Shadow had gained no inkling of connected crime. He had it here, the link he wanted. Above the mahogany plaque; upon its square surface was a design done in bronze.

The plaque represented a shield, supported on each side by a gryphon. The design was a perfect match for the embossing imprinted upon the sheet of paper that The Shadow had found in the dead hand of James Tolwig.

This house on the Georgia coast was the headquarters of the supercrook who controlled dozens of rogues like Dalavan; the man who managed a ring that dealt in international theft, wholesale smuggling, and open murder.

A voice spoke from the doorway of the room. With the others, The Shadow turned about to meet the owner of the house. Playing his role of a chance castaway, The Shadow was face to face with the master crook whom he had not expected to meet for a long while to come.

## **CHAPTER VI. THE UNSEEN GUEST**

THE man in the doorway did not look the part of a master criminal. His appearance was quite the opposite; it ended any apprehensions held by The Shadow's companions. Pleasant of voice, friendly in

attitude, the master of the lonely house was one who knew how to make his guests feel at home.

He was portly and bald-headed; his face was wreathed in a smile. He was attired in a green silk dressing gown; in his hand he held a meerschaum pipe that he had been smoking. There was nothing to connect him with the fray on the beach; but The Shadow knew that this genial individual was certainly responsible for all crime that might strike upon the isle.

"Good evening." The portly man spoke in a half-chuckled tone. "My name is Purvis Elger. It is not often that I am honored with unexpected guests. Allow me to welcome you to my humble abode."

Another servant stepped up behind Elger. He was tall and cadaverous - a contrast to the huge, big-fisted fellow who had been at the door. Elger ordered the pair to bring in the luggage that the castaways had carried with them. Bowing, shaking hands, Elger himself ushered the guests to their individual rooms. He suggested that they change their attire, then join him in the living room.

Soon afterward, the group assembled, wearing dry clothes. Puffing at his meerschaum, Elger listened to their story, then spoke.

"The yacht should come safely to harbor," he declared. "There are many inlets along this coast. The Maldah will find haven. As for the strange attack that took place upon the beach, it is something that can be definitely explained."

PAUSING, Elger puffed his meerschaum. He studied Bram Jalway, who was languid and half smiling; ready, apparently, to believe what his host might have to say. Elger noted Professor Marcolom; he saw an absentminded look upon the savant's features. Eyeing Seth Hadlow, Elger observed a serious countenance. He felt sure that he could convince the sportsman with the coming explanation.

"This isle," announced Elger, "is but one of many that line the Georgia coast. It is called Timour Isle; it once formed a colonial plantation. The manor house was in the center of the isle. This building was a look-out house, almost a fortress. The slave quarters were on the opposite side of the isle.

"All was ruin when I came here. Jungle had overgrown the remains of the other buildings. But the tabby walls of this look-out house were partly standing. Though built of shell, sand and lime, they survived the elements; and their proximity to the beach prevented overgrowth. I restored the building; I am still enlarging it. Meanwhile, I have lived here, devoting myself to study."

Elger nudged toward the hallway with his meerschaum pipe.

"My den," he added, "is at the back of the house. I spend most of my time there. I have two servants. Golga, the one who admitted you, stays on duty at night. Royme serves as cook and does day duty. The windows" - Elger gave a sweep of his hand - "are barred. The reason for such protection is because outlaws sometimes visit this isle and those that adjoin it."

"The men on the beach!" exclaimed Francine. "They were outlaws?"

Elger nodded.

"I speak of them as outlaws," he declared. "Some are fugitives from justice. Others are merely treasure seekers; but of a disreputable sort. The fugitives come here because the marsh land between the isles and the mainland are an obstacle to searchers. As for the treasure hunters, they count on the fact that such pirates as Abraham and Blackbeard once used these islands as headquarters."

"Famous pirates, those," put in Jalway. "Do you think that Abraham and Blackbeard actually buried treasure here?"

"Possibly," returned Elger. "There is also a chance that colonial inhabitants of these isles buried their own valuables to keep pirates from finding them. Anyway, the treasure hunters come here; and they often fight with other groups who have the same quest.

"Those murderers whom you encountered were either outlaws who decided that you might be bringing valuables ashore; or they were members of a treasure-seeking band who looked upon you as rivals. In either case, they probably did not expect that you would be armed."

"Isn't it dangerous, living here?" queried Francine. "Those outlaws might attack this house at any time!"

"No," stated Elger, "they are skulkers. Real criminals who hide out along this coast do not come in bands. They would be too few to make an attack. The riff-raff come in numbers, to dig about for buried wealth. They would pillage an empty house, if they found one. But they are too fearful of the law to attempt an actual attack.

"They saw a chance to prey upon persons whom they thought would be helpless. Probably they have fled to the other end of the island, to take a boat that they have hidden in the marsh. But there is always the danger of encountering individual prowlers hereabouts. While you are my guests, I must insist that you remain indoors after dark."

SOMETHING in Elger's final sentence made Francine look about in wonderment. Bram Jalway understood the girl's expression. He smiled slightly as he spoke.

"Mr. Elger has informed us," said Jalway, "that communication with the mainland is impossible and will be for some days to come. The storm is rising to hurricane intensity. Even the back channels might prove difficult to navigate."

"And the roads on the mainland," added Elger, "will be impossible. It would be futile for any of you to leave here. While you are my guests" - his pleasant smile broadened - "this house will be yours. We are well stocked with provisions. There are plenty of books to read. Only one thing is lacking."

"A radio?" questioned Francine, looking about the room.

"You have guessed it," laughed Elger. "I ordered one; but its shipment was delayed. A little boat comes over from the mainland, once or twice a week; but we cannot expect it to arrive until after the storm has subsided. So we shall have no radio."

"I don't mind," declared the girl, with a smile. "To me, Mr. Elger, this is the most wonderful house that I have ever seen. Fancy finding it in this lonely spot. I was merely worried about my uncle. That was all. I had hoped that we could notify the coast guards that the Maldah is in distress."

Golga and Royne appeared just as the girl finished speaking. The big servant spoke to Elger while the cadaverous man stood by. Elger turned solemnly to his guests

"They have brought in the sailor's body," said Elger. "It is locked in the construction house, with the tools that the workmen left here. I suggest that we leave the body there until we can inform the authorities. Is that agreeable?"

He was looking from one man to another, not knowing which one to accept as the leader of the group. Catching nods from all concerned, Elger spoke to Golga. The servant handed his master a bunch of keys.

Royne had already left the living room. As conversation resumed, the cadaverous servant returned bringing a large tray laden with coffee and sandwiches. Elger waved his hand toward the refreshments.

"Help yourselves," he said. "Make yourselves entirely at home. You have your rooms. Retire when you please. In the meantime, I shall ask you to excuse me. I have been working tonight on problems in non-Euclidean geometry and I should like to resume my studies."

THE castaways did justice to the coffee and sandwiches. The constant whistling of the increasing gale seemed remote in this secluded spot. Refreshments ended, the group relaxed. Professor Marcolm arose and smiled.

"I have studies of my own," he remarked, "but I shall forego them tonight. I am going to bed. Good night."

"Not a bad idea," grunted Dashler as the professor departed. The sailor had been sitting silently in a corner. "I've got a bunk and I'm going to use it."

The others chatted for a short while after Dashler had left. Then they, too, decided to retire. Hadlow and Jalway had been given rooms on opposite sides of the hall, while Francine's room was across from the professor's.

Royne, the cadaverous servant, had disappeared. It was Golga who came into the living room after the guests had all retired. The big servant began to gather up cups and plates. That task completed, he turned out the light and carried the tray along the hall toward the kitchen, which was at the rear of the long, low building.

Only the rear hall was lighted. It formed a dim corridor past the doorways of rooms where the guests were stationed. While creepy, whistling winds wailed unrelenting about the secluded house, a cloaked figure emerged from the blackness of the front hall. It was The Shadow; ghostlike in his glide, he moved along the rear hallway.

A light glimmered beneath a door. With noiseless stride, The Shadow reached the doorway. His gloved hand moved forward; it gripped the doorknob and moved the door inward, inch by inch. The Shadow peered into the room that Purvis Elger had termed his "den."

To the others from the Maldah, that abode was merely the private quarters of a man who chose the life of a recluse. To The Shadow, this den was the lair of a cunning supercrook, identified by the gryphon plaque upon the living room wall.

The den looked like a study. A desk was piled high with books. Other volumes lay upon a lounge. The walls of the room were lined with bookcases, which held more volumes than the shelves that The Shadow had seen in the living room.

The den was empty; but a light from a half-opened door indicated an inner bedroom. Elger had gone there. Taking advantage of the supercrook's absence; The Shadow entered the den and closed the door from the hall.

A heavy bookcase ended near a corner. The space formed a niche against the wall. The Shadow glided in that direction; he became a tall shape of motionless black, as he took to the improvised hiding place. From here, The Shadow could peer straight toward the half-closed door of the bedroom.

The barrier opened as he watched. Elger came out and went to the desk. He began to consult an opened book that lay there. He was interrupted by a knock at the door from the hall.

Elger spoke. The door opened. Golga entered. The servant's face wore a cunning gleam. Elger noted it and smiled.

"They have all retired?" he questioned, softly.

"Yes," growled Golga.

"Turn in then," ordered Elger. "I shall talk with you in the morning."

Golga departed. As soon as the servant was gone, Elger arose and went to the door. He locked it, then extinguished the light. He crossed the den and entered the bedroom, leaving the door partly opened.

THE SHADOW moved from his hiding place. Stealthy in the darkness, he followed Elger's course. He peered into the bedroom. Elger had removed his dressing gown; he was donning coat and vest, all that he required to be fully clad.

Besides a bureau and a bed, this room boasted a bookcase in an obscure corner. These shelves appeared to be stocked with the overflow of volumes from the den; but The Shadow noted that the books were lined in perfect order. That indicated some other purpose; for Elger, if he used those books, would probably have allowed them to reach a stage of disarray.

The real purpose of the bookcase became apparent as Elger approached that corner of the room. Removing one volume, the portly man pressed a hidden spring. The bookcase swung outward, like a hinged door. Beyond it loomed a blackened passage.

Elger entered. His bald head moved downward. The man was descending steep steps. Hardly had he disappeared before the bookcase closed automatically. At the same instant, the light went out in the bedroom.

A soft laugh in the darkness. The Shadow's cloak swished slightly as his form moved forward. A tiny flashlight glimmered. A gloved hand found the book that Elger had removed. The Shadow drew the volume forth, then probed the space where it had been.

A click. The Shadow stepped back as the bookcase opened. Musty, dampened air issued forth from the staircase in the wall. Moments passed; then that atmosphere ended. The bookcase had closed. The room was silent.

The Shadow, alert upon the trail, was following the course that Purvis Elger had taken. He was on his way to learn the secret that lay beneath this house on Timour Isle.

## **CHAPTER VII. CAVERNS OF WEALTH**

A TINY flashlight glimmered amid inky blackness. A soft laugh came from hidden lips. The light went out. Stealthily, The Shadow swished forward through a passage that was low and long beneath the ground.

The Shadow had reached the bottom of the hidden stairway. Waiting there, he listened to the sound of fading footfalls from ahead. Positive that Purvis Elger had left this dank corridor, the black-garbed investigator was again taking up the trail.

At intervals the flashlight blinked, its small circle directed toward the rough stone floor of the passage. Though hidden traps seemed unlikely, The Shadow was taking no chances in his pursuit.

As he proceeded, however, he became confident that the only secret of this corridor was its hidden entrance. Oozing spaces between the stones showed that the moist ground offered no possibilities of a hidden pitfall.

The passage ended one hundred yards from the house. The Shadow encountered a stone wall in the darkness. Instead of using his flashlight, The Shadow waited in the gloom; then he sensed a slight draught from the right. That indicated another corridor. Groping, The Shadow found the passage.

A few rods brought him to another barrier. This was a door, sheathed with metal. Cautiously, The Shadow opened it. Dim light greeted his keen eyes. The Shadow was in a square-walled cavern, which was hazily illuminated by the glow from an opening beyond.

Dim shapes stood by the wall. Burnished surfaces reflected the dim glow. Eyeing these figures, The Shadow discerned that they were suits of armor, standing like rigid sentinels. They were not the only objects in the cavern.

Large chests were stacked along the wall. Upon them rested several vases that gleamed dully in the light. In a corner stood a group of metal cylinders. The Shadow could guess the nature of their contents: rolled-up paintings, stowed in these tubes to prevent injury from dampness.

Passing the metal sentinels, The Shadow reached the opening beyond. From darkness, he gazed into a second, smaller cavern. This room contained a few odd chests; beyond it was the opening to a larger, darkened room.

MOST important, however, were the living occupants of the middle room. Two men were seated upon chests; the glow of a lantern showed their faces. One was Purvis Elger; the other was a hard-faced, roughly clad fellow, with bristly, unshaven cheeks.

The Shadow had seen that countenance before. Elger's companion was a New York mob-leader, known as "Ruff" Turney. He had disappeared from Manhattan some months ago. Rumor had it that Ruff had been slain in a wholesale mob killing.

Blended with the darkness of the room that he had crossed, The Shadow waited, listening. He had caught the sound of voices during his advance; now he could distinguish the words that passed between the men whom he had uncovered. Purvis Elger was talking in a testy tone.

"You knew my orders, Ruff," announced the portly man. "There was no excuse for that attack on the lifeboat. You should have given the word to scatter."

"That's what I did," growled Ruff. "But it was too late. We got fooled, chief. It wasn't until the sailor came running up that we knew those mugs weren't from the Dalmatia."

"You should not have been on the beach at all. I told you that the Dalmatia would anchor off the lower inlet."

"We saw the lights from there, chief. Then the ship anchored farther up. We figured the captain had missed his bearings. That's why we went out to the beach and sent up our rockets."

"I told you that the Dalmatia was a tramp steamer, like the others that have anchored off here."

"I know that. That's what we thought the ship was. We saw a line of lights, coming up and down with the waves."

"A low line?"

"Sure. Kind of low, but the way they went up and down, it was hard to figure them. Say - what was the boat, anyway?"



"A yacht. The Maldah, owned by a shoe manufacturer named Kingdon Feldworth. And you and your outfit mistook it for a tramp steamer!"

ELGER ended his utterance with a contemptuous snort. Ruff Turney's bristly face showed a sour expression. The mob-leader stroked his chin; then grunted an excuse.

"If you'd been out on the beach, chief," he said, "maybe you'd have been fooled, too. We couldn't figure how far out the ship was. Just lights - that's all. Looked like a hundred-to-one shot on it being the Dalmatia."

"That part is excusable," decided Elger. "In fact, everything was all right up to the time of the attack. But that was the big mistake. You started too much trouble."

"I didn't start it, chief. The outfit thought it was coast guards, when the sailor came running up. Nicky yanked a knife before I could stop him. He stabbed the sailor."

"And after that?"

"The rest of the mob began to fire. At the boat. But those birds were sharpshooters. They dropped Nicky. They plugged our searchlight. They clipped Hungry when we started to beat it. We brought Nicky and Hungry along with us."

"Seriously injured?"

Ruff scowled as he heard Elger's question.

"Dead," informed the mob-leader. "Both of 'em. That cuts the crew down to four. I left 'em over in the cabin of the boat."

"Anchored in the swamp?"

"Sure. Back of the old ruins where the slave houses used to be. I came in alone through the big passage. Don't worry, chief. Nobody's going to spot that boat of ours."

"There is no occasion to worry," declared Elger. "The people from the lifeboat found my house; so I welcomed them. Golga and Royne brought the sailor's body into the construction house."

"Want us to snatch it out of there?" inquired Ruff. "There won't be any evidence if we do."

"No evidence," snorted Elger, "except the testimony of five persons who saw the sailor die. We shall keep the body where it is, Ruff; later, I shall inform the law of what occurred on the beach. My position is a perfect one. I am a respectable citizen who had chosen the life of a recluse.

"No one knows that my look-out house has a passage that leads to these caverns, under the ruins of the leveled mansion. Nor do they know that these caverns are also connected with the ruins of the old slave buildings."

"It's a great set-up, chief."

"It is. But its worth depends upon a complete separation between myself and your band. Should the law come here, I can state that questionable characters have been about. In doing so, I can divert search from your actual hiding place.

"As an emergency measure, you and your men could abandon the boat and hide out in these caverns. But it is best to create the impression that nothing is wrong on Timour Isle. Unfortunately, your crew injured

that situation tonight."

Ruff grunted, then put a suggestion.

"We bumped off the sailor," he growled. "Why not rub out the crowd? Then there'd be nobody left to talk."

"That would be unwise," returned Elger, dryly. "At least, for the present. The yacht managed to steam out to sea. If it comes to safety, those aboard will institute a search for those who came ashore. The captain will give the exact location of this isle. If the castaways are found alive, my position will be strengthened.

"Should the Maldah flounder, as I hope it will, the news will reach us. We can then dispose of our unwelcome guests. The world will believe that they went down with the yacht. In either event, we shall have several days to wait. The hurricane has not abated."

As Elger paused, a ticking sound came from a box at the rear of the cavern. It was a telegraph sounder. Elger read the clicks, then turned to Ruff, whose blank look showed that he was unacquainted with telegraph codes.

"From the shack on the mainland," stated Elger. "Tully says he has picked up a wireless from the Dalmatia. The ship is putting into Charleston. It will probably stay there until the hurricane is over."

Approaching the box, Elger busied himself with a telegraph key. He notified Tully that he had received the message. That done, the bald-headed crook turned about with a complacent smile.

"Tully will keep us posted," he stated. "Since the Dalmatia is bound for Tampico, Mexico, it will unload no freight in Charleston. It will not come under inspection. The Dalmatia will bring us our last cargo. We shall hold our trophies here, then ship them ashore after construction begins at my house. Loaded boxes will go to the mainland on the construction barges."

"It may be tough, chief," interposed Ruff, "unloading all this swag. Dalavan got into trouble down in Miami."

"That was an exceptional case," retorted Elger. "Dalavan is safe in New York. Once he arrives here, he and I can arrange to dispose of treasures wholesale. Dalavan can line up plenty of other men like himself."

"Dalavan is a smooth guy, chief."

Elger sat thoughtful; suddenly he chuckled.

"Since the Dalmatia is in Charleston," he remarked, "I shall have Dalavan board the tramp steamer there and accompany the final shipment when it comes ashore at Timour Isle."

With that decision, Elger began to puff his meerschaum, eyeing Ruff Turney. A crafty look came into Elger's gaze; The Shadow could see the glint of the supercrook's eyes. Elger had decided that he had talked enough. He waved his hand as a dismissal to Ruff Turney. As Ruff arose to depart, Elger added final words:

"Lay low with the crew, Ruff. Report here as usual. I shall contact you personally, or through Golga or Royme. I shall hold my guests until after the Dalmatia has unloaded. Meanwhile, Tully will learn the fate of the Maldah. The lives of my guests will depend upon what happens to the yacht."

AS Ruff departed, Purvis Elger indulged in a smug smile. The master crook was pleased. In this cavern,

surrounded by millions of dollars' worth of stolen, imported wealth, Elger felt an absolute security. He was unperturbed because his house had gained unwelcome guests. Elger was confident that he could handle any opposition.

During his conversation with Ruff, Elger had heard the hardened crew leader mention trouble that Dalavan had encountered in Miami. Apparently that news had been flashed through from Tully some time ago; and Elger considered it of little consequence, even though it had involved The Shadow. Evidently, Dalavan had reported a perfect get-away, stating that his identity was unknown to The Shadow.

Yet The Shadow had learned the name of George Dalavan; he had gained it here, in the very headquarters of the master crook whom Dalavan served. Purvis Elger, with all his confidence, would have been overwhelmed with astoundment had he realized that he, himself, was under the keen observation of The Shadow.

It would be a while, however, before Elger would guess that The Shadow was present on Timour Isle. Elger had decided to play a waiting game. Learning that fact, The Shadow had chosen to adopt a similar policy.

There was much to learn, here on Timour Isle. There would be loose threads to gather, before the final stroke. The more that Elger planned, the better it would please The Shadow.

## **CHAPTER VIII. THE SHADOW ACTS**

NONE of Purvis Elger's detailed methods had escaped The Shadow. While he remained on vigil, the master sleuth summarized new facts that he had learned; and added them to those that he had previously gained.

For some time, Europe had been stirred by robberies in England and the continent. Rare paintings had been filched from museums, priceless treasures stolen from palaces. Relics such as archeological trophies and suits of armor had disappeared. Many other items of immense value were gone.

Those items could not have been fenced in Europe but it was possible to dispose of them in America, to private collectors who would say nothing. It was also a simple matter to ship them to South America and the Orient, for disposal there; but that could only be done from the United States.

The real game had been to get the treasures to America. The Shadow had known that when he had heard of the Lamballe tiara, mentioned by chance while he was in Havana. He had immediately surmised that James Tolwig, the intended purchaser, would be approached by a member of the thieving, smuggling ring. George Dalavan had been such an agent.

How had the goods come to America?

The Shadow had suspected the answer; at last he had found it. Tramp steamers, putting out from European ports, had carried the stolen goods in their cargoes. The European authorities had counted on all ships being inspected at receiving ports; hence they had not supposed that the stolen treasures would be aboard such vessels.

Elger had managed the shipments by having the ships pass this isolated section of the Georgia coast. There, they had unloaded the swag; Ruff Turney and his crew had received it and brought each shipment ashore in their small boat. One more cargo would complete the job; it would come by the Dalmatia.

ANOTHER point impressed The Shadow. Long ago, Elger must have done some treasure hunting of his own. On Timour Isle, he had uncovered the ruins of the old manor house; he had discovered the secret

vaults and passages. The caverns and their underground routes dated from colonial days, when they had been used in case of pirate raids.

Naturally, the manor house had been the focal point, with passages leading to the slave quarters and the look-out house. Elger had simply changed the arrangement. He kept the look-out as his own abode; he had Ruff and the receiving crew back in the swamp, near the site of the vanished slave quarters.

The caverns were doubly protected; either Elger or Ruff could come to them. Far apart, there seemed no connection between the two groups of inhabitants on Timour Isle.

Elger had already fenced some swag through Dalavan, as a "feeler" for the future. That meant a contact; and Elger had one. A telegraph cable led through the swamp to the mainland. Near some town was Tully, the telegrapher, ready to relay messages anywhere. Tully also had a receiving station for wireless messages; thus he had learned about the Dalmatia and would gain facts regarding the Maldah.

While The Shadow watched Elger, the portly crook finished his reverie. He carefully dumped the ashes from his meerschaum and placed the pipe in his pocket. That done, Elger turned to the telegraph key and tapped a message with his pudgy hand. The Shadow read the clicks, which were sent in Morse.

Elger gave the names of the persons who had arrived on Timour Isle. He stated that they would remain as his guests for the present. He instructed Tully to gain information regarding the yacht Maldah. Elger added orders that concerned George Dalavan.

The taps of the key told Tully to send a letter to New York by the night mail, instructing Dalavan to come to Timour Isle. Elger forwarded the suggestion that Dalavan travel to Charleston and board the Dalmatia there. He added, however, that such procedure would be optional. Should Dalavan prefer, he could come to the isle by the usual route.

Elger did not specify details regarding the "usual route." It probably meant that Dalavan had formerly come to some town in Georgia, perhaps the one where Tully was located, and from there had reached Timour Isle by a small boat.

Through such expeditions, Dalavan had doubtlessly received the Lamballe tiara and other valuable items, which he had taken along to peddle to close-mouthed curio collectors. It was evident to The Shadow that Dalavan had been confident that he had left no trail from Miami; otherwise, the murderer would have headed for the safety of Timour Isle. Unquestionably, Dalavan had discounted the importance of the sheet of paper that he had been forced to leave at James Tolwig's.

In suggesting that Dalavan come by the Dalmatia, Elger was making allowance for the hurricane. There would be a chance that the usual route would be closed for some days after the storm, as Georgia roads are frequently flooded after heavy rains.

His orders completed, Elger arose and turned directly toward the cavern where The Shadow stood. As he stepped forward, the crook did not spy the tall form of the onlooker.

The Shadow faded away before Elger arrived. He chose a darkened spot behind the suits of armor; there, The Shadow waited while Elger went through the cavern and chose the passage back to the look-out house.

DARKNESS followed Elger's departure, for the crook took the lantern with him. Soon, The Shadow's flashlight carved the blackness. Entering the central cavern, The Shadow focused the gleam upon the telegraph key.

A low laugh whispered through the musty air. Gloved fingers pressed the telegraph key. It clicked; then came a pause. Again, The Shadow tapped. There was a response from the other end. The Shadow began to send a message. His taps were a perfect copy of Elger's leisurely style.

"Add in letter to Dalavan," ordered The Shadow. "Obtain information regarding preferred stock Argentum Silver Mines. Learn if any is available at nineteen.

"Also inquire about Eastern Zinc, Incorporated. Selling at twelve and one quarter. Make inquiries through Rutledge Mann, investment broker, Badger Building, New York.

"Ask for information on Consolidated Securities; send immediate report on same. Tell Dalavan to approach Mann as a possible client who has learned of these investments."

The Shadow waited while Tully's reply ticked back. The man on the mainland was repeating the message. He had taken it as a bona-fide order from Elger.

The tiny flashlight cut a line of illumination across the central vault as The Shadow made his way toward the exit that Ruff had taken. Passing into the next cavern, the investigator discovered another store of valuables.

Here were other chests. The Shadow lifted one and judged from its weight that it contained metal, probably gold or silver plate. Upon a box in the corner of the room stood a cluster of bronze and silver statuettes. Against another wall was an upright mummy case.

Apparently, Purvis Elger had used many connections with continental thieves in order to acquire this hoard of valuables. Recalling the rogue's conversation with Ruff, The Shadow estimated that at least a dozen shipments must have been taken ashore at Timour Isle.

A DOOR led from this cavern. It was locked, to close the path that Ruff had taken. The flashlight's gleam focused upon a keyhole. A gloved hand moved forward, carrying a blackened metal pick. The Shadow probed the lock.

The door yielded. The Shadow stepped through and locked it from the other side. His flashlight glimmered to show a passage wider than the one that led to Elger's house. This had evidently been used - years ago - for the removal of valuables to the safety of the swamp.

This passage was also longer than the other. When The Shadow reached the end of it, he found himself in a low cellar. His light showed a flight of steps in the corner. Moving upward, The Shadow encountered a heavy trapdoor. He raised it and emerged into the night.

Winds whistled fiercely through the trees that sheltered this spot. Moist, matted underbrush settled soggily in place as The Shadow lowered the trap. He had come from one of the cellars in the old slave quarters. The entrance was hidden by clustered jungle weeds that rested on it.

A glimmer of the flashlight showed a tangle of cypress roots that formed a higher level. In darkness, The Shadow stepped upward, then paused abruptly. From close by, he heard a squidgy sound; indication of a footstep in swampy ground. The Shadow waited; the next token was a scrape against a cypress root. The Shadow wheeled; shot both hands into the darkness.

The move was timely. A bulky figure hurtled upon The Shadow. A snarl came from the attacker's lips as The Shadow grappled. It was not Ruff Turney's tone. This fighter was an underling, like "Nicky" and "Hungry," the two who had been slain on the beach. The fellow had merely chanced upon The Shadow.

Luck served the attacker. Twisting away, The Shadow backed against a cypress; lost his footing and

came to one knee. Ham-like hands clutched for his throat; The Shadow gave a gasp that brought a pleased snarl from his antagonist. The thug choked harder, ignoring the clutch of The Shadow's hands upon his arms.

That was all The Shadow needed. His grip tightened; he shot his body upward like a trip hammer. His shoulders hoisted backward; the attacker was propelled headlong by the sudden jujitsu thrust.

It came so forcefully that the thug lost his finger grip upon The Shadow's throat. A surprised snarl sounded as the crook took his six-foot dive; there was a crackling of underbrush, followed by a dull crash some distance below.

Crawling down beside the cypress roots, The Shadow used his flashlight to discover an opening in the jungle-like growth; The gleam displayed a pit, eight feet deep; at the bottom lay a twisted figure, back upward, but with goggle-eyed face turned full about.

The thug had plunged through a third layer of overgrowth into a forgotten cellar. His head had struck the stone floor; his neck had been broken in the crash. It was plain that his death had been instant.

THE SHADOW extinguished his light. He took to the marshy ground; changed course to seek a higher level. Picking a direction through vines and brambles, he reached a spot where the howling winds increased; and the roar of surf came with crashing tumult.

The Shadow had gained the beach, above the lower inlet. He took a course beneath the fringing trees. Shrouded beneath the overhanging branches of oaks, the weird prowler moved toward the look-out house. Reaching the building, The Shadow skirted the tabby walls to arrive at a side window of the living room.

There, he found outside bars, set in a frame held by heavy screws. The Shadow produced a small combination tool that served as screwdriver. He loosened the framework and removed it.

The Shadow had anticipated this easy entry. He knew that Elger had no need for barred windows; these frames were a mere pretense, to build up Elger's claim that he was a recluse who feared prowlers.

The Shadow opened the clamped window sash by means of a thin metal wedge. Entering the house, he replaced the barred frame; then clamped the window. He blended with the blackness of the living room.

Soon, motion ceased within the silent house. Only the banshee-like wail of the hurricane remained. Howling winds seemed angered as they twisted among mighty trees that thwarted their wrath. Those winds alone carried the secret of The Shadow's presence on Timour Isle.

Tomorrow, Ruff Turney would find his crew another man short. Discovery of the body would not indicate a fray. It would look as though the dead thug had stumbled over the cypress roots in the darkness, to accidentally plunge into the pit.

One man more or less did not concern The Shadow. Though he was stranded on this lonely isle, like the other castaways, he had accomplished much. He had listened in on Elger's schemes; he had seen the wealth that the master crook had hidden; he had learned the identity of George Dalavan.

Most important, however, was the fact that The Shadow, like Purvis Elger, had gained contact with the outside world. The supercrook could move distant men into action; and he had done so. The Shadow, by his added message, had accomplished the same.

In New York, The Shadow had agents of his own. He had sent them information through Elger's own outlet.

The carrier of The Shadow's message would be none other than George Dalavan!

## CHAPTER IX. THE NEXT NIGHT

A NEW evening had arrived on Timour Isle. The castaways were gathered in Elger's living room. Seth Hadlow and Bram Jalway were chatting while they smoked. Francine Feldworth was curled up on a couch reading a volume from a bookshelf. Professor Marcoln was at a desk in the corner, working problems on a chessboard, while Dashler was playing solitaire upon the window seat.

Ceaseless winds were wailing; tonight their intensity seemed greater than before. The captain of the Maldah had spoken wisely when he had predicted that the storm would increase. Purvis Elger's statement that it would be impossible to reach the mainland was borne out by the added fury of the tempest.

Elger had dined with his guests. After that, he had retired to his study. At intervals he dropped into the living room, always puffing at his meerschaum. Golga, too, was occasionally about.

"I'm turning in early," remarked Jalway to Hadlow. "This storm is endless. The only way to forget it is to sleep."

"Unless you're in the middle of it," returned Hadlow. "I'll wager that it's doubly bad out on the beach tonight. We're lucky that we came ashore when we did."

"One satisfaction," reminded Jalway. "It will be a tough night for those rogues who attacked us. I doubt that they will venture on the beach tonight."

"The trees are sheltering, though," said Hadlow. "It would be no trick at all to move about the island if one kept to the fringe of the woods."

A clatter came from the writing desk. Professor Marcoln was putting the chessmen away in their box. Rising, the white-haired castaway closed his board. He crossed the room, paused to mumble a good night, then continued on through the hall.

"The professor must have gained my copyright idea," remarked Jalway, with a slight smile. "I'm sure he didn't hear me say that sleep was the best procedure on a night like this. Well, I'm copying his example. Good night, all."

Jalway arose and departed. Hadlow finished a cigarette, then arose, stretched his long arms and spoke to the others. Francine looked up from her book; seeing that three of the castaways had decided to turn in, the girl tucked her book under one arm and followed shortly after Hadlow.

Dashler finished his game of solitaire. He looked about and shrugged his shoulders. The sailor felt the room chilling and oppressive with his companions gone. Gathering up the playing cards, he went to his room.

A DOZEN minutes passed. Golga entered the lighted room and looked about. Finding that all had retired, the big servant extinguished the light and went to the back hall. There he entered a room of his own and seated himself stolidly in a chair.

Half an hour passed. It was Golga's job, apparently, to maintain this vigil, unless otherwise directed by Elger. The servant did not seem to mind it. But when the clock on his table was pointing to the hour of eleven, Golga arose as though by plan. He went back into the rear hall. There, he noted a light from beneath the door of Elger's study. Golga kept on to the front.

There, the servant noted another light from beneath the door of Francine's room. He recalled that the girl had been reading a book. Probably she had stayed up after the others had gone to bed. Golga kept on past silent doorways. Suddenly, he paused. A slight, whistling noise came to his ears.

Golga entered the living room. He turned on the light. He heard the same noise again; from the rear corner. Advancing there, the servant made a prompt discovery. The corner window was unlocked; more than that, it was slightly raised.

Wind, whining about the tabby walls despite the shelter of the trees, had caused that whistling. Golga could feel the puffs of outside air. As he reached the window, he noted also that the outer bars had been removed.

Golga paused abruptly. He turned, quickly went back across the living room and extinguished the light. He crept along the front hall, stopping at every door. First, Seth Hadlow's. There, by chance, Golga heard a motion from within, as of the occupant turning in his bed. He also caught a slight sound that sounded like a cough.

Stopping outside of Bram Jalway's door. Golga heard no sound at all. He rested his hand upon the knob, and then changed his mind. He moved farther along the hall and stopped at the professor's door.

No sound from within. Carefully, Golga turned the knob. He opened the door and entered. He could see the professor's form in the bed; he also spied the whiteness of the man's hair upon the pillows. The professor stirred. Golga backed out and quietly closed the door behind him.

He looked toward Francine's door. The light still shone from beneath it. As Golga watched, the light clicked out. Francine had finished reading. Golga knew that the girl was in her room.

The big servant paused only for a moment when he reached Dashler's door. The sound of the sailor's snores were sufficient evidence that Dashler was there. Returning front-ward, Golga listened, but heard no sound. Boldly, he opened Jalway's door and flicked a flashlight upon the bed.

No one there. The room was empty. Golga extinguished his light, promptly closed the door and crept creaking back toward Elger's study, anxious to report to his master. Reaching his objective, the servant knocked at Elger's door. There was no response. Golga rapped louder.

A SOUND from within. Elger was coming from the inner bedroom. He opened the door and admitted the servant. Golga's face bore an expression that proved he had a message of importance. Elger closed the door without a word.

The rear hall remained gloomy and silent for a full minute. Then came a swish from the front. Blackness took on a tall, living shape. The Shadow advanced toward the door of Elger's den. He paused to listen outside the barrier. His gloved hand gripped the knob and opened the door a fraction of an inch. Voices came to The Shadow's ears.

"Within the last half an hour?" Elger was demanding. "You're sure of that, Golga?"

A growled affirmative from the servant.

"You looked in Jalway's room," came Elger's next remark. "Well, that proves he was out. But are you sure that all the others were where they belonged?"

"The girl turned out her light," informed Golga, gruffly. "I could hear the sailor snoring; and I saw the professor in his bed."



"What about Hadlow?"

"I thought I heard him, at first. I can't be sure about it, like the others. But I would have looked in there if I hadn't found Jalway missing."

"Leave the windows as they are," decided Elger. "Keep watch in the living room and let me know when Jalway returns. We can let him think that his trip has not been discovered. Maybe we can find out what he is up to, Golga."

Pausing for a few moments of reflection, Elger finally added:

"Ruff lost another man last night. The fellow dropped through into one of those old cellars at the slave quarters. It was an accident, though. I don't think that Jalway could have been at large last night."

The door closed imperceptibly. The Shadow faded into the darkness of the front hall. Half a minute later, Golga appeared and went forward. When he reached the living room, the servant heard no whistling from the corner.

Bringing out his flashlight, he found the window bars back in place; the window sash had also been closed. The screws of the bar frame were loose, however. They had been hurriedly replaced.

Returning to the front hall, Golga paused between the first doors. He heard a distinct cough from Hadlow's room. Stopping at Jalway's door, Golga listened intently. He heard someone moving about within the room. Golga crept onward, to report to Elger.

Again, a blackened shape appeared as soon as the servant had entered the den. Once more The Shadow approached and performed his motion at the door. Listening, he caught Golga's new report. He heard Elger grumble.

"Jalway, all right," came Elger's opinion. "Well, we'll keep a watch on him. So long as he snoops around outside, there's no reason to worry. But it proves that we've got to look out for him."

"Smart, choosing a window in the living room. He figures that if we noticed it was open, we wouldn't know who did it. Well, Golga, we've got Mr. Jalway's number. We'll keep it."

"Turn in for the night. I'm not going below until tomorrow evening. I'll be up a while and I'll take a look in that front hall myself before I go to bed. After this, we'll check on Jalway. But we'll make no move so long as he does his prowling outside."

The Shadow faded from the door. His laugh came as a sibilant whisper as he reached the darkness of the front door. No echo remained when Golga reappeared from the den. The servant went to his own room.

BACK in the den, Purvis Elger sat puffing at his meerschaum. His right hand steadied the pipe, while his left drummed softly upon the desk. A slow, crafty smile wreathed itself upon the schemer's lips.

Purvis Elger had learned that one of his guests was a prowler. He had decided that the fellow was playing a lone game. That, to Elger, was proof that there would be but one to watch: Bram Jalway.

Cunningly, Elger was planning a way to bring Jalway's prowls to an end, should occasion make that course advisable. He was satisfied that the fellow could cause no damage to affairs here on Timour Isle.

There was reason for Elger's smile. The shrewd crook was basing his opinions on Golga's report. Golga was vigilant. He had learned that one guest was missing. Elger was confident that the servant could keep tabs on whatever might happen in this house.

But Elger's smile would have faded had the crook realized how little Golga had actually discovered. Master, like servant, held to the impression that these castaways - Bram Jalway included - were all ordinary persons.

Not for an instant had either suspected that among the group was one who moved with the stealth of night itself. They did not know that this house of crime was harboring the secret presence of The Shadow!

## CHAPTER X. THE SHADOW'S MESSAGE

THE next morning brought a letdown of the high winds that swept the Georgia coast. The center of the storm had passed, but mountainous waves still beat upon the shore of Timour Isle.

The hurricane, reduced to a gale intensity, had gone northward, along the Atlantic seaboard. Ships had scurried to the shelter of the Chesapeake capes. New Jersey beach resorts were suffering damage from heavy waves.

In New York, strong winds were screaming fiercely among towering skyscrapers. A chilly drizzle was driving down into the canyons formed by Manhattan streets. New Yorkers were gaining a taste of the tempest that had paralyzed shipping along the coast.

High in one of those Manhattan towers sat a placid, round-faced man who seemed oblivious to the sights outside. He was busy at a desk in his private office, studying lists of stocks and bonds. He was Rutledge Mann, a quiet, methodical investment broker.

A stenographer announced a visitor. Mann studied a card that bore the name of George Dalavan. The visitor was unknown to Mann; nevertheless, the investment broker ordered the girl to show Mr. Dalavan into the private office.

Dalavan entered. His lips held a slight smile beneath his clipped mustache. In every deal that he made, Dalavan liked to meet men who looked easy to handle. Mann belonged in that category, according to Dalavan's estimate.

It was Dalavan's belief that Purvis Elger had gained information regarding certain securities through the guests on Timour Isle, for they were people of wealth. Dalavan had wondered why Elger had sent word to negotiate through one particular broker; and upon seeing Mann, Dalavan thought he had the answer.

The transactions probably required a broker who would not suspect that a big deal was under way. Mann appeared too dull a person to catch on to any smooth work.

"I came to talk about investments," informed Dalavan. "I was told that you might know about them. What facts can you give me about Argentum Silver?"

A SLIGHT flicker of surprise appeared upon Mann's rounded features. It ended as the investment broker smiled and leaned back in his chair. Mann's answer was so complacent that it finished the slight suspicion that flashed through Dalavan's mind.

"Argentum Silver," announced Mann, "was a freak issue that has disappeared from sale. At what price were you advised to buy it?"

"At nineteen."

"No wonder your friend recommended it. Argentum Silver was snapped up at twenty-seven. It cannot be had at nineteen."

Dalavan looked disappointed; then he stated:

"I was also advised to purchase Eastern Zinc, Incorporated, at twelve and one quarter."

"That could have been done," returned Mann. "Eastern Zinc was a good buy at that figure. However, the stock is off the market. Eastern Zinc was recently absorbed."

"What about Consolidated Securities?"

Mann nodded as he heard Dalavan's question. The investment broker seemed pleased by his customer's interest in that stock.

"Consolidated Securities is as yet unlisted," stated Mann. "I understand that all has been subscribed; but there are option holders who would sell small blocks at a reasonable profit. It is something of a speculative offer; but I can advise you definitely when I have obtained a late report on the stock. Where could I reach you later today?"

"At my hotel," replied Dalavan. "I am stopping at the Bonzell. Room 1214."

Mann made a notation on a desk pad.

"You will hear from me by five o'clock," he told Dalavan. He glanced at his watch. "I shall go downstairs with you, Mr. Dalavan, as it is my lunch hour. I expect to meet some brokers during lunch and will make initial inquires when I talk with them."

The two left the office and descended to the street. Dalavan headed toward Times Square; Mann took the opposite direction. As soon as he was out of Dalavan's sight, Mann hailed a cab.

SHORTLY afterward, Mann reached a modest apartment house. He rang a bell that bore the name Slade Farrow. He was admitted promptly to an apartment; there, he shook hands with a keen-faced, middle-aged man whose eyes showed a gleam of interest when they spied Mann. It was plain that Farrow saw something unusual in this visit.

"Mr. Farrow," stated Mann, in a careful tone, "I have come here on a matter which concerns The Shadow. Both of us have served him. Posing as an investment broker, I work for The Shadow. Your part has been a different one. As a criminologist, you have knowledge of the underworld. In times of emergency, you have supplied able workers to The Shadow. Men who were once crooks, but who have gone straight."

"They are always ready when The Shadow needs them."

"He requires them at present."

Farrow's eyes gleamed with interest at Mann's statement. He waited while the investment broker paused, then listened intently as Mann resumed.

"A few weeks ago," declared Mann, in a confidential tone, "The Shadow left New York. You will be surprised to learn that he had no motive in doing so other than to enjoy a needed rest. Crime seemed in abeyance, here in New York. It was a logical time for The Shadow to take a vacation."

Farrow nodded in agreement.

"The Shadow informed me," resumed Mann, "that he intended to cruise aboard the yacht Maldah, as a guest of the owner, Kingdon Feldworth."

"The Maldah!" exclaimed Farrow. "That yacht has been reported missing. You mean The Shadow is aboard?"

"The Shadow was aboard," replied Mann. "But it is apparent that he has come safely ashore from the yacht. I received a message from him today."

"Through whom?"

"Through a man whom I must class as an enemy, until I learn more about him."

SLADE FARROW was dumfounded by the investment broker's statement. Word received through an enemy. It passed belief. Incredible though The Shadow's methods were, this startling revelation surpassed all that Farrow had known in the past.

"A short while ago," explained Mann, "a suave visitor named George Dalavan came into my office and inquired regarding stock issued by the Argentum Silver Mines. No such stock exists. The mention of it means that Dalavan is to be watched. He is a criminal."

"His identity is known to The Shadow?" inquired Farrow.

"Perhaps," returned Mann. "Perhaps not. I merely know that Argentum Silver Mines is the key to check upon the man who made the inquiry. But that was only part of the information that Dalavan unwittingly brought me.

"He also mentioned a stock called Eastern Zinc, Incorporated. He quoted two figures: nineteen and twelve and one quarter. Those do not fit in with any prearranged code with the exception that Zinc signifies The Shadow.

"It seems logical that under the circumstances, The Shadow is anxious to communicate his location. Furthermore, Dalavan referred to an unknown stock called Consolidated Securities. The term Consolidated refers to The Shadow's agents, with whom I have contact. Evidently he requires their aid."

Slade Farrow smiled in meditative fashion. Eyeing the criminologist, Mann caught what was in Farrow's mind.

"The Shadow relies upon you in cases of emergency," asserted the investment broker. "I have previously been instructed to call upon you in time of perplexity. Evidently, The Shadow resorted to some device to convey an additional message. One that he believes you can solve."

Farrow arose and paced across the room. He was considering all that Mann had told him. At length the criminologist paused to face the investment broker.

"Mann," declared Farrow, "I am working on the assumption which you have gained: namely, that The Shadow is subtly trying to tell us where he is. It is obvious that he has landed from the crippled yacht. He might be anywhere between here and the Florida Keys.

"Assuming that he knows his own location, the first information that he would give might be the name of the State where he has come ashore. As I recall it" - Farrow paused as he plucked an almanac from the desk and thumbed the pages - "the nineteenth State in point of size is Georgia. Yes" - again a pause - "that is correct. Georgia is the nineteenth. That is where The Shadow is."

"Somewhere on the Georgia coast!"

"Exactly." Farrow was bringing out an atlas. "His reference to Eastern Zinc is probably a reminder of that

fact. By use of the word Eastern, he emphasized that point. So from the number twelve and one quarter we must learn his exact location."

FARROW opened the atlas to a map of Georgia. He ran his finger along the coast line. Mann looked on, a trifle glum, for he could not see how the criminologist could manage to locate the right spot. Farrow's chuckle, however, showed that the man had an idea.

"Obviously," declared Farrow, "The Shadow has consulted a map of his own. Since there is no way that we could guess the exact scale of that map, his only course would be to give us a percentage scale."

"I don't quite understand," put in Mann.

"Simply this." Farrow laid a ruler along the map. "Consider the north to south distance of Georgia in terms of one hundred units or segments, reading upward, in the manner of latitude. That scale" - Farrow was marking it off with a pencil - "would apply to any map, large or small.

"Here is twelve. One quarter more puts us on this spot. See that tiny island, Mann? The one that has no name? That is the spot from which The Shadow sent his message."

Leaving the atlas, Farrow went to a filing cabinet and brought out some larger maps. He found one that showed a portion of Georgia, on a large scale. He compared it with the map in the atlas.

"Here we are," declared Farrow. "This map names the island. It is called Timour Isle. Not much more than a mile in length. Thick marshes between it and the mainland."

"That must be the location," decided Mann. "I shall send agents there at once."

"Perhaps," put in Farrow, "it would be better to check on Dalavan first. I presume you arranged to meet him later?"

"I am to call him at the Hotel Bonzell. Room 1214."

"Why not send Hawkeye over there?"

The query brought a prompt nod from Mann. There was every reason why he should approve. "Hawkeye" was a protege of Farrow's, who had enlisted in The Shadow's service. Hawkeye was a clever trail finder; at that art, he had encountered only one who was superior: The Shadow.

Mann picked up Farrow's telephone. He dialed a number; a quiet voice responded. Mann held a short conversation; he was talking to Burbank, The Shadow's hidden contact man. Not only did Mann request that Burbank assign Hawkeye to the required task; he also urged that other agents - active ones - be ready to leave for Georgia.

A FEW hours later, George Dalavan strolled from his room in the Hotel Bonzell. As he passed the door of Room 1212, Dalavan failed to notice that it was ajar. A small, wizened-faced man was in that room; the man was Hawkeye. Craftily, he had made an entry to the room that adjoined Dalavan's.

Noting that Dalavan was not wearing hat and coat, Hawkeye decided that he was merely going to the lobby. Hurriedly, Hawkeye crossed the room and worked on a connecting door that led into Room 1214. There was sufficient space for him to get at the bolt on the other side; and Hawkeye managed the task, although he was no expert with locks.

Hawkeye had originally planned to crawl out the window and reach the sill of Dalavan's room; but this route, through the connecting door, was preferable.

Once in Dalavan's room, Hawkeye put in a prompt telephone call to Burbank. In a hotel the size of the Bonzell, the operator naturally thought that the caller was either the occupant of 1214, or a friend.

A brief report given, Hawkeye started a search of Dalavan's suitcase. He came upon a letter that the man had received that day. In it, Hawkeye read the details of what had occurred on Timour Isle, as transmitted from Elger to Tully.

The letter suggested that Dalavan go aboard the Dalmatia at Charleston, unless he should prefer to come by the usual route. Included in the letter was the mention of the stocks that Dalavan had discussed with Mann.

Hardly had Hawkeye slipped the letter back into its envelope before there was a sound outside the door of Room 1214. Quickly, Hawkeye scurried across the room and reached the connecting door. He slid beyond it; but had no time to close the barrier. Dalavan stepped into 1214, strolled across the room and began to pack his suitcase.

He had not seen the opened door to 1212. Hawkeye wanted to shut it; but feared that the stir might catch Dalavan's attention. Cautiously, the little spotter waited, staking everything on a break that he expected. The break came. Dalavan's telephone rang. The mustached man turned about to answer it. Hawkeye closed the connecting door. As he started to turn the knob, he heard Dalavan talking to Rutledge Mann.

"Hello, Mr. Mann..." greeted Dalavan. "Yes... Thirty-six shares of Consolidated Securities... Price quoted twenty-two and one half... You can arrange the purchase..."

HANGING UP, Dalavan turned suddenly. He thought that he had heard a sound from the connecting door. He eyed it suspiciously; then, with a long stride, he walked across and tried the door. He found it unbolted.

Thrusting a hand into his pocket, Dalavan yanked the door open; looked into the next room. He saw no one. Hawkeye had made a quick sneak out into the hall.

Stepping back into his own room, Dalavan entered a closet; from a high shelf, in a spot hidden from view, he brought out the square-shaped suitcase that he had brought from Florida. He opened it, viewed the Lamballe tiara, the money, and other items. With a smile, Dalavan set the case upon the floor.

Relieved to find that the swag was untouched, he decided that any intruder could not have managed to search the room.

Nevertheless, Dalavan's subsequent actions showed that he was worried because of the incident which had occurred. The murderer brought out a carbon copy of a brief note that he had typed to Tully; he shook his head as he burned this duplicate of a letter already sent.

From his pocket, Dalavan produced a ticket and Pullman reservation, both to Charleston, South Carolina. Again, he shook his head. It was plain that Dalavan intended to go to Timour Isle by the old route; not aboard the Dalmatia.

Packing up, Dalavan left the hotel room; he checked out of the Bonzell, carrying his case of swag with him. He took a cab to the Grand Central Station; there, he switched to another taxi and rode to the Pennsylvania Station. When he reached that destination, Dalavan indulged in a smile. He was confident that his trick with the cabs had thrown any followers off his trail.

DALAVAN was correct in his conjecture. Nevertheless, the reason why he had escaped pursuit was

different than he supposed. The answer came early that evening, when Rutledge Mann again called upon Slade Farrow. Together, these men who served The Shadow went over a series of newspaper clippings that Mann had brought along.

The newspaper accounts mentioned the Dalmatia. The tramp steamer was in Charleston; but it had reported several crew members lost during the hurricane. It was on that fact that Mann and Farrow depended for results, as their conversation proved.

"If Hawkeye leaves on the 9:30 train," declared Farrow, "he will arrive in Charleston soon enough. Hawkeye is crafty; he will be smart enough to arrange a berth for himself, aboard the Dalmatia. He can pass himself as an able-bodied seaman."

"Vincent and Marsland will leave later," announced Mann. "Their train will get to Charleston by tomorrow afternoon. If Hawkeye does manage to place himself aboard the Dalmatia as a crew member, he should be able to work them aboard with him."

Farrow nodded. He knew Harry Vincent and Cliff Marsland, as competent aids of The Shadow. Teamed with Hawkeye, they would make a useful trio. Dalavan had never seen any of them; if he should be aboard the Dalmatia, he would not recognize the three as agents of The Shadow.

"If Hawkeye fails," added Mann, "he can wire Richmond. Vincent will pick up the telegram there. In that case, he and Marsland will have to find their own route to Timour Isle."

Mann and Farrow parted. Their work was done. They had received The Shadow's message; they had put active agents on the job. The Shadow had relied upon such cooperation and he had gained it. Affairs were tightening on Timour Isle. Crooks were converging to that focal point. Soon, Purvis Elger would be prepared to deliver murder.

Yet The Shadow had countered, despite his isolated situation. Through Elger's own ace, Dalavan, The Shadow had arranged for aid of his own; The Shadow's men had chosen their route to Timour Isle. The Shadow could depend upon his agents to offset the reserves whom Elger soon would gain.

## **CHAPTER XI. THE NEXT NIGHT**

LATE the next afternoon, sunshine came to Timour Isle. Scudding clouds had cleared. The fury of the storm had ended. Purvis Elger, smiling when he entered the living room, had suggested that his guests might like to stroll abroad.

All had accepted the suggestion with the exception of Professor Marcolin. The white-haired savant had brought several manuscripts from his bedroom. He was busily engaged in the translation of an Arabian epic. He seemed pleased that the other guests were going out. It offered him a chance to work undisturbed.

Elger invited the old man into his study. Marcolin accepted. He found it a better place to work; and occupied himself at a corner table while Elger, at the desk, delved into mathematical problems. It was nearly dinner time when the two scholars ended their work.

Entering the living room, they found Bram Jalway pacing about, puffing at an empty pipe. Elger was smoking his meerschaum; he smilingly proffered his pouch. Jalway filled his briar and lighted up.

"Where are the others?" queried Elger.

"Somewhere close by," replied Jalway, "walking about under the trees near the beach. Looking at the

Spanish moss, I guess. Funny how that stuff clings to the branches. Even the hurricane didn't seem to loosen it."

"How long ago did you come in?" inquired Elger.

"About half an hour ago," responded Jalway, puffing at his pipe. "I couldn't see much use in strolling about a deserted beach."

The front door opened a moment later. Seth Hadlow and Francine Feldworth entered, followed by Dashler. As the arrivals began to chat with Elger, Royne entered to announce that dinner was served.

The dining room was located in a rear extension of the house, near the kitchen. As usual, the guests enjoyed their meal; for Royne had proven himself a capable cook. While they were finishing their dessert, Elger spoke to Royne. The servant went from the dining room.

"I've sent Royne to look for some of my special tobacco," said Elger to Jalway. "A blend that I had put away for unusual occasions. You seem to be enjoying your briar pipe. Keep it ready for this new smoke. In the meantime, suppose we adjourn to the living room."

They moved to the front of the house. There, Royne reappeared, to state that he had not been able to find the tobacco. Elger excused himself. He was gone for several minutes.

He returned with a tin of the missing blend. He offered it to Jalway who filled his briar. Elger followed by putting a pipe load in his meerschaum.

THERE had been nothing suspicious about the procedure. Yet it fitted with something that The Shadow had learned on a preceding night. Elger had said that he would send Royne to contact with Ruff Turney; to learn what Ruff's man had discovered.

Royne's futile hunt for the tobacco had been a cover for that contact. His claim that he could not find the tobacco had given him a chance to report to Elger.

Whatever the crook's plans might have been, Elger kept them from his guests. In fact, he reversed his usual procedure. Instead of retiring to the seclusion of his study, he remained in the living room and chatted pleasantly.

Conversation turned to the matter of the Maldah. Francine began to express anxiety concerning her uncle. Her companions tried to reassure her. It was Elger who delivered the most comforting announcement.

"The storm has abated," he declared. "Within a day or two we should have contact with the mainland. I would not be surprised if a boat should come here shortly."

"We have the lifeboat," remarked Hadlow. "It is high on the beach, undamaged by the waves."

"It would not be suitable for the back passages," returned Elger. "A power boat is needed for those channels. Moreover, most of them are blind entrances into the marshes. Only a pilot familiar with the channels can pick his way through them."

"You are sure that people will come here soon?" questioned Francine.

"Positively," replied Elger. "A boat would have come yesterday but for the storm. Be patient, Miss Feldworth. There will not be long to wait."



A slight pause while Elger puffed at his meerschaum. Then the master of Timour Isle turned to another subject.

"There may still be danger on this isle," he remarked, in a cautious tone. "Those vandals who attacked you on the beach may have found themselves stranded by the hurricane. There is a chance that they are still about.

"Therefore, I would suggest that all continue to remain indoors after dark. If those rogues were laying low during the storm, they might approach this house now that the weather has abated. For that reason, I intend to keep my servants on guard."

Troubled looks appeared upon the faces of the listeners. Elger dismissed them with a casual wave of his hand.

"No occasion for worry," he assured. "This house is a miniature fortress. But to be ready in case of trouble, I shall have Golga stay on duty here in the living room. Royne will guard the back of the house."

That ended the subject. Elger had played his part well. He had made it appear that he was taking the precaution purely to avoid an invasion; at the same time he had definitely made it plain that the living room window would not be a possible exit for anyone who might wish to prowl from the house.

Puffing steadily at his briar pipe, Bram Jalway suggested a game of bridge. He, Hadlow, Francine and Elger made up a table. Professor Marcolm took his manuscripts to his bedroom. Elger offered him the use of the study; but the white-haired man declined, stating that he would retire early.

Dashler played solitaire on the window seat; finally the sailor decided to turn in; and a short while later, the bridge game came to an end. The last three guests went to their rooms; Elger called Golga, then retired to his study, leaving the servant on duty in the living room.

IN the seclusion of his study, Elger indulged in a smile. He had subtly blocked the prowling game tonight. His guests had retired; it was time to keep a rendezvous with Ruff Turney. For tonight, Elger knew, there would be return news from New York.

Pocketing his meerschaum, Elger extinguished the study light. He went into the bedroom, opened the big bookcase and descended by the secret stairway. The bedroom light went out. Hardly had blackness come before the outer door of the study opened. The Shadow glided into the empty room.

Elger's new plan of action had worked perfectly for The Shadow. Golga, stationed in the living room, would have no need to search the rooms that the guests occupied, for he was blocking the outlet that had been used before. Thus The Shadow had a perfect opportunity to spy upon Elger himself within the house.

Crossing the study, The shadow entered the bedroom, opened the bookcase and descended. He reached the lower passage and kept on through until he arrived in the first cavern. The sound of voices from the central room told him that Elger and Ruff were already holding conference.

"Tully's been trying to click something through to you," stated Ruff. "I've heard his taps while I've been waiting. Better get in touch with him, chief."

Elger moved over to the telegraph outfit and began to tap for Tully. A response came. The receiver clicked a message. The code was plain to The Shadow, listening from the outer cavern. But it meant nothing to Ruff Turney, until Elger gave his explanation.

"Dalavan started south last night," stated Elger. "He is going to board the Dalmatia at Charleston. He will

come ashore with the shipment."

"How soon?" inquired Ruff.

"The Dalmatia sails late tomorrow," replied Elger. "Tully picked up a radioed shipping report to that effect. That means she'll be off the coast during the night. You'll meet her."

"And bring in the swag?"

"Part of it. The rest will come in by one of the boats from the Dalmatia. Hexler and his outfit will handle it. They'll join up and take orders from you. This is the last job, remember."

"I get it. No need for them to go back aboard."

"None at all. The captain of the Dalmatia has been paid to keep mum. He doesn't know what he's unloading. Thinks it's liquor on which the duty is too high for shipment through the customs."

"He must be a sap."

"He probably is, or he would not be the skipper of a hopeless tub like the Dalmatia. Here's something else important. The Maldah has been sighted, stranded in shoal water by Hamplin's Inlet."

"That's only twenty miles from here. Who sighted her?"

"A coast guard cutter. It couldn't get through; and the Maldah has signaled that she needs no aid."

"No radio report?"

"None. The Maldah has apparently been unable to repair the wireless equipment. So nobody knows yet that some of the passengers came ashore."

"Why do you think Feldworth is stalling them off? His ship's aground."

"He probably doesn't want to pay salvage on the yacht. I can't see why, though. He has plenty of money. It works to our advantage, however. There won't be any search for these castaways until after we unload the Dalmatia."

Tick - tick - tick

THE SHADOW listened. A new message was coming from Tully. Elger was back at the key, acknowledging. Clicked words followed. An exclamation came from Elger's lips. The Shadow knew the reason. He had heard the message also. He lingered to hear Elger's comments to Ruff.

"Tully just got a phone call from Dalavan," announced Elger, in a harsh tone. "Dalavan's in Georgia. Got off a train at the station near Tully's shack."

"He isn't going to Charleston, then?" quizzed Ruff.

"No," Elger spoke, grimly. "Somebody spotted him in New York at the Hotel Bonzell. It may have been The Shadow."

"Dalavan took it on the lam?"

"Yes. With the evidence that would have made trouble. That's all Tully knows. He's going to bring Dalavan here. He's bringing Chunk along, too. They'll pull in by boat at the upper inlet and wait there

while Dalavan comes up to the house."

"To report to you?"

"Yes. He can pose as a chance visitor. I'll introduce him to the other guests in the morning. We'll say that he sent the boat back, not knowing that I wanted to make contact with the mainland. But the boat will stay here."

Elger paused, then glanced at notations he had made while receiving Tully's message. A puzzled frown appeared upon his countenance.

"Here's something I can't figure out," he remarked. "Dalavan told Tully that he can purchase thirty-six shares of Consolidated Securities at twenty-two and one half. Says they are on order."

"Some stock you ordered, chief?" inquired Ruff.

"No," returned Elger, still puzzled.

"I never heard of the stock before. I'll ask Dalavan about it when he comes."

A MOTION beyond the door of the cavern; The Shadow was moving further back into the darkness. Since Elger did not intend to question Tully regarding Dalavan's mention of securities, there was no reason for The Shadow to remain. The Shadow had learned facts that strengthened his position.

Elger believed that The Shadow was in New York; that it was he who had tried to spot Dalavan. This proved conclusively that Elger did not have even the mildest suspicion that The Shadow was one of his guests on Timour Isle.

More important, however, was the quotation of figures that Tully had given over the wire. Rutledge Mann had purposely named thirty-six shares of Consolidated Securities as the number available; and there was a reason why he had stated the price as twenty-two and one half.

Even without a map at hand, The Shadow knew that South Carolina was the thirty-sixth State in size; and that Charleston was located at point twenty-two and one half, according to The Shadow's system of measurement.

The Shadow knew that Mann had discovered the meaning of the message that had come through Dalavan. Mann had sent an answer back through the same channel. Since The Shadow wanted agents here, Mann's message naturally signified the route that they had chosen. They would board the Dalmatia at Charleston; The Shadow was sure that they would find a way to come ashore with the swag, when the tramp steamer neared Timour Isle.

Under the circumstances, the fact that Dalavan suspected he was followed and had chosen to come by the usual route was all for the better. Edging away in darkness, The Shadow caught a last statement from Elger to Ruff.

"I'm going to tell Golga to be ready for Dalavan," informed Elger. "I shall come back here, to arrange the treasures for later shipment to the mainland. When Dalavan arrives, Golga can show him into the den. Dalavan can wait for me there. It will be a few hours before he arrives."

Elger turned toward the outer cavern that led to the secret passage to his house. He encountered vacated darkness. The Shadow had departed. Moving noiselessly through the gloom ahead, The Shadow was en route to the look-out house.

The Shadow was gone from Elger's den when the master crook arrived there.

## CHAPTER XII. THE SHADOW'S CHALLENGE

MIDNIGHT had passed. All was quiet in the house on Timour Isle. Golga, seated in the darkness of the living room, was listening intently. He was under orders from Purvis Elger.

Hours ago, his chief had stolen in here to announce that George Dalavan was due to arrive tonight. Then Elger had departed. Golga had waited stolidly, until the time for Dalavan's arrival had neared. The big servant had become restless.

Pacing to the door of the living room, Golga listened. All silent in the hall. The guests were asleep. Outside winds were scarcely audible tonight. There were no disturbing sounds to cover noises that might occur within the house.

A scratching tap from the front door. Golga moved cautiously in that direction. Slowly, he drew back the bolts. He opened the door a few inches. Pallid moonlight showed a mustached countenance beyond. It was George Dalavan.

Stepping back, Golga admitted the arrival. He closed the door and bolted it, drew Dalavan into the living room. Cautiously, the servant whispered Elger's instructions. Dalavan nodded his understanding. He tiptoed out into the hall, back toward Elger's den.

Golga listened from the door of the living room. The servant wanted to be sure that none of the guests had heard Dalavan's entry. No sound disturbed the silence of the hallway. Golga moved back into the living room.

It was then that darkness stirred. From a doorway in the hall, blackness came to life. A shrouded form blocked the slight light that came from the rear hall. That shape became the figure of The Shadow, moving stealthily, unheard by Golga, toward the goal that Dalavan had chosen.

George Dalavan had entered, carrying his square-shaped suitcase. When he reached the den, he found the room deserted. Placing the case upon the desk, he opened it and removed four objects. The first was the Lamballe tiara; the second, the envelope containing Tolwig's fifty thousand dollars; the third was the sheaf of shorthand notations compiled by the dead investigator Bagland; the fourth, the receipt that Dalavan had signed.

With a suave grin, Dalavan spread these exhibits upon the desk. He looked toward the door of the bedroom, expecting Elger to appear. Seeing no sign of his chief, Dalavan lighted a cigarette and strolled about the study, glancing at books that were strewn there.

The door from the hall was opening, inch by inch. Keen eyes were peering inward. The door moved more swiftly. Blackness edged into the room. The Shadow, cloaked being of vengeance, closed the door behind him and stared steadily at Dalavan.

The murderer heard the slight click of the door. He turned about, expecting to see Golga. Dalavan's face showed sudden horror; the cigarette dropped from his trembling fingers. Once again, Dalavan was staring into the looming mouth of an automatic, gripped by an avenger in black.

DALAVAN froze, exactly as he had done at Tolwig's bungalow near Miami. He had discounted The Shadow's prowess; for his safe flight had given him confidence. Moreover, the New York episode had made Dalavan believe that he could shake The Shadow from his trail. Thus The Shadow's unexpected appearance, in Elger's own den, was a complete blow to Dalavan. The murderer quailed.

"I - I killed Tolwig," gasped Dalavan. "But it - it was in self-defense. It was Lovett who - who started it -"

Dalavan paused, incoherent. He could see no mercy in the gleam of The Shadow's eyes. However, as he stared helplessly, Dalavan saw something that The Shadow did not observe. The door from the hall was opening; its click had been drowned out by Dalavan's words.

With momentary rally, Dalavan steadied, hoping to hold The Shadow's attention. There was a further motion at the door; Dalavan saw Golga, crouching forward. The servant had a long-bladed knife. A few seconds more and Golga could spring upon The Shadow.

In those seconds, however, Dalavan overplayed. His lips compressed beneath his mustache. His eyes showed shrewdness. The Shadow saw that they were looking beyond.

The Shadow jabbed his .45 warningly toward Dalavan. As the crook quailed instinctively, The Shadow spun about. Instantly, he whirled toward the door.

Golga was already springing inward. The big menial's blade flashed from his driving hand. Despite Dalavan's unconscious betrayal, Golga, through quick action had gained the edge on The Shadow. An instant's pause for perfect aim might have been fatal to the black-cloaked warrior.

The Shadow fired at the hand that held the knife. Hard upon the automatic's spurt came a cry from Golga as the bullet clipped the servant's wrist. The down-coming hand seemed to jolt as its fingers opened. The long knife skimmed past The Shadow's shoulder, and clattered against the wall beside Dalavan.

The timely shot would have eliminated an ordinary foe. But Golga was a vicious, deadly fighter. The man scarcely halted in his lunge. Shooting his free left hand forward, he hurled himself upon The Shadow and drove the avenger back against the wall.

Flaying arms gripped The Shadow in a furious grapple. Twisting, the cloaked fighter tried to wrestle free. He partially succeeded, then drove his left fist squarely to Golga's chin. The servant lost his hold. Clearing him, The Shadow swung toward Dalavan.

The covered crook had become a fiend. During the momentary struggle, Dalavan had yanked a revolver from his pocket. Wielding the stub-nosed .32, he was leaping forward to clip The Shadow at close range. That advance was to prove his undoing.

DALAVAN had the bead on The Shadow. His aim would have served at a dozen feet as well as five. But Dalavan, in his maddened effort, had chosen the closer range. He was still surging forward as he pressed the trigger of his gun.

The Shadow's left arm was swinging as his right hand aimed. His gloved fist struck Dalavan's wrist just as the fellow fired.

The crook's hand jolted up; the bullet whistled through the brim of The Shadow's slouch hat. Dalavan, bringing his arm down in cudgel-like fashion, sought to loose a second slug.

The Shadow's automatic roared. Dalavan's surging body bounded in the air. With a frantic cry, the crook came jouncing upon his half-crouched foe. It was a death plunge; for The Shadow's bullet had found the murderer's heart. Yet dying, Dalavan was a man of fury.

The Shadow rolled sidewise beneath the writhing form that hit him. Dalavan's gun went clicking to the floor. The Shadow, twisting, freed himself from the murderer's body. Then, of a sudden, he dived sidewise on the floor.

Golga, seizing his knife with his left hand, had pounced back into the fray. His driving stroke was on its way even as The Shadow made his voluntary sprawl. The blade went wide, plunging on The Shadow. Golga poised for another stroke with the knife. A roar sounded from the floor.

The Shadow had delivered a backhand shot. Golga's body wavered; his left hand wobbled back and forth. Balanced on one knee, Golga stared straight ahead, while a sickly expression dominated his evil face.

The Shadow, rolling clear, watched the strange result. Golga was like a rocking statue. The knife loosed from his shaking hand. It dropped, blade foremost, into the floor. Then the servant's body crumpled. A fierce death gasp came from ugly lips as Golga's arms sprawled outward on the floor.

Lunges - shots - the knife strokes - all had followed with quick succession. In less than two dozen seconds, The Shadow had accounted for this pair of would-be slayers. Already the cloaked victor was at the desk. Unscathed, The Shadow was sweeping tiara, cash and notes into the case that Dalavan had brought.

With a fierce, mirthless laugh, The Shadow sprang to the door of the den and gained the rear hall. Quickly he crossed that space and merged with the front darkness.

A MOMENT later, Dashler's door banged open. The sailor came out into the hall.

"What's up?" was Dashler's growled query. "Did I hear shots?"

A voice answered from the rear hall. Hearing footsteps, Dashler moved in that direction, to encounter Royne. The cadaverous servant reached the door of the study.

"Look!" cried Royne, pointing to the bodies on the floor. Then, seeing that Elger was not in the room: "Stay back. Go and call the others."

As Dashler obeyed, Royne hurried into the bedroom. He saw that this apartment was empty; he knew that Elger must be below. While Royne hesitated, the bookcase swung open. Elger himself appeared.

Royne pointed to the study. Elger quickly closed the bookcase. With the servant, he entered the study to look at the bodies. He picked up Dalavan's gun and held it in readiness as footsteps came from the hall.

Dashler was back. Following him was Professor Marcoln, clad in a dressing gown, his white hair unkempt. The two stopped on the threshold. As Dashler reported to Elger, Marcoln stared with wide eyes at the bodies.

"I knocked at the other doors," stated Dashler. "I told Miss Feldworth to stay where she was. I called to the others to come."

Seth Hadlow appeared as Dashler finished speaking. The sportsman's face was solemn. He eyed the bodies half curiously; then, in mechanical fashion he reached in the pocket of the dressing gown that he was wearing. Methodically, Hadlow produced a cigarette and placed it between his lips. But he did not light it.

"Where is Jalway?" demanded Elger.

"I called him," responded Dashler.

"Go find him," ordered Elger.

The sailor turned. Before he had gone a dozen steps, he encountered Jalway coming from the front hall. The promoter was fully dressed, except for his necktie. He spoke to Dashler as he advanced.

"What's up?" was Jalway's query. "Did you say something about shots?"

DASHLER motioned toward the den. Jalway stopped on the threshold. His eyes opened. The sight of the two dead men seemed to astonish him. His expression carried inquiry.

"What has happened here," declared Elger, solemnly, "is this. I expected a visitor. Mr. George Dalavan, whom you see dead before you. I did not know when Mr. Dalavan would arrive."

"Quite naturally not," interposed Hadlow, "since you had no communication with the mainland."

"Exactly," emphasized Elger. "But it appears that Mr. Dalavan arrived tonight. Golga must have admitted him and sent him into the den. I was asleep in the adjoining bedroom" - he pointed to the door that he had come from - "and my door was closed."

"Did you hear shots, sir?" asked Dashler.

"Yes," replied Elger, "but I had no idea they were so close at hand. I arose; I heard commotion here. I entered to find Royne beside the bodies. Tell me: can anyone supply evidence regarding what occurred?"

Head-shakes were the only answers.

"We must assume then," decided Elger, "that someone came in with Dalavan. He must have sought to kill Dalavan, and Golga intervened. Both are dead. The killer has escaped. Let us examine the front door."

Elger led the way. The group followed. They found the front door bolted. Elger stepped into the living room and turned on the light. He looked at the windows. One was closed but not locked.

Elger opened it. He noted that the barred frame had been removed. Flicking a flashlight to the ground outside, Elger saw the frame there. A smile appeared upon his lips - an expression which no one observed. Elger turned in from the window.

"The assailant," stated Elger, "must have effected an entry by this route. He has escaped by the same outlet. Royne" - he turned to the servant - "take Dashler and go to the upper inlet. See if, by any chance, there are men there with a boat. The ones who brought Dalavan from the mainland."

Royne and Dashler departed. At that moment, Francine appeared in the living room. The girl's face was pale as she looked about inquiringly. Elger, as spokesman, told Francine what had occurred.

Royne and Dashler returned, bringing two roughly clad men who looked like natives from the mainland marshes. This pair was Tully and "Chunk"; men known to Elger. But he gave no sign that he recognized them. He took the two into the den, leaving the guests in the living room.

WHEN Elger returned alone, he made a brief announcement. He stated that he had hired the two men to remain on guard for the night. The bodies had been removed by these new hirelings.

"The men tell me that the trip was difficult," stated Elger. "They do not want to attempt a return journey for another day, at least. The regular channels of the marshes have been altered by the severe winds.

"These men are armed and have identified themselves as reliable parties. With Royne and Dashler, they can guard the place tonight. There are no cartridges suitable for the rifles that you people brought; so I

am giving Dashler my own revolver."

This frank arrangement pleased the guests. The inclusion of Dashler among the watchers gave an added security. The castaways retired; so did Elger. The four pickets went on duty. It was taken for granted that some outsider must have entered to battle with Dalavan and Golga; and that the intruder must have fled the house.

In his den, Elger indulged in a dry smile. With three of his own men on guard, he felt that the field was safe. Tomorrow, he would take steps to avenge the deaths of Dalavan and Golga.

The Shadow had challenged Purvis Elger's henchmen. In that challenge, The Shadow had dealt death. He had gained wealth and evidence that George Dalavan had brought to Timour Isle. Yet Elger, though he knew the import of this evening's battle, was still unperturbed.

With guards on duty, with the majority of his guests lulled to a sense of false security, this crafty master of crime was playing a waiting game in answer to The Shadow's challenge.

### **CHAPTER XIII. THE TRAP IS LAID**

ANOTHER day had passed at Timour Isle. Subsiding winds had left only a heavy, heaving swell with odd chunks of wreckage along the beach. Purvis Elger's guests had gone out to view the flotsam and jetsam strewn by the tide. They had found nothing that could have come from the yacht Maldah.

That fact was mentioned during the evening meal. It brought a reassuring comment from Elger, who was presiding at the head of the table.

"I believe the Maldah is safe," stated the portly host. "We shall know positively by tomorrow night. Thanks to the two men from the mainland."

"Tully and Chunk?" inquired Jalway, using the nicknames by which the men had introduced themselves.

"Yes," nodded Elger. "When morning comes, they are going to set out for the mainland. The channels should certainly be clear by then. I shall have them notify the authorities regarding the deaths that have occurred here.

"They will bring back sheriff and coroner. When those officials arrive, I feel sure that we shall gain news concerning the outside world. That should include a report of the Maldah."

FRANCINE appeared relieved by Elger's statements. The portly man arose and made another announcement.

"I am going to my den," he said, "to make a full detailed report of all that has occurred since your arrival on Timour Isle. I shall send that report ashore with Tully and Chunk.

"This evening, I shall rely on your cooperation in guarding the house. I have instructed Royne to give revolvers to the three who are unarmed. You, Mr. Jalway; you, Mr. Hadlow; and you, Professor Marcolm.

"If any of you care to fare forth, you are welcome to do so. I believe that the best way to deal with the cowardly assassins who are near this isle is to let them know that we are prepared. But I advise any who choose to go out to use the utmost discretion. We want no more deaths."

With this statement, Elger excused himself. He left the dining room and went into his den. He locked the door behind him on this particular occasion. Immediately afterward, Tully, who was lounging in the hall,



took up a casual position near the door.

From the den, Elger entered the bedroom. He opened the bookcase and descended into the secret passage. He moved along to the caverns. A light was burning when he arrived. Ruff Turney was waiting for his chief.

Tonight there were no spying eyes as the two conferred. The Shadow had found no opportunity to trail Elger to his lair. But The Shadow, incidentally, had no reason to look in on tonight's conference. He already knew the plans that the crooks had made.

As conversation moved between Elger and Ruff, it became apparent that the two were plotting on a side scheme that they had not as yet discussed. Elger was explaining how he had duped his guests; and with it, he was mentioning certain consequences that might develop.

"I've bluffed them, Ruff," boasted Elger, as he faced his tough lieutenant. "I told them that I figured somebody from outside had killed Dalavan and Golga."

"They fell for it?" queried Ruff.

"Absolutely," replied Elger. "And it was all for the benefit of one person present: Jalway."

Ruff nodded. Elger puffed at his big pipe.

"Golga was capable," mused Elger, reflectively. "He planted it cold upon Jalway. That one man is the troublemaker in my house. He's playing a lone hand.

"Unquestionably he planned to go out last night. But he knew Golga was in the living room. When he heard Dalavan come through the hall, he decided it might be Golga, going to the den. So he went there."

"And encountered Dalavan?"

"Yes. Killed him in a fight. Golga pitched in and Jalway finished him, too. Then he ran for it. Got to the window in the living room."

"Then turned yellow?"

"Hardly yellow, Ruff. He decided it would be better to stage a bluff. He came back. He looked as surprised as the others. He tried a bluff of his own; so I countered with mine. I went to the living room and found the window unbarred. I decided - for Jalway's benefit - that an outsider had done the dirty work."

Another pause. Then Elger chuckled. "Dalavan had a box with him," declared the master crook. "I can guess what was in it. That Lamballe tiara and maybe Tolwig's dough. Dalavan talked a little to Tully and Chunk. They told me so when I got them alone last night."

"Did he tell them much?"

"Unfortunately, no. He assured them that all was well; and he mentioned that he had valuables with him."

"If Jalway's got the box now, why don't you make a search for it?"

"He may have chucked it somewhere outside the house, or he may have planted it inside, in some place that would make it impossible to pin the goods on him. No, Ruff, I have a better way to deal with Mr. Bram Jalway.

"I'm giving him rope" - Elger paused for a few furious puffs of pipe smoke - "and it will be enough to hang him. I suggested that my guests look about tonight. Leave the house, if they wished to do so. But I added that they should be careful."

"I get it. Then if Jalway goes out, we can grab the others -"

"No, no, Ruff." Elger was impatient in his interruption. "Those others are our alibi. Don't you get it? If they looked upon Jalway as their protector, the game would be difficult. But Jalway, thinking himself a fox, is playing a lone hand. That gives me the chance to step in as the real protector.

"I've given guns to all of them. I have warned them to be careful. If anyone goes out, it will be his own funeral if he gets hurt. And I believe" - Elger's tone was crafty - "that Mr. Jalway is going to walk into trouble."

"You mean we're to watch him?"

"Exactly. You and the men that you still have. Cover the house, Ruff. Capture Jalway if he appears. Bring him here, through the entrance from the marsh."

"What if he puts up a fight?"

"Don't kill him - unless you have to do so. We'll make him talk. We're going to find out what he did with the swag."

"What about the others, chief?"

"Later we shall form a searching party. Tomorrow - after the shipment has come ashore from the Dalmatia. We shall look for Jalway's body. We shall find it. Riddled with bullets, somewhere in a swamp. You and your crew will be gone."

"In the boat?"

"A few of you. Others, including those from the Dalmatia, may be in hiding in these caverns. I shall decide about that later."

"But when the others find Jalway, then -"

"They will be reminded of my admonition that all should be careful. They will stand by me when I testify to the law that Jalway disobeyed my orders. That sailor, Hoskins; Dalavan; Golga; and finally Jalway - all will be classed as victims of outlaws who have terrorized Timour Isle."

RUFF TURNEY nodded. He could see the merits of this scheme. Purvis Elger had run into difficulties of late; but the master schemer was figuring the best way out. The elimination of Bram Jalway was an absolute necessity to the culmination of his schemes.

"Personally, remarked Elger, in a cold tone, "I should like to eliminate all these castaways. But the fact that those aboard the Maldah may begin a search is something that I cannot ignore.

"There is no telling how much Jalway may have learned. He is a menace. We must finish him and we must regain the articles that he stole. That is the course we shall take; and through it I shall strengthen - not weaken - my position with the other unwanted guests."

With an imperious gesture, Elger pointed to the opposite exit. Ruff nodded as he arose. It was time for him to start out and assemble the band for the capture of Bram Jalway.

"I shall see you later, Ruff," reminded Elger, as he arose and stalked toward his own passage. "I feel positive that Jalway will go out tonight. I shall allow half an hour for his capture. So I shall come here at the end of that period, starting my time with Jalway's departure from the house."

The two crooks took their opposite courses. When Elger reached his study, he filled his meerschaum from a tobacco jar and donned a smoking jacket. Puffing his pipe in leisurely fashion, he strolled out to the living room.

All of the guests were present. Francine Feldworth was curled in a large chair, reading a book. Seth Hadlow was seated in a corner, quietly smoking a cigarette. Professor Marcoln was busy with his manuscripts; but the gray haired guest looked weary and irritable.

Bram Jalway was strolling about the room. He showed signs of curbed restlessness. Elger gave him a cheery greeting, then sat down to talk to Hadlow. The conversation, though quietly conducted, became disturbing to Professor Marcoln. The white-haired man looked about.

"We are bothering you, professor?" inquired Elger. "If you wish, you may use my den for your work. It is quiet and secluded there."

"I shall go to my own room," returned the professor, politely. "A little more work, then to bed. I am quite nervous, Mr. Elger. Quite nervous."

HE began to gather up the manuscript pages. Jalway stopped his pacing and turned to Elger.

"I'm going out a while," announced the promoter.

"To the beach?" inquired Elger.

"Yes," said Jalway. "I want to look about. To see what it is like at night. There is mystery on this isle."

"Too much mystery," inserted Hadlow.

"I should not advise you to go out alone," reminded Elger, concentrating on Jalway. "If you wish, I can send Royne with you."

"He may be needed here," returned Jalway. "I shall not go far from the house. I am armed" - he produced the revolver that he had received from Royne - "and I can take care of myself."

Abruptly, Jalway turned on his heel and strolled to the front door. Chunk, on guard there, drew back the bolts and allowed Jalway's passage. Elger resumed conversation with Hadlow.

Professor Marcoln finished gathering his papers and left for his room. Fifteen minutes later, Francine yawned and announced that she intended to retire. The girl departed. Another quarter of an hour elapsed. Conversation lulled between Hadlow and Elger. The latter arose.

"I must bid you good night," he said to Hadlow. "Since Professor Marcoln is not using my den, I can engage in some important research there."

"And I'll read a while and then turn in," stated Hadlow, with a quiet smile. "Good night, Elger."

Leaving the living room, Purvis Elger headed directly for the den. Arriving in that room, he locked the door behind him. The fiendish leer that appeared upon his pudgy face was one of anticipation.

For Purvis Elger was confident that his plan had gained success. He was sure that on his coming visit to the rendezvous, he would find Bram Jalway a captive in the hands of Ruff Turney.

## CHAPTER XIV. THE PRISONER TALKS

BRAM JALWAY, when he left the tabby-walled house, had acted in direct opposite to his announced plan. He had said that he would keep close to the shelter of the house. Instead, he took a rapid and immediate course toward the beach.

Keeping along the fringe of oak trees, Jalway formed an obscure figure. At times he was completely lost beneath the thick streamers of Spanish moss that hung from long, low boughs. At other moments, the moonlight broke through to show him clearly in its glow.

At such intervals, Jalway quickened his pace and moved closer to the woods. At last his course cut through the underbrush. Jalway wallowed knee-deep through gnarled roots, as he passed the ruins of the old mansion in the center of the isle.

Followers were on his trail. In this jungle it was difficult for one to note lurkers who were familiar with the terrain. Moving away from the house, Jalway skirted a bit of marshy land and came out near the lower inlet.

Here were sand dunes, ghost-like in the filtered moonlight. Passing one, Jalway came to the edge of a swamp that lay between parallel dunes. This was a typical Georgia slough; called a "hammock," in the Southern parlance.

It stretched into the end of the isle and as Jalway sought the higher ground, he came beneath the shelter of huge pines and cedars that vied with the oaks for dominance.

Swamp lay beyond. That was where Jalway was heading. All the while, he was circling farther from the house that he had left. He was cutting deeper into the terrain that harbored Ruff Turney's band.

Unwittingly, Jalway was making the trap easier. He had escaped attack, for he was going in the very direction that his stalkers wanted. He paused on the verge of swampy land where trees formed a veritable jungle. Seeing nothing through the blackness, Jalway began to retrace his steps.

The course that he took was directly toward the ruins of the old slave buildings. Stumbling through mushy soil, finding foothold upon spots of thicker ground, this investigator came almost to the spot where the hidden entrance to the lower passage was located.

Wrenching free from tangling brambles, Jalway seemed undecided concerning his next move. As he paused, he heard movement close behind him. He turned in that direction, drew his gun and suddenly flicked a flashlight from his left hand. The glare revealed a dodging figure. Jalway aimed.

At that instant, two men pounced upon him from in back. Struggling, Jalway sprawled in the thicket. His arms were gripped. Ruff Turney's growl ordered him to make no trouble. For a moment, Jalway persisted in the struggle. Then his gun was gone; two more men had fallen upon him. Thongs were wrapped about his arms and legs. A gag was jammed between his teeth.

More growls. The captors hoisted their prisoner. Ruff's light blinked. A dozen paces brought the band to the brush-covered trapdoor. Ruff raised the entrance. The others dragged Jalway down the steps. Ruff took the lead through the passage.

PURVIS ELGER was awaiting their arrival. Puffing impatiently at his meerschaum, the portly crook indulged in a venomous smile when the prisoner was lugged into view. He had the captors lay Jalway back against the box that housed the telegraph outfit. Ruff dismissed his men. Elger and the lieutenant alone remained with the prisoner.

"Cut the gag, Ruff," ordered Elger.

Ruff complied. Jalway moved his jaws, then studied Elger with a look almost of contempt.

"Surprised, eh?" quizzed Elger, in a sarcastic tone.

"Yes," admitted Jalway, hoarsely. "I was looking for a bunch of thugs. But I didn't expect to find you in with them. I suppose you've got a passage of your own, leading to this hangout."

"An excellent guess," chuckled Elger, puffing at his meerschaum. "Well, Jalway, your goose is cooked. You might as well talk. What did you do with the box you took from Dalavan?"

"The box I took from Dalavan?"

"Why stall, Jalway? We know you killed Dalavan and Golga. We've been checking on you right along."

Jalway smiled sourly and shook his head.

"You must be smoking opium in that big pipe of yours," he parried. "If you think I bumped those fellows, you're all wrong. I never saw Dalavan in my life before I joined you in your study and saw him dead upon the floor."

"Want me to make him talk, chief?" inquired Ruff, in a vicious tone. "I've got a few ways of doing it, you know."

"Not necessary, Ruff," replied Elger. "Jalway is too sensible to force us to resort to torture methods. Come, Jalway" - he eyed the prisoner coldly - "you're through. Why not admit the point?"

"I can't admit what I don't know," challenged Jalway. "I figured you bumped that fellow Dalavan yourself, Elger. I thought he must have killed Golga and you shot him to get even. I didn't blame you for covering up."

"Let us return to your own case," suggested Elger. He drew over a chest and sat upon it. "One night, Golga reported that you had made an exit from the house by way of the living room. window. Do you admit that you were out?"

"Sure," replied Jalway. "Why not? I wanted to look around, like I was doing tonight."

ELGER eyed Jalway coldly. Ruff showed impatience; the lieutenant wanted to give the prisoner the heat. Elger, however, had smoother methods. He decided to talk further; to lull Jalway and thereby induce the prisoner to commit himself by some unguarded statement.

"Look about you," suggested Elger, suavely. "This is your opportunity, Jalway, to see the actual state of affairs on Timour Isle. Here you see millions in treasures stolen from Europe. My business is the importation of such rarities.

"Tonight, a final shipment is coming from a tramp steamer called the Dalmatia. Ruff and his men mistook the Maldah for that ship, the night you landed. This telegraph line makes contact with the mainland.

"Until tonight, Tully was in charge at the other end. He informed me, by the way, that the Maldah is twenty miles up the coast. The yacht is stranded; and refusing offers of salvage."

A curious gleam came into Jalway's eyes. They showed eagerness, which Jalway quickly restrained. Elger was puzzled by the expression; but he decided to press his final point.

"Tonight," declared the master crook, "Dalavan brought me spoils from New York. He had a suitcase with him. It contained a tiara and the sum of fifty thousand dollars. The case is gone. You, Jalway, are the man whom I hold responsible."

Elger waited for the effect upon Jalway. He noted a return of the prisoner's eager expression - a look that gave Jalway the air of a schemer. Jalway spoke; but he did not refer to the main theme. Instead, he took up a subject that Elger had merely chanced to mention.

"Since the Maldah is safe," remarked Jalway, "a search will eventually begin for the passengers who came ashore here. You will have to produce them, Elger."

"Some of them," returned Elger dryly, "For an alibi."

Jalway grimaced. He knew that he would not be included among the rescued. It was obvious that Elger would attribute his death to outlaws. Jalway changed his tone.

"Regarding Dalavan's suitcase," he said. "Suppose you learn that I did not take it? What will you do then? Eliminate the other survivors until you find the right one?"

Elger nodded, while he puffed his pipe.

"The less the number of survivors," reasoned Jalway, "the better your position, Elger, provided that you kept just one, who would support any statements that you might make. Such a survivor could help you dispose of the others. He could state later that all were lost in the overturn of the lifeboat. He would say nothing about the deaths of Dalavan and Golga. In brief, Elger, you would be greatly helped by an ally as crooked as yourself."

"Not a bad idea, Jalway," approved Elger. "You would like to be that one survivor. I am willing to make the deal, if you turn over the goods you took from Dalavan."

"I can't do that." Jalway shook his head wearily. "I swear I'm not the man who took the stuff. All I can do is help you regain it by aiding in the elimination of the others who came from the Maldah."

"I'm a crook," snarled Elger, "and I like to deal with crooks! If you could deliver the stuff, that would prove you worthy! Since you can't -"

"I can help you get it," interjected Jalway. His face was as fierce as Elger's. "As proof of my worth, I can show you the way to a clean-up that is right along your alley. I can give you the low-down on Kingdon Feldworth. Why he's refusing offers of aid for the Maldah. Why he doesn't want the yacht salvaged -"

"Hold it!" Elger spoke with a tone of conviction. He had caught the channel of Jalway's talk. "Cut him loose, Ruff."

DUMFOUNDED, the lieutenant cut the thongs that held Jalway. Elger, meanwhile, produced a tobacco pouch from his pocket. As Jalway struggled to his feet, Elger proffered the pouch.

"Got your briar with you?" he asked.

Jalway nodded, grinning.

"Fill it and smoke up," ordered Elger with a chuckle. "We'll talk as crook to crook. I've seen the light. You know something that's worth while - something that will make our deal a real one."

"Sit back, Ruff, and listen." Elger shook his head as he observed the lieutenant drawing a revolver to

cover Jalway. "Put away that rod. You won't need it. This man has convinced me. Spill it, Jalway. I'm listening."

Jalway rubbed his chafed wrists. He produced his briar and filled it with Elger's tobacco. Elger extended a lighted match. Jalway puffed away and seated himself on a chest opposite Elger's.

Aromas of briar and meerschaum mingled while Jalway began to talk. Elger, listening, inserted comments of his own. Schemers both, the two were in accord, while Ruff Turney sat astounded as he heard the game that the crafty pair developed.

## CHAPTER XV. THE NEW GAME

"WHEN I went aboard the Maldah, in New York," stated Jalway in a candid tone. "I did so with the intention of building up a reputation with Kingdon Feldworth. I figured that he was wealthy enough to be due for a trimming at some future date."

"I take it that swindling is your game," observed Elger.

"It is," admitted Jalway. "But I've kept it nicely under cover. When I fleece saps like Feldworth, I do it indirectly. Stock deals in which I appear to be a dupe also."

"Did you ever handle a stock called Consolidated Securities?" inquired Elger.

"Never heard of it," returned Jalway. "It sounds like a flim-flam. Where did you hear about it?"

"Through a friend." Elger was eyeing Jalway carefully. "Forget it. Go on with your story."

"In Havana," resumed Jalway, "we all went ashore. Hadlow took Francine about the city; the old professor went to a museum. Only the captain and Feldworth were aboard the yacht when I returned unexpectedly.

"A flock of Cuban stevedores were loading some boxes aboard the Maldah. They took them into the cabin, then came out and went away. I saw the captain come from the cabin. Figuring that Feldworth was in, I strolled up and rapped at the door. Feldworth admitted me. He thought I was the captain coming back. The boxes were gone."

"Where were they?" asked Elger.

"I'm coming to that," explained Jalway. "I must have looked about in rather curious fashion, because Feldworth guessed that I had seen the boxes. He shut the cabin door and took me into his confidence."

"Regarding the contents of the boxes?"

"Yes. It appears that Feldworth had met a wealthy Cuban in New York. One of those fellows who had to scamper from Havana after the revolution. The Cuban had left a million dollars' worth of rare curios buried in Havana. He was hard up; he sold the lot to Feldworth for two hundred grand. But Feldworth had to get the stuff."

"He managed it without trouble?"

"Yes. The Cuban had told him where the stuff was buried. He also gave Feldworth the names of certain loyalists in Havana. Those chaps were the stevedores - fake ones, of course - and they delivered the goods aboard the yacht. Went after the stuff pronto when Feldworth told them where it was stowed."

"Where did Feldworth put the boxes?"

"In a secret compartment at the end of his cabin. He opened it and gave me a look into one of the boxes. I had a flash of some rare stuff. Jeweled hangings - cloth of gold - enough to tell me that the million-dollar talk was true."

"So that," mused Elger, "is why Kingdon Feldworth prefers not to abandon his stranded yacht."

"Absolutely," stated Jalway. "You know the laws of salvage. A claim on the cargo as well as the ship itself. It isn't the Maldah that Feldworth cares about. He wants to get that stuff ashore. That's why he's sticking to the ship."

ELGER nodded. Exhaling pipe smoke, he studied Jalway closely, expecting some suggestion. It came.

"Suppose," said Jalway. "that raiders went after that yacht? They could massacre the crew, get the stuff ashore, and take for cover. This cavern would be as good a hideout for Feldworth's stuff as it is for the swag you've already got."

"It would," agreed Elger, "and there would be no trouble in disposing of the goods."

"You're getting it," said Jalway. "The only fellow who might blab would be the Cuban. And he'd keep quiet. He's gotten his dough."

Elger nodded. Ruff eyed his chief. The lieutenant, too, was seeing possibilities. He expressed them.

"With that mob from the Dalmatia," put in Ruff, "we'd have a cinch, chief! This looks like a pipe -"

"Restrain your enthusiasm, Ruff," interposed Elger. Then, to Jalway: "Continue with your story. Tell me about your actions here on Timour Isle."

"That's easy," stated Jalway. "Now that you know the inside of the game. When the lifeboat hit the beach, we encountered opposition. Then we came to your house. You welcomed us and told us that there were desperate characters hereabout. You fooled me. Perfectly."

"Yet you decided to look about the island -"

"Certainly. Because I figured that the Maldah would get stranded somewhere. I was going to go out through the window of my bedroom; then I figured that might be bad if found out. So I picked the living room window instead."

"And your purpose was to hunt up the outlaws?"

"You've guessed it. I figured if they were tough enough to bump Hoskins, they'd be good enough to form a pirate party and go after the Maldah. I wanted to make contact with the outlaws. I felt sure they must be at the lower end of the island."

Elger was almost convinced by Jalway's story. The portly supercrook held to one lone, lurking suspicion. He decided to settle it by a final quiz.

"Where were you last night?" demanded Elger. "At the time when the shots were fired?"

"Outside again," returned Jalway promptly. "I still wanted to contact the outlaws. Golga was in the living room, blocking me; but when I heard him go back to your den. I hurried to the living room. I loosened the frame and scrambled through."



"After the shots were fired in the den?"

"I didn't hear any shots. I was starting to close the window when I heard Dashler rousing every one from the front hall. I thought it best to come in; but I left the frame as it was. When you discovered it and sprang your theory regarding an outsider. I thought you were trying to cover up the fact that you bumped Dalavan."

"Evidently," chuckled Elger, "we each gave the other undue credit. I suppose you thought that I was still trying to play innocent tonight?"

"I did," rejoined Jalway. "That's why I chanced a bold stroll on the beach. I still wanted to meet up with the outlaws."

ELGER pulled a penciled sheet from his pocket. He studied the notations then spoke to Jalway.

"The night when Golga learned that you were out," declared Elger, "he saw a light beneath Francine Feldworth's door and also heard the girl moving about. He entered the professor's room and saw the old man asleep in his bed. He heard Dashler snoring, when he stopped outside the sailor's door. He thought that he heard Seth Hadlow cough."

"What has that night to do with it?" queried Jalway. "I have already admitted that I was out of the house."

"One of those four people," declared Elger, "was responsible for the deaths of Dalavan and Golga. That is why I am trying to check on all of them."

"Last night is all that counts," persisted Jalway. "Just the same, I see your point. Golga wasn't sure about Hadlow."

"That's it," acknowledged Elger. "I have an idea that Hadlow was looking about from the start. If so, he is the man who encountered Dalavan; and finished Golga as a sequel. Hadlow is the man that we must watch. He may know too much."

Elger pocketed his notes and turned to Ruff Turney.

"Ruff," said Elger, "when you go out to the Dalmatia, tell the captain to stand by. Tell him that you are bringing out some boxes loaded with junk for him to heave overboard."

Ruff looked about in surprise. He nudged his thumb toward the treasure chests, then queried:

"Which of the stuff is fake?"

"None of it," chuckled Elger while Jalway smiled. "We are simply going to murder our unwelcome guests and put their bodies into weighted boxes. We shall require four such caskets."

"Why bump the girl?" queried Jalway. "If this is staged like a raid, she will think it's on the up and up. I've sort of had my eye on Francine, even though she's more partial to Seth Hadlow -"

"I understand," interrupted Elger. "If you managed to save her, she would be all for you. We can make a bargain, Jalway. If Francine listens to reason, she can live. If not, she will die like the others -"

"Agreed."

THAT settled, Elger remembered another item. He spoke to Ruff, telling him to arrange for three extra boxes to carry the bodies of Dalavan, Golga and Hoskins. That done, Elger gestured toward the farther

cavern, indicating that both Ruff and Jalway should use that exit, while he went back through the regular passage to his house.

"Prepare to contact the Dalmatia, Ruff," ordered Elger. "I shall rely upon Tully and Chunk to work with Jalway and myself. Your course, Jalway, is to complete your stroll and circle back to the house. I shall be there, wondering about your safety. Remember: we must dupe Seth Hadlow. The old professor and the sailor will cut no figure."

Pocketing his big meerschaum, the arch-crook started for his own passage while Ruff and Jalway went in the opposite direction. Ruff carried the lantern that had provided illumination for the conference. En route to the house, Purvis Elger indulged in an insidious chuckle.

The arch-crook felt that he had bargained well with Bram Jalway. Fully convinced by the promoter's story, keyed with hope of further swag through a piratical attack upon the crippled Maldah, Elger looked forward to a profitable alliance.

Since George Dalavan was dead, Elger would need a new man to organize a crew of smooth agents who could unload the European spoils. Bram Jalway was just the sort to fill the bill. He would simply come in for Dalavan's share of the proceeds from the loot.

An excellent arrangement, since Jalway had revealed that there was a million dollars in additional booty aboard the Maldah. In fact, Elger was glad that Dalavan had died to make the replacement possible. As for the tiara and the money that Dalavan had brought, Elger felt confident that they would be regained.

Once the four victims were eliminated, the lost items could be found; for Elger felt sure that Hadlow must have hidden them somewhere inside the house. The sooner the climax the better, in Elger's estimation; for Hadlow would have no time to bury the tiara and the cash in some outside hiding spot.

With Bram Jalway as an ally, the game seemed ironclad to Purvis Elger. Though he counted Seth Hadlow as a capable foeman, Elger had no inkling that the hand of The Shadow was involved. Therefore, the master crook felt no insecurity regarding the grim game in which Bram Jalway had promised to cooperate.

## **CHAPTER XVI. THE SHADOW WAITS**

WHEN Purvis Elger regained his study, he immediately went out into the hall and strolled in the direction of the living room. A frown furrowed his wide forehead as he heard the sound of voices, Francine's among them.

Entering the living room, Elger found the girl and Dashler talking with Tully and Chunk. Royne was standing in the background. The cadaverous servant's face was troubled; it cleared as the man saw Elger.

"What is the matter?" inquired Elger. He looked about in his usual friendly fashion. "Where are the others? Hadlow - Jalway - the professor?"

"Jalway is still out," responded Dashler. "Hadlow has gone out to look for him. Neither has returned. I have just been talking about making a search."

"I said we should wait for you, sir," put in Royne. "That's why I rapped at your door, Mr. Elger."

"I thought I heard someone knocking," said Elger. "I was in the bedroom, dozing, with the door closed. So Hadlow went out to look for Jalway. How long ago?"

"About fifteen minutes back," replied Dashler. "I was in my room, or I'd have gone out with him."

"I couldn't sleep," added Francine. "I came out to learn if anyone happened to be up; when I learned that Mr. Hadlow had gone out to search, I called for Dashler."

"Well, well," mused Elger. "I had no idea that this complication would occur the moment that I told my guests they could fare forth. What were you two doing?" The question was to Tully and Chunk. "Why did you let Hadlow go out alone?"

"Your orders, Mr. Elger," reminded Tully, in an uneasy tone. "You let Mr. Jalway go out. We didn't stop Mr. Hadlow."

"They will probably return shortly," decided Elger. "If they do not, we shall begin a search. By the way, where is Professor Marcolm? I hope he managed to desist from a stroll along the beach."

"The professor is asleep," stated Francine. "I knocked at the door of his room and he answered. But he was so drowsy that I hesitated to disturb him. I called Dashler instead."

"I warned Jalway," remarked Elger, filling his pipe from the ever-ready pouch. "I told him - and Hadlow heard me - that this milder weather might mean new danger on Timour Isle. But both these chaps are armed. I believe that they can take care of themselves. Suppose" - he glanced at his watch - "that we allow them ten minutes to return."

The others nodded in agreement. They sat down about the room. Elger lighted his meerschaum and paced back and forth. He was more troubled than he cared to reveal. Hadlow's trip outside was something that he had not foreseen.

WHILE the little group remained in the living room, the island outside the house was gloomy beneath the faint rays of a cloud-enveloped moon. Giant oaks still swayed in response to fitful winds. The steady roar of the surf beat up hollow echoes from the beach.

Far out to sea, a line of lights was moving to the south. Vanishing, then reappearing beyond the long swells, that slow streak of illumination indicated the presence of a ship.

From beneath the shelter of moss-laden boughs, keen eyes were watching the lights at sea. The ship was anchoring off Timour Isle. Those same eyes spied another light. From the south of the island, beyond the sand dunes, a small boat was putting out to sea.

Ruff Turney and his squad were on their way to contact with the Dalmatia. A soft laugh whispered from the gloom. It was the strange mirth of The Shadow - a tone of suppressed mockery that echoed weirdly in the wafting breeze.

Then came silence. The author of the laugh had moved away. Silently, beneath the fringe of trees, The Shadow was returning to the house. No sign marked his passage toward the clearing that surrounded the white tabby walls.

Ever mysterious, even when uncloaked, The Shadow had become a part of the night itself. No human eye could have discerned his approach to the old look-out house.

FIVE minutes passed, while the vague lights from the living room windows shone unblinkingly along the tabby walls. Then from the pathway to the house, a figure stepped suddenly into view. A strolling person advanced toward the door.

The arrival turned suddenly, as though hearing a sound close by. He spied another person coming from

the edge of the clearing. The man by the door spoke.

"Who's there?" he challenged.

"Hadlow," came the quiet response. "Is that you, Jalway?"

"Yes." Jalway laughed slightly. "Rather spooky, the way you stepped into sight."

"I was looking about for you," returned the sportsman. "I thought maybe you had circled the house. Where have you been, old chap?"

"Down to the end of the island. Come. Let's enter. They may be worrying about us."

Jalway rapped on the door. It opened promptly. As the two men entered Francine Feldworth sprang from the living room to greet them. Concern still showed on the girl's face. It was plain that she was glad that the men had returned.

Purvis Elger, stepping from the living room, gave a cheery welcome. At the same time, the portly man was observant. He noted that Francine's greeting to Hadlow was more spontaneous than her welcome of Jalway. This fitted with the rivalry that Jalway had mentioned during the conference in the cavern.

Professor Marcoln's door came open. The white-haired guest had heard the commotion in the hall. Attired in a dressing gown, he blinked sleepily as he crackled a question regarding the disturbance. Francine turned to explain concerning the absence of Jalway and Hadlow.

"I heard you knock some time ago," recalled Marcoln, in a wheezy tone. "I was on the point of rising then; but I went back to sleep almost unconsciously. This new noise, however, completely awakened me."

"Stay up and have a cup of coffee," suggested Elger. "I'm sending Royne to get some refreshments."

"That would mean staying up all night," smiled the professor. "With me, a sound sleep is the only sleep, and coffee disturbs it. I miss those lulling winds that marked our first nights here. But I believe" - he paused to scratch his tousled mop of hair - "that I can sleep again if I remain undisturbed."

His tone almost reproachful, the professor returned to his room and closed the door behind him. The others went into the living room.

In casual manner, Elger questioned Jalway regarding his stroll on the beach. He asked him if he had seen any sign of prowlers. Jalway shook his head to give a negative reply. Hadlow remarked that he had also found the beach quiet. He added that he had looked for Jalway along the upper inlet.

ROYNE appeared, pushing a tea wagon from the kitchen. The cadaverous servant had prepared sandwiches as well as coffee. Host and guests welcomed the refreshments and began to devour them with gusto. All were chatty, except Francine.

The girl had a sense of impending danger. She tried to attribute it to the worry that she had felt during Seth Hadlow's absence. Nevertheless, the foreboding remained. Francine noted that Purvis Elger was more than unusually jolly. She saw Bram Jalway smiling in his natural fashion. Seth Hadlow seemed less solemn than usual. Dashler, finishing his second cup of coffee, showed no sign of worry.

Francine could not understand why she felt those qualms. Yet she had cause for foreboding, though she did not know the reason. Doom was hovering over Timour Isle tonight. New schemes had been concocted by Purvis Elger, the master crook who posed in friendly guise.

Those lights at sea; the moving light beyond the sand dune - both were proof that men of crime had gathered to perform service for an evil chief. They were offset only by the fact that watching eyes had seen those symbols of lurking crime. The Shadow had spied the moves that were being made.

The Shadow's plans - like Elger's - were settled for this night. Before the crook's schemes reached their culmination, The Shadow would enter into the game. For the present, however, he was playing a waiting part, within the very building that sheltered an evil master and a group of intended victims.

When The Shadow's turn arrived, he would surely introduce an element of surprise that had not been discussed by Purvis Elger and Bram Jalway during their conference within the caverns of stolen wealth.

## **CHAPTER XVII. ABOARD THE DALMATIA**

THREE men were grouped in a grimy, bunk-lined compartment. The dingy glow of oil lanterns illuminated their faces. One was a crafty-eyed little fellow. The others were keen-visaged young men whose countenances showed determination.

The little man was Hawkeye. His companions were Harry Vincent and Cliff Marsland. Hawkeye, first in Charleston, had gained his berth aboard the Dalmatia. More than that, he had found places for Harry and Cliff.

Like Hawkeye, the other agents of The Shadow had shipped aboard as able-bodied seamen to replace members of the crew swept overboard while the Dalmatia had been fleeing the hurricane.

The rest of the crew were up on deck. The ship was anchored off Timour Isle. One occupant alone remained in the forecabin with The Shadow's agents. That was a snoring man who lay sprawled in a lower bunk, rolling back and forth with every long sway of the ship.

"I've talked with Hexler," whispered Hawkeye, "and he's slated me to go ashore with the landing crew, to take the place of this fellow, Lopey" - he paused, indicated the dead head in the bunk - "so that puts me in the game. But Hexler don't want more than one."

"That's tough," remarked Harry, grimly.

"You bet it is," acknowledged Hawkeye. "But it's lucky that I'm in on the deal. I worked my head off getting Lopey loaded up with that grog we found in the hold. Say - it would be tough if Hexler found out I handed Lopey the booze."

"Lopey passed out before Hexler had a chance to question him," said Harry. "Cliff and I lugged Lopey down here. He could hardly talk when Hexler found him up near the bow. What's he going to do with Lopey?"

"He's taking him ashore," replied Hawkeye. "Just to have him later on. But he's supposed to bring six men with him. All in good shape. That's why he gave me the chance."

"It's tough that those poor guys who went overboard weren't part of Hexler's outfit. Then there'd be jobs for you two fellows, too. But as it is, you're slated to stick with the ship until she reaches Tampico."

"But we're going ashore tonight," put in Harry

"That's the ticket," agreed Hawkeye. "But how're you going to make it?"

"I'll tell you how." It was Cliff who spoke. "We'll lug Lopey up on the deck. If the captain wonders where we are, tell him what we're doing."

"And then?" prompted Hawkeye.

"Then," stated Cliff, "the stuff will be on its way up from the hold. We'll start down to help. But instead, we'll cut back to the stern. We'll lower one of the small boats on the port side."

"You'll have a tough time in this swell -"

"Maybe. It would be easier on the starboard side, but the unloading will be done in the lee of the ship; so we'll have to risk the outside. We'll clear the stern and head for the upper end of the island."

HARRY nodded his accord with Cliff's plan. Before further discussion could begin, footsteps clattered at the head of the forecastle stairs.

"Hey, you, below there!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" responded Hawkeye. The little man scampered to the steps. "Coming right up."

"Who else is down there?" growled the man at the top, as Hawkeye reappeared. The Shadow's agent recognized the second mate.

"Two seamen," returned Hawkeye, "bringing up Lopey. He's got to go ashore."

"Hurry it up!" bawled the mate, leaning toward the forecastle.

With the mate following, Hawkeye headed toward the starboard side of the ship. Reaching the rail, he saw a small cabin boat moored below. A man was coming up the rope ladder that the Dalmatia had lowered.

Hawkeye stared as he saw the hard face beneath the lantern light. He knew this fellow from days gone by. Ruff Turney, missing mob-leader from Manhattan. Hawkeye shrank back behind the rail, then shrugged his shoulders.

He had been small-fry when Ruff was a swaggering mob-leader. He realized that Ruff would not remember him, even if they came face to face.

Boldly, Hawkeye edged forward to join Hexler. This man - leader of the minions on the Dalmatia - was a brawny, rough-faced fellow who looked like a seaman.

"Where's Lopey?" growled Hexler.

"Coming up," responded Hawkeye.

He turned away as Ruff joined Hexler. Hatches were off the hold; boxes were being raised by the crew. Other men were lowering a boat on the lee side of the Dalmatia. Harry and Cliff, coming from the forecastle, were bringing "Lopey" toward the side.

They dropped the sodden mass of humanity upon the deck, then turned and moved away. The second mate, challenged them.

"Where you going?"

"Down to the hold, sir," replied Cliff, "to help with the boxes."

"Get a move on then," growled the mate.

Hawkeye noted Ruff observing Lopey's prostate form. The mob-leader grunted, then turned angrily to Hexler.

"What's the matter with this dope?" he demanded.

"Drunk," informed Hexler. "Got hold of some grog that was aboard. First thing I knew, he'd gone blotto."

"Making you one man short?"

"I've got this mug" - Hexler turned to indicate Hawkeye - "and he'll fill in for Lopey. Says he can handle a gat."

"Can you?" demanded Ruff.

"Sure," acknowledged Hawkeye.

"He shipped aboard at Charleston," explained Hexler. "He's not one of the regular bohunks in the crew. This is a guy we can use."

"Looks all right," admitted Ruff. "But that doesn't help. We're still short-handed."

"How come? I've got six -"

"The chief wants more. Two, anyway. But coming out here, I began to figure it would be tough to get them. We can't yank off the regular members of the crew. The captain would put up a squawk -"

"Say" - Hexler had an idea - "There were two other birds came on at Charleston. Buddies of this guy. What about 'em, Ruff?"

"What are they like?"

"Tough eggs."

HAWKEYE put in a clincher of his own.

"We was hiding out in Charleston," he confided to Ruff. "The three of us. We ain't seamen; we just bluffed it. We used to be with Cozy Doman's mob."

"Yeah?" quizzed Ruff, in surprise. "A bunch of bank workers."

"Sure," acknowledged Hawkeye, with a nod. "We cut loose from Cozy after he pulled that job in Wilmington, North Carolina. It was getting too hot. That's why we was laying low."

"Go get your pals," ordered Ruff.

Hawkeye turned and hastened off, as though heading for the hold. But he changed direction as soon as he was out of sight. Running to the stern, he came upon a boat that was hanging loose from the davits.

"Cliff!" whispered Hawkeye, hoarsely. "Harry!"

The two agents popped into view. They had ducked into a companionway at the sound of Hawkeye's footsteps. Quickly, Hawkeye gave them the news.

"Duck down into the hold," he suggested. "I'll tell Hexler you're coming up."

Returning, Hawkeye found Hexler impatiently awaiting him. Ruff had gone away to confer with the captain. What he was doing was arranging for the Dalmatia to stand by until a cargo came from shore.

"Where are the other guys?" demanded Hexler.

"Coming up," replied Hawkeye. "You'll see 'em in a minute."

THE last of the boxes had come from the hold. Immediately following came Cliff and Harry, up through the open hatchway. They slouched over as Hawkeye beckoned. Hexler studied the new recruits. He had not noticed Harry and Cliff carefully before. Now he nodded, convinced that they would measure up to Ruff's requirements.

Boxes were being lowered into the boats; some into Ruff's cabin launch; others into the boat that the Dalmatia had dropped. Ruff's crew was exchanging greetings with the men in the Dalmatia's boat. These outfits had met before.

Ruff came back from his confab with the captain. He eyed Harry and Cliff, then nodded approvingly to indicate that they were satisfactory.

"We're coming out again," he told Hexler. "Bringing back the boat to the ship here and loading some stuff aboard. We'll arrange all that later. Let's go."

Cargoes were loaded. Hexler motioned to the rope ladder. Harry and Cliff descended; then Hawkeye followed. The little man got snarled in the rope. That seemed to please Ruff.

"That bird's no seaman," chuckled the mob-leader, speaking to Hexler. "You can tell it from the way he tangled. You hit a ten strike, getting these three bimboes. They're just the ones we'll need."

"More work ahead?"

"Plenty. You'll get the dope later."

Ruff leaned over and motioned Hawkeye into the Dalmatia's boat, separating him from Harry and Cliff. Hexler descended, stepped aboard Ruff's boat and shifted over into the other boat as Hawkeye had done. Ruff was the last to come down the ladder.

The two boats pushed off from the heaving side of the Dalmatia. Ruff's boat began to chug toward the island, its motor throttled low. The Dalmatia's boat followed, propelled by the strokes of brawny oarsmen.

Combined crews of crime were on their way to accomplish evil. Timour Isle was threatened with armed invasion as the first step toward a fiendish purpose. But with those invaders were coming men prepared to strive for right.

Though outnumbered by their dangerous companions, The Shadow's agents were grimly prepared to play their part when the time of conflict came.

## **CHAPTER XVIII. THE ATTACK**

THE power boat was the first to meet the lower inlet. Passing the sand dunes, the craft veered toward a channel which Ruff, at the tiller, picked with accuracy. The boat came to a stop with its prow wedged in a muddy landing place.

Ruff ordered all ashore. Harry and Cliff followed the other members of the crew. Ruff led the way



through heavy underbrush, while his men brought the boxes from the boat.

Stacking the spoils, Ruff ordered his crew toward the beach. They skirted a sand dune, then waited on a little point. Ruff swung a lantern; an answering glimmer came from the inlet. The boat from the Dalmatia was heaving toward this portion of the shore.

Hexler and his henchmen landed. Ruff ordered his own men to take the boxes that had come from this second boat. The shore crew lugged their burdens off through the darkness, toward the spot where they had left the first load.

Cliff and Harry remained with Hexler's crew. Ruff held confab with Hexler. Nods of agreement were exchanged beneath the dull moonlight. Ruff turned and took the path along which his burden carriers had gone.

HAWKEYE sidled over beside Cliff and Harry. The Shadow's three agents were again united. Yet the situation was not entirely to their liking. Though they exchanged no comments, all held the same idea.

They knew that danger was abroad. Two crews of thugs were ready to deliver an attack somewhere. If Hexler's crew should strike, The Shadow's agents would be in the proper place. But if Ruff's outfit intended trouble on its own, that mob could move unmolested.

One thought alone was saving. Ruff's outfit had a definite task; to store the boxes that had been brought from the Dalmatia. That signified that the criminal work would probably be shifted to Hexler and his outfit. As members of that band, The Shadow's agents might find opportunity to counteract trouble.

There were eight men besides Hexler. Lopey had been left in the boat, which was drawn high on the shore. Thus The Shadow's agents were outnumbered two to one. But such odds did not trouble them. Like the rest of the crew, they were armed. They felt capable of tendering a good account should the pinch arise.

"We're going up the island." Hexler growled this information as he joined his men. "Don't worry about those other fellows. This is our job. We're heading for a house at the upper inlet!"

Harry nudged Cliff. This was the kind of news they had been waiting for. It meant that Hexler, not Ruff, was scheduled to attack some place on Timour Isle.

"The house is in a clearing," continued Hexler. "When we get there, plant yourselves on the edges. Ready for a rush when I give the word."

Affirmative growls from the band. The Shadow's agents joined in the comment. Hexler was about to start the march when a thick voice called from the shore. "Lopey," a trifle unsteady, was coming to rejoin the invaders.

"Get back in the boat!" ordered Hexler, in a rasping tone. "Stay there until we get back!"

"I'm all right," growled Lopey, rubbing his forehead. "The air's got me braced. Comin' in from the ship brought me to. Say, I was groggy -"

"Join up with us then," snapped Hexler, "and keep your trap shut!"

"All right," agreed Lopey. "But listen, Hexler - it wasn't my fault, gettin' plastered that way. There was a guy on the ship -"

"Lay off the chatter," broke in the leader, "or you'll go back in the boat with a cracked konk! Get me?"

"All right," responded Lopey. "But if I get that lousy guy -"

Hexler handed the big fellow a jab in the ribs. Lopey doubled up, regained his footing and trailed in at the rear of the mob.

Hawkeye, up ahead, whispered to Cliff:

"I'm not letting Lopey lamp me. If he wises that I'm with the outfit, he may spill something to Hexler. Lopey thinks I'm with the crew on the Dalmatia."

"I get it," responded Cliff, in an undertone. "Keep ahead of us, Hawkeye. When we get to the house, pick a spot where Lopey won't see you."

OTHER members of the band were closing in. Trudging northward, the complete crew skirted the edges of the forest strip. They straggled into little groups as they marched along. This gave The Shadow's agents a chance for further comment.

"The job is ours," whispered Harry. "This shore outfit is busy storing those boxes. Maybe they'll join us later."

"We'll work quick when we get the chance," put in Cliff. "We don't know what we're going into; but if we can get the jump on Hexler and his bunch, we ought to come through clean."

"Maybe he'll spill more when we get there," added Hawkeye.

Others were overtaking the trio. They trudged along in silence, veering left as the coast line took a slight curve. All was peaceful on this isle, where the steady roar of the surf was lulling in its monotony. Men of crime seemed strangely out of place in the setting.

They were coming close to the upper inlet. Hexler, apparently, had gained complete directions from Ruff; for the leader moved forward to slow his band. He pointed out an opening between the trees. Leading, he took the path toward the house.

Dull lights glimmered from white walls as the invaders reached the clearing. Here Hexler halted the crew and delivered an order for deployment.

"Spread out all around," he instructed. "I'm going up to the house. I'll rap; they'll let me in. There'll be talk at the front door.

"Then I'll come out again. Watch for a move of my left arm. Up and down; That'll mean to close in. Do it in a hurry. But there's one point more. If I start things quick, I'll signal with a shot. That'll mean to rush the place."

A pause. The invaders were ready to spread. Hexler picked out two men from the crew. He called them by name: Jake and "Curry." He pointed toward the house.

"Sneak up there," he ordered, "you two. One on each side of the door. Well out of sight. Then when you get the signal, I'll have the two of you close by."

Jake and Curry sneaked forward across the clearing. Hexler gave a final injunction to the remainder of the band: one that was most important.

"We've got friends inside there," he informed, "so keep your rods steady. Any guy that tries quick shooting will answer to me later. Maybe we won't have to fire a single shot.

"But if there's trouble, use your noodles. Aim for the guys that aim for you. Leave the others alone. That's simple enough. Remember: hold it for the pinch. Not before."

He motioned with his right hand. The invaders spread along the edge of the clearing, Cliff and Harry moving to the right. Hawkeye sneaked past his fellow agents and took a spot on the flank.

Hexler moved cautiously forward. He beckoned to Jake and Curry. They closed in from the wall and listened while their leader whispered the same instructions that he had given to the balance of the mob.

WATCHING, the deployed invaders saw Jake and Curry resume their positions on the sides of the door. Then they watched Hexler walk boldly up to the portal. The leader had his left hand in his pocket. It was plain that he was left-handed, that his hidden fist was gripping a ready revolver.

Harry, between Hawkeye and Cliff, was tense and alert. He knew that his fellow agents were the same. This was the time for which they had been waiting long. They had reached Timour Isle, headquarters of The Shadow.

Yet they had gained no contact with their hidden chief. They knew only that word had gone to him that they were coming. Had The Shadow received that word? Was he ready, waiting, relying on his men? Or had The Shadow encountered danger here alone - had he met with some adversity that had already placed him in the hands of foemen?

The next minutes would tell. To these aids of The Shadow, the immediate future hovered in the form of Hexler's tight fist, raised to tap upon the door. For with Hexler's knock, the tide of invasion would be ready for its surge.

## **CHAPTER XIX. STROKE AND COUNTER-STROKE**

INSIDE the house, Tully and Chunk were still keeping the semblance of weary guard duty. One man was slouching in the hall; the other was standing by a window of the living room.

Purvis Elger was lounging in a chair, smoking his pipe. Jalway was across the room, leaning against the bookcase, while Hadlow was standing at the entrance to the hall, his hands in his coat pockets.

Francine had gone to bed. The tenseness had wearied the girl. That same feeling of uneasiness had extended to the others. Elger was affable; Jalway appeared matter-of-fact; and Hadlow looked calm and unperturbed. Yet every one of the three possessed a peculiar alertness that had not previously been evident.

A knock from the door. Hadlow started, then smiled quietly. Jalway looked curiously toward Elger. The portly crook lowered his meerschaum from his lips and called to Tully.

"Was that a knock at the door?" he inquired.

"Sounded like it," returned Tully.

"Did Royne go out?" inquired Elger.

"No, sir." The reply came from Royne himself as the servant appeared from the hall. "Did you want me, Mr. Elger?"

"There was a knock at the door," - Elger paused as the rap came again - "yes, I was sure of it. Probably someone has come in from the mainland. Suppose you answer it, Royne."

As he spoke, Elger arose from his chair. He walked past Hadlow and joined Royne. Tully was standing with arms akimbo, ready to draw a gun if so commanded.

"All right, Dashler!"

These words came as a sudden order, from the lips of Seth Hadlow. The sailor, who had been at his solitaire on the window ledge, came suddenly to his feet, swinging a revolver with which he covered Chunk, by the inner window.

At the same instant, Hadlow brought his hands from his pockets. In each was a revolver. Stepping to the center of the living room, he held the guns so that they kept a sweeping level upon Elger, Royne and Tully.

"Stand where you are!" ordered Hadlow. "Don't answer that door!"

TRAPPED men obeyed. They were all in the hall - the three whom Hadlow covered - and the sportsman moved leisurely out in their direction. His new step cornered them between himself and the front door. Elger and his henchmen formed an astonished trio, all with their hands half raised.

Bram Jalway remained motionless, his briar pipe poised in his right hand. His position at the bookcase placed him almost in line of Dashler's gun. The sailor was not covering Jalway; but Elger, looking past the corner of the doorway, saw that the promoter was trapped.

Jalway's only part was to play innocent. It was apparent that Hadlow had not included him among the enemies whom the sportsman had so suddenly decided to control.

Elger, master at bluff, began to sputter a protest. Facing Hadlow, he met the sportsman's determined gaze and demanded an explanation.

"What - what is this?" questioned Elger. "Have you gone mad, Hadlow? Are you afraid of enemies outside this house?"

"I am concerned with those within," announced Hadlow, steadily. "You, Elger, and your associates, of whom there are too many. No one is going to answer that door - until I give the word."

He motioned with one gun. The gesture was for Elger and Tully. The two men backed into the living room, toward the corner where Chunk was standing. A louder rapping came from the front door. Hadlow ignored it.

"There has been murder on this isle," denounced Hadlow, in a steady voice. "I have seen evidence of it; and I suspect those responsible. You, Elger, have deliberately attempted to forestall justice. I have suspected you of planning new crime. I have anticipated it."

"This is preposterous!" protested Elger. "What do you say to it, Jalway?"

"It puzzles me," declared Jalway, eyeing Hadlow, who was using one gun to cover the living room, while he kept the other on Royne, at the front door. "Off hand, I would say that our friend Hadlow is deluded; and yet" - he paused to light his pipe - "there may be merit in what he tells us."

Pounding at the front door. Still Hadlow remained firm. He added one more statement to his accusation.

"You are a smug crook, Elger." Hadlow said it in a positive tone. Then, to Jalway: "I would have called upon your aid had you not gone out tonight, Jalway. The only person to whom I could appeal was Professor Marcoln. I told him that I sensed danger."

"He gave me his revolver. This second weapon which I hold. I managed to instruct Dashler to aid me. I was afraid, Jalway, that you would not return. Danger lurks on Timour Isle. But you are here; and I am counting on you to aid me in this emergency. Have you your revolver ready?"

Jalway nodded. He drew the weapon.

"Cover those men in the corner," ordered Hadlow.

JALWAY did so, an even smile upon his lips. He backed toward the front of the room and motioned Dashler to stand beside him. The sailor obeyed. At that moment, Francine came into the hall. The girl gasped as she saw Hadlow with his pointed guns.

"Step into the living room, Francine," ordered Hadlow, promptly. "Stand behind Jalway and Dashler. You will be safe there."

Mechanically the girl obeyed. She had caught only the last of Hadlow's accusations. As yet, she could not grasp the understanding that Purvis Elger was a crook. Jalway motioned Francine to the safety of a corner.

A final, emphatic pounding came from the front door. Hadlow, seeing that Jalway and Dashler held the men in the living room at bay, was ready to concentrate upon this new point. His smile tightened.

"You are the master of this isle, Elger," he commented. "Tully and Chunk are evidently members of your evil band. But there are others. Those who now crave admittance. Let them come. I am ready."

Leveling both revolvers toward Royne at the front door, Hadlow issued a stern command:

"Unbolt the door!"

Royne started to obey, half trembling as he reached for the upper bolt. The grating must have been heard from the other side, for the pounding ceased.

Framed in the door of the living room, Hadlow was concentrated on delivering a surprise to those outside the house. He was not ready for the attack that came from another quarter.

A SWIFT figure came pounding from the hall. A pair of brawny hands caught Hadlow's wrists from behind and tried to wrest the guns from the sportsman's hands. Before Hadlow could manage to twist a weapon free, two others were upon him. Then a fourth.

At the same instant, Jalway performed an unexpected move. Shooting out his left hand, the promoter caught Dashler's wrist and snapped it upward; at the same instant, he jabbed his revolver into the sailor's ribs.

Seth Hadlow had been overpowered by Ruff Turney and his crew. The mob-leader and the shore band had pulled the unexpected. They had come through the passage from the caverns where they had left the swag. Entering through Elger's study, they had been ready to cut off the retreat of any fugitives.

Creeping forward, Ruff had seen Hadlow in the front hall. He had passed the word to his underlings. Their creeping attack had culminated in a perfect finish. Hadlow, disarmed, was in their power. Ruff, rising from the floor, was ready with a revolver, to join an attack on Dashler.

That was unnecessary. Elger, Tully and Chunk had given Jalway aid. Bounding across the room, they had downed Dashler. Tully was rising with the sailor's gun; Chunk was seated on the fellow's chest.

Francine Feldworth had tried to aid Dashler. Seeing Jalway's treachery, she had grabbed at the promoter's arms. But the girl had been too late. Jalway had wrested free from her grasp. His revolver was now pointed in the girl's direction. Francine was subsiding in the corner.

Triumphant, Purvis Elger was standing in the center of the room, his glaring eyes on Seth Hadlow, who sat, dejected in the grip of Ruff Turney's men. Sarcastically, Purvis Elger leered at the helpless sportsman. Then the master crook turned toward the door, where pounding had come anew.

"Open the door, Royne," ordered Elger. "Let us see who our new guest may be."

## **CHAPTER XX. MEN MARKED FOR DEATH**

PURVIS ELGER was back in his living room. Ranged with their chief were Tully, Chunk and Royne. Ruff and his henchmen were in the hall; with them a newcomer. Hexler had entered to take his stand beside the land lieutenant.

Three prisoners were bunched in a corner of the living room. Seth Hadlow pale and dejected, was backed against the wall. With him was Dashler, glum but stolid. The third in the group was Francine Feldworth.

The final occupant of the room was Bram Jalway. Calm and unruffled, the traitor seemed almost neutral in his attitude. He appeared to be waiting for Purvis Elger to speak. Yet he seemed to lack animus toward the prisoners.

"I have been branded as a crook," sneered Elger. "You, my friend" - he was looking straight at Hadlow - "are the one who made the denunciation. Very well. I am a crook.

"I have ruled this island unmolested - until you and your companions appeared. Your presence is a menace to my safety. Therefore, you shall be eliminated. All of you."

"You intend to murder us?" queried Hadlow, in a strained tone.

"I intend to dispose of you," corrected Elger. "This man" - he indicated Hexler - "has come ashore from a ship called the Dalmatia which is anchored off Timour Island. The captain of the Dalmatia is a useful man; but a stupid one.

"He was kind enough to unload smuggled goods tonight; and he used one of his boats to aid in bringing boxes ashore. We are sending the boat back to him. With it, a few heavy boxes that will be of no use to us. Those boxes will be dropped overboard. Miles at sea."

"Our coffins," declared Hadlow, solemnly.

"Precisely," nodded Elger. "And there will be caskets, too, for the corpses that now lie in the construction house out back."

A PAUSE. Elger chuckled, then puffed at his pipe.

"You are a fiend," said Hadlow, slowly. "A murderous fiend. There is no use to cry to you for pity. Dashler and I are willing to receive the death that you offer.

"But you can have no purpose in slaying Francine Feldworth. Let the girl go free. She has not harmed you."

"I can provide for that, Hadlow," put in Jalway. "Tonight, I made a deal with Elger. Francine will be

allowed to live. At my request."

"At the request of a traitor?" demanded Francine. The girl's face was scornful. She turned to Hadlow. "Why ask for any mercy from men like these? I would sooner die with you, Seth."

"That would be foolish, Francine," said Hadlow, placing his arm on the girl's shoulder. "I could stand death if I knew that you were safe. I can't believe that Jalway is a traitor. I believe that he was forced into this."

A smile showed on Jalway's lips. Hadlow was aiding his cause. Smugly, Jalway took up the suggestion.

"I had no other alternative, Francine," he declared. "I can assure you of safety. Elger has promised me your life. With one condition only; that you never tell of the events that have occurred here."

"What!" exclaimed Francine. "You expect me to live, carrying such a secret? Knowing that you were a party to the murder of the man" - she looked toward Hadlow - "of the man I loved?"

Hadlow tried to soothe the girl. It was useless. Her denunciation begun, Francine persisted.

"I do not want the life you promise," she told Jalway. "As long as I live - if I should live - I shall seek vengeance for the crimes in which you have had a part. If you let me live, I shall try to denounce you, whenever opportunity comes. I shall have no part in your schemes."

"It is useless, Jalway," remarked Elger, in a tone of feigned sorrow. "The girl will make trouble for us. She must die. With the others."

Jalway looked perturbed. His keen eyes met Francine's in an almost hypnotic stare. But the girl remained steady.

"I can save you, Francine," began Jalway, slowly. "Remember, I can save -"

"Only if you save the others also," broke in the girl. "If Seth Hadlow dies, you will be his murderer."

Jalway remained staring for a moment. Then he turned away. He looked toward Elger and shook his head.

"You are right," he admitted coldly. "It is useless. The girl must die. Call on the executioner."

ELGER turned to Hexler. The brawny man from the boat was merciless in expression. He seemed to have no qualms concerning the slaughter of innocent victims.

"We will bind and gag them here," stated Elger; "then you and your crew can carry them to the lower inlet. Riddle them with bullets among the sand dunes. Make the execution a prompt one.

"Ruff and his men will go back by the route they used to come here. They will bring empty boxes, weighted. Also the bodies from the construction house. Ruff has the key.

"Load the new corpses with the old. Place two competent men aboard the Dalmatia, to see that the boxes are dropped when the ship is well out to sea. We do not want anyone aboard the tramp steamer to learn what the boxes contain."

Elger turned, to deliver an order to Royme. The tall servant departed. His purpose: to get ropes and strips of cloth. Elger had a reason for wanting the victims bound and gagged. He feared that pleas for mercy particularly from Francine - might cause a weakening among Hexler's crew.

The man from the Dalmatia grasped that thought. His lips formed an ugly leer. He nudged his thumb toward the open front door.

"Don't worry about those huskies of mine," he growled. "They'd massacre a whole town if they were paid for it. Ruff tells me you'll want them later."

"I shall," Elger chuckled. He spoke clearly that Francine and the other prisoners might hear. "We have located the yacht Maldah. It is aground in an inlet, twenty miles north.

"Kingdon Feldworth has hidden treasure aboard. New swag, as attractive as that which we have already gained. We are turning pirates, Hexler. Long enough to sink the yacht, after we have gained new spoils."

A cry from Francine. The girl spoke pleading, incoherent words. She was thinking of her uncle's safety. Begging, she manage to gasp to Jalway.

"I shall keep quiet," the girl promised, "even - even if you do slay Seth! If only - if only my uncle can be spared!"

"Our plans are made," declared Elger, coldly, speaking for Jalway. "Your uncle will die like the rest. No one who was aboard the Maldah will survive!"

"Which reminds me of the professor," added Jalway, apparently deaf to Francine's pleas. "He is fond of sleep. By foregoing his coffee, he has managed to slumber through this commotion. Perhaps, Elger, it would be best to eliminate him while he is still in repose. Turn a short sleep into a long one -"

As he spoke, Jalway stepped toward the door. He was almost to the hall when Elger stopped him. Royme had returned with the gags and ropes.

"We'll save the shooting for outside," decided Elger. "Put away your revolver, Jalway" - he motioned toward the gun that the promoter had drawn - "and leave the job to Hexler.

"Ruff - you and one of your men get the professor from his room. Drag him out, and tap that white head of his if he starts to jabber. Make it quick. There is no more time for delay. We must capture the Maldah before dawn."

RUFF nodded. He stepped from the room, with a man behind him. Royme pointed out the professor's door. Jestingly, Ruff tapped. A crackly voice responded.

"Come out a minute, professor," called Ruff, in a disguised tone. "Mr. Elger wants to speak to you."

Ruff stepped back with a grin, holding his revolver at his side. His companion made the same move. Elger, puffing at his meerschaum, was standing in the doorway of the living room, smiling in anticipation of the doomed man's surprise.

The door swung open. But the professor did not appear. Ruff motioned his companion back, so the old man would not see them until he actually reached the hall. All were watching for the stoop-shouldered, white-haired figure. He did not arrive.

Instead, a whirling form swept suddenly into view. A strange, amazing shape that twisted from the room with a rapidity that was astounding. With that surprise arrival came a startling, eerie laugh - a chilling tone that rang out in strident mirth through this house of doom.

A figure in black that swung to a sudden stop. Glaring eyes that burned from beneath the brim of a felt hat. Gloved fists that projected from the folds of a black cloak, with looming automatics unlimbered for



prompt action.

Professor Thaddeus Marcolm existed no longer. His guise had been discarded by the occupant of that secluded room. In the professor's place was a master fighter bent on bringing an end to crime.

The Shadow!

## CHAPTER XXI. FIGHTERS OF THE NIGHT

LONG had The Shadow delayed this revelation. Well had he timed his plans for battle. Tonight, he had gone out by the window of his room; its bars were as easily removable as those in the living room.

He had seen the lights of the Dalmatia. He had watched the little boat going out to meet it. More than that, he had ventured forth again, to hear the approach of the landing party.

The Shadow had counted on the presence of his agents. Yet he was taking a chance that they were not there. Listening from the door of his room, he had learned enough to know that victims were marked for deaths. Now was the time to save them. He had waited, knowing that he would be summoned.

In his quick arrival, The Shadow gave his enemies no chance to recover from their surprise. Instant death was all that these murderers deserved. The delivery of quick punishment, moreover, was The Shadow's one hope of conquering overwhelming odds.

Automatics roared through the darkened hall. Point-blank, The Shadow downed Ruff and his henchmen as the two were raising their guns. As Purvis Elger dived for cover of the living room, The Shadow loosed another pair of bullets.

These slugs were meant for Ruff's other henchmen. They found their targets. The mobsters swayed, then toppled, losing their revolvers when they fell.

Royne was leaping for The Shadow. The advancing fighter wheeled. He stopped the servant's body as a quick bulwark; he flung the fellow forward just as Hexler fired. The sea lieutenant's bullet clipped the staggering form of Royne. The Shadow's left-hand automatic barked.

Wounded by a quick shot, Hexler went diving through the doorway, out to the safety that his band would bring. The Shadow, leaping over Royne's prostrate form, was in quick pursuit. But he stopped short at the living room.

TULLY and Chunk were driving out to get him. Revolvers barked with hasty aim. Bullets zipped past The Shadow. One shot skimmed the master fighter's shoulder. The automatic roared new fury to the echoes. Tongues of flame were pointers to the hearts of Tully and Chunk. The villains sprawled simultaneously.

Swiftly, from close range, The Shadow had burrowed straight through the startled enemies who had sought to block him. Each pair of foemen had been beaten in quick struggle. Ruff and his companion had gone first. The second brace of mobsters had been clipped while aiming guns at their formidable antagonist.

The interlude with Royne and Hexler had given Tully and Chunk their chance to enter the fray. These men from the mainland had fired. But The Shadow, more accurate than they, remained unscathed save for a trifling flesh wound, while his foemen had come to grief.

In this brief but terrific thrust, The Shadow reached a vital, strategic point; the door to the living room. He had two alternatives: one, to deal with Purvis Elger and Bram Jalway; the other, to follow Hexler. Both

were essential to triumph. His problem was which to tackle first.

In his well-calculated drive, The Shadow had counted upon possible aid. Hadlow and Dashler had not yet been bound. Those two could assist in fighting Elger and Jalway.

Outside, there was the chance that agents were along with Hexler's band. The Shadow had counted upon that possibility. But it was plain that the source of greater danger might come from those outside raiders.

Nevertheless, The Shadow, here to save innocent lives, cast caution aside as he deliberately chose Elger and Jalway as his first adversaries. Those two had been sheltered by the protecting cordon of lesser henchmen - the cohorts whom The Shadow had shattered.

Jalway was covering Hadlow, Dashler and Francine, holding his fire only because he thought the struggle in the hall would be short-lived and in favor of the crooks. But Elger, who had seen The Shadow come from Professor Marcolm's room, was ready in reserve to meet that avenging foe.

As Tully and Chunk sprawled to the floor, Elger gave a maddened shout. Leaping toward the front end of the room, he cried to Jalway for aid. The two were directly in front of the amazed prisoners. Should The Shadow fire wild, his shots would strike the persons whom he had come to aid.

Jalway swung at Elger's cry. Together, they aimed for the elusive, blackened figure that came whirling from the hall. A chilling, sardonic laugh resounded through the room as The Shadow swung the muzzles of his automatics toward these two fiendish foes.

That laugh was calculated. It made Elger and Jalway forget all but The Shadow. It inspired two other men to prompt and efficient action. Hadlow and Dashler leaped from Francine's side. Hadlow took Elger; Dashler bore down on Jalway.

Gripped by formidable antagonists, the two crooks writhed. The Shadow, seeing the instant success of his ruse, wheeled toward the outer door, ready for the attack of Hexler's mob.

OUTSIDE, waiting attackers had been startled by the suddenness of the conflict in the house. Hexler's henchmen, lulled by the interval that had followed their leader's entrance, were totally bewildered by the unexpected outburst.

Shots were the emergency signal. Yet the mob had remained latent during the opening moments of the fray. It was not until Hexler came staggering from the doorway that they decided upon action.

Roaring like a wounded bull, Hexler had swung about the moment that he was in the clearing. Free from The Shadow's fire, he turned and began to pump hot lead back into the empty hall.

As he blazed with his revolver, using his good left hand, the lieutenant shouted for the charge.

Jake and Curry sprang from their positions beside the door, ready to join with their leader when he drove to the new attack. At the same instant, seven men from the edge of the clearing came leaping into view.

Shots burst from ready guns; Cliff, Harry and Hawkeye were firing toward the house. A bullet sizzled by Hexler's ear. Wheeling, the lieutenant saw Hawkeye pausing to take aim. Hexler roared a command.

Curry, too, had barely escaped a long-range shot. He swung about, with a cry to Jake. The three men coming from the other side of the clearing stopped short to aim at The Shadow's agents.

Cliff shouted to his companions. The three dropped flat upon the edge of the clearing. Cliff swung his gun

across to deal with the reserves. Harry and Hawkeye did likewise. It was a well-timed move.

For Cliff knew that The Shadow would be coming from the beleaguered house. With Hexler, Jake and Curry turned about, the cloaked fighter would get the trio unaware. The danger lay from the four advancers across the clearing. Those men, if unhindered, would come up to find The Shadow as a target, should the black-garbed warrior appear.

It was a reverse of the expected. A clipping of the reserves. A dependence upon The Shadow, to which all his agents were trained. But Hexler, having fled from the formidable foe, understood the move the moment that The Shadow's agents quit their shooting toward the house.

He and the two beside him were at long range from The Shadow's agents. Counting upon that, Hexler snapped a command to Jake and Curry. With his cry, Hexler went hurtling squarely into the open house door, his two men at his heels.

"Get them!" barked Cliff, to Harry and Hawkeye.

THE SHADOW'S agents came to their feet. They forgot the men across the clearing. Two of those reserves had toppled to the ground. A third, wounded, was aiming unsteadily. The fourth, not yet clipped by The Shadow's agents, opened a wild fire. A chance shot dropped Hawkeye. The little man fell wounded, a bullet in the thigh.

Shots from within the house, The Shadow had swung from the living room at the crucial moment. His automatics loosed their thunder straight against the three men who were making a massed attack: Hexler, Jake and Curry.

Hexler uttered a hoarse cry as he sought to fire. Then the big rogue shot forward on the floor, striking squarely on head and shoulders. His revolver went clattering to The Shadow's feet. Jake and Curry stopped short, aiming.

Hexler's plunge had cleared the way. Straight came The Shadow's shots. Tongues of flame, bursting from the blackness of a shifty, wavering figure that bobbed elusively as puny revolver shots barked in return.

Jake tottered. Curry staggered back, wounded, then dived for the door, momentarily protected by Jake's wavering body. The Shadow came sweeping forward. Jake, slumping, snarled and aimed point-blank for the swift shape that was bearing down upon him.

The Shadow's left arm swung. Automatic drove hard against revolver. Jake's weapon clattered from his trigger-squeezing grasp. It cracked against the wall before the man could fire. Weaponless, the dying thug sank to the floor. The Shadow's shots had been mortal ones.

Curry was vicious as he hurtled from the house. In flight, he thought of other foes. Leaping from the door, he aimed straight for two figures that he saw beneath the clearing moonlight - those of Harry and Cliff.

Harry had swung to the left, because of Hawkeye's fall. But Cliff was aiming for the door. Shots roared through the clearing. Quick, rapid fire, accompanied by sizzling slugs that whistled from flaming gun muzzles.

Cliff and Harry were the focal point of a simultaneous attack that came from separate angles. Curry, like the man across the clearing, was aiming to kill. But these rogues were dealing with capable marksmen.

Curry toppled with a groan, as Cliff clipped him with a timely shot. An instant later - before Cliff could turn to aid - Harry delivered a perfect shot toward the crook across the clearing.

The ruffian twisted about, went rolling crazily upon the sward. Echoes rattled back from the tabby walls of the look-out house. Then came silence. The Shadow, his form grotesque in the moonlight by the front door, had arrived to see his agents triumph.

Cliff and Harry turned to Hawkeye. They raised the wounded man; as they did, Hawkeye's gun came up in his right hand. With a sharp cry, the little fighter aimed across the clearing; steadying himself against Cliff's shoulder.

One crook had been wounded over there. He was the fellow who had faltered in his aim. But now he was steady on one knee, pointing a gun straight for the door of the look-out house. He had seen The Shadow. He was aiming to kill.

SHOTS soared from three spots. From the crouching crook; from Hawkeye's spot; from the doorway where The Shadow stood. Those bursts seemed simultaneous; yet fractions of seconds separated them.

The Shadow's shot was first, straight for the gun hand of the aiming crook. It clipped the fellow's knuckle just as his finger pressed the trigger. Diverted, the crook's bullet plastered itself against the tabby wall beside The Shadow's shoulder.

The crook's altered shot was the second and Hawkeye's burst was almost with it. Seeking to save The Shadow, the wounded agent had delivered quick but perfect aim. The crouching crook toppled forward, a bullet through his heart, while his smoking gun dropped from his broken fingers.

An ominous lull came hard upon fleeting echoes. Then from within the house burst the sound of another gun. Elger and Jalway, arch-crooks of the lot, had found a chance to fight. That shot betokened trouble.

Whirling, The Shadow disappeared into the blackness of the hall. Victor against hordes of crime, the master fighter was heading in to deal with the most dangerous of the lot.

## **CHAPTER XXII. THE LAST STROKE**

THE shot that The Shadow had heard had been a random one. It had come from the revolver gripped by Bram Jalway as the crook still writhed in Dashler's grasp. Gun pointed upward, Jalway had found no other target than the ceiling. Yet his shot turned an overwhelming tide.

Seth Hadlow had already subdued Purvis Elger and was holding the portly crook against the wall. But at the sound of Jalway's shot, Hadlow turned instinctively. Elger wrestled free and dived to the floor.

His gun was lying there, where he had dropped it in the struggle. Regaining the weapon, Elger twisted away from Hadlow and made an upward stroke. His gun muzzle delivered a glancing blow to Hadlow's chin. The sportsman went down with a thump.

Dashler, seeing this, made a valiant effort to grab Jalway's gun. It was a mistaken attempt. Jalway, copying Elger's motion in reverse, drove his weapon downward. Dashler's gripping arm partially absorbed the shock; but a glancing stroke struck his skull. The sailor sagged.

Hadlow and Dashler were prey for the crooks. But a spontaneous cry from Francine gave warning to both Elger and Jalway. Staring hopelessly toward the door, the girl had seen a new figure arrive. The Shadow had returned for battle.

Entering, The Shadow had dropped his brace of automatics. He had emptied those weapons in his previous fray. His gloved hands were whipping a new pair of weapons from beneath his cloak.

With Elger and Jalway taking time to fire at the senseless forms of Hadlow and Dashler, The Shadow

would have had perfect opportunity to clip the crooks. But Francine's cry had placed him at a disadvantage.

ELGER and Jalway wheeled toward the door as one. Separated by a dozen feet, they offered a dual problem to The Shadow as he yanked his guns to view. Marvelous marksman though he was, the position placed him so that he would have to pick one foe an instant before the other.

Both men were desperate. Both were killers. It might have been an equal choice to an ordinary fighter. But The Shadow, instantaneous in his decision, took immediate preference. His eyes swung to the left, where Elger stood alone. His left-hand automatic flashed its flame.

Elger staggered. He tried to hold his gun; but he failed. The portly crook lost the weapon and went sagging to the floor, clutching his chest, coughing from the mortal wound.

The Shadow's quick gaze had shifted toward Jalway, who had stepped in front of Francine. It was Jalway's position that had made The Shadow allow him the momentary chance to aim. For The Shadow had counted on a break. It came.

Francine, by her cry of gladness, had brought grim menace to The Shadow. But it was that very reaction of the girl that had caused The Shadow to fire first at Elger. He was relying upon Francine's spontaneous promptness. The Shadow had decided well.

As Jalway's finger pressed the trigger for a death shot, Francine was already leaping forward. The girl's frail hands caught at the man's wrist. The effort was sufficient; it diverted Jalway's aim.

A bullet boomed from the crook's gun. The shot went wide by half a dozen inches. It missed the turning form of The Shadow. But Jalway, with a furious oath, leaped to another measure.

Twisting, he grabbed the girl's body with his left arm and swung Francine as a barrier against The Shadow's shot. His revolver leveled, he tried to turn it toward the evasive foe at the doorway.

The Shadow swept into the room, ahead of Jalway's swing. Jalway fired one shot - another - but his turning aim, handicapped by Francine's struggle, was too late on both occasions.

Then, suddenly, The Shadow stopped short. He fired one shot as Jalway, swinging his arm wide, gave him a momentary target. The bullet burned Jalway's forearm. With a cry, the crook let Francine fall away. Still holding his gun, he tried to press the trigger. His shot was never fired.

The room roared with a mingled burst that sounded like an artillery barrage. Cliff and Harry had dashed into the house. They fired simultaneously with The Shadow. Three bullets spun Jalway to the floor. The crook was motionless before the echoes ended.

Purvis Elger, crumpled by the bookcase, was staring with glassy eyes. The arch-crook could not reach his gun. He tried to fume incoherent words; his strength ebbed with the gasps.

Half rising with a final effort, Elger buckled and sprawled dead. His hand clutched at the bookcase as he fell; loosened volumes tumbled and thudded the floor beside the master crook's prone form.

COMPANIONS in crime had received just doom. Bram Jalway, whom The Shadow had suspected of criminal intent aboard the Maldah; Purvis Elger, whom The Shadow had identified as an evil rogue, even before he had met the master of Timour Isle. Above the mantel over the fireplace, burnished bronze reflected the room's light. That gryphon shield would no longer be the symbol of a supercriminal.

From beneath his cloak, The Shadow brought forth a sheet of paper; he let it flutter to the floor, where it

fell beside Elger's body. The side that came upward showed the same symbol as the bronze above the fireplace.

The Shadow had returned the piece of evidence that he had acquired on the night when George Dalavan had murdered James Tolwig. That scrap of paper had come from Purvis Elger; The Shadow had given it back to its dead owner.

Seth Hadlow was reviving, with Francine beside him. Dashler, after a momentary sway, was regaining his senses. The Shadow turned to his agents. He gave a hissed order. Cliff and Harry turned about and headed for the front door.

The Shadow glided toward the hallway. For a moment he stood there, barely discernible, blackness against a gloomy background. Then he whirled. The crimson lining of his sable cloak swished momentarily in the glow from the living room.

Then The Shadow, too, was gone, the only token of his parting a hissed, sardonic laugh that left strange, ghoulish echoes quivering through this room where men of crime had died.

## CHAPTER XXIII. NEW DAWN

THE pink light of a new day was breaking along the Georgia coast. The stretched expanse of rose-tinted ocean was heaving with long, restless swells. The power of the waves had ended. These heavy rises and falls were but a reminder of the storm that had spent its fury.

The glow from the horizon revealed a small power boat chugging northward, past islands where stretches of sand ended in strips of towering, blackened trees. This was the little cabin boat that Ruff Turney had kept hidden in the swamp below Timour Isle.

Dashler was at the tiller; as the sailor nonchalantly guided the boat, two others talked of events that were past. Seth Hadlow was seated beside Francine Feldworth, while they discussed the episode on Timour Isle.

"The professor gets the credit," acknowledged Hadlow, in a solemn tone. "If it hadn't been for him, we'd be boxed up deep beneath the ocean."

"The captain of that tramp steamer was a dupe," said Francine. "He thought that Purvis Elger intended to get rid of useless curios by dropping them at sea."

"But he didn't stay around to wait," added Hadlow. "He must have hauled up anchor and sailed hours ago. Probably he was afraid that coast guard cutters might be off the shore."

A PAUSE followed. Francine, nestling close to Hadlow, sighed pleasantly as she looked toward the brightening sky. This day was dawning with perfection.

"The professor didn't miss a trick," commented Hadlow. "That case in his room - with the tiara, the fifty thousand dollars and the stenographic evidence. It showed that fellow Dalavan for a crook as bad as the others."

"And the note we found," said Francine. "The one that told us to follow the passage to the caverns; then on to the old slave quarters and the spot where this boat was run ashore. It gave us all we needed."

"Full proof of Elger's crimes; and Jalway was working with the rogue."

"It will enable us to inform the law. Those treasures will be reclaimed intact."

"To go back to their true owners."

Another brief pause; then Hadlow spoke speculatively.

"Who was Professor Marcolm?" he inquired. "Where did your uncle meet him?"

"In New York," replied Francine. "The professor had heard that uncle was going on a cruise. He wanted to come along; to check on charts of the Atlantic coast."

"Those were the things he brought ashore? His maps? I wondered what he had with him?"

"He took his belongings after he saved us from death. He must have had his black attire with them, also those huge guns that he carried."

Hadlow recalled another matter after Francine had spoken. He expressed his recollection.

"The night we landed on Timour Isle," he said, slowly, "I fired blindly with my rifle; and I am sure that Jalway did the same. We were confused; yet we seemed to get results. The reason was that the professor fired also. I remember that his three shots punched in between ours with peculiar precision."

"Do you mean," questioned Francine, "that the professor - or whoever he was - saved us that night?"

"I do," affirmed Hadlow, soberly. "His shots were timed to perfection. He dropped the thug who attacked Dashler. He smashed the bull's-eye lantern. He clipped another enemy, by the fellow's gunfire, which served as a target. In addition, he saved some cartridges while we wasted all of ours."

The power boat was turning. Looking from the side, Hadlow and Francine saw that Dashler was guiding the craft into an inlet. The sailor pointed.

"There's the Maldah," informed Dashler. "Dead ahead. It looks like they're maneuvering her off the bar. We'll be aboard soon."

Coming to their feet, Hadlow and Francine looked over the little cabin. They saw the yacht, white smoke pouring from its funnel.

"There's your uncle on the deck," declared Hadlow. "He has seen us."

"He looks happy," laughed Francine. "And he'll be happier when he learns how fortunate we have been."

"And finds out what he was saved from," added Hadlow. "Those villains on Timour Isle would have made short work of the Maldah."

"But they never got their start," chimed in Dashler, from the stern.

The cabin boat pulled up beside the yacht. Soon the castaways were pouring out their story to Kingdon Feldworth and the captain. The owner turned to the skipper.

"The radio working?" he inquired.

"Just repaired," informed the captain. "And we'll be off this bar in half an hour."

"Send word to the coast guards," ordered Feldworth. "When we're clear, head for Timour Isle. We'll meet the cutters there."

WHILE the reunion and its aftermath were taking place aboard the Maldah, another group of voyagers

was faring north from Timour Isle. Their vessel was the small motor boat in which Tully and Chunk had come from the mainland. But their course was not outside the string of islands that fringed the Georgia coast.

The little boat was chugging through an inner channel. Clear of the marshes, it was traveling beneath the shelter of an inner shore. The tiny craft was almost shrouded in a setting that dawn had not yet reached.

Gliding beneath huge overhanging boughs that streamed with beards of Spanish moss, the voyagers were nearing the end of their trip to the mainland. In the center of the boat were Harry Vincent and Cliff Marsland; between them, Hawkeye, chipper despite his wound.

Shrouded at the rear of the boat sat a black-cloaked figure, a silent pilot who guided the craft with unerring skill. Picking channels that he did not know, The Shadow had weaved a remarkable course in from Timour Isle.

Far from that isolated spot where he had waged war against crime, The Shadow was bringing his agents to security. From the mainland they could transfer Hawkeye and take him north by train.

The boat had entered the channel of a sluggish creek. Moss hung almost to the surface of the water as The Shadow swung the tiller. The prow dug deep into thick soil. The shrouded pilot had found a landing place.

The motor ceased its throbs. Solemn silence hovered as strange aftermath to the events that had gone before. The howl of the hurricane; the thunder of avenging guns - those sounds seemed part of a far, distant past.

Yet as the boat lingered, with its occupants motionless, there came a manifestation that woke echoes of the past. It was the first utterance from that weird pilot at the stern; the first sound that The Shadow had given since the departure from Timour Isle.

A laugh that quivered from hidden lips. A burst of mockery that rose through the thick air of the sylvan glade. A haunting cry that rose to a fierce crescendo, then broke into a shuddering tone that faded with uncanny suddenness.

Chilling echoes answered The Shadow's triumphant laugh. Phantom tongues gave weird but mirthless reply; then they, too, dwindled into nothingness.

Silence, strange and unfathomable, again clung to this lonely landing place upon the Georgia shore. Crime had been conquered by The Shadow and his aids. New day had led them forth on further quests.

THE END