

VENGEANCE IS MINE!
by Maxwell Grant

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Solemn were these words from the mind of a mad criminal - but it was The Shadow who meted out the repayment, with a stern justice that brooked no thwarting!

CHAPTER I

CRIME'S BLAST

NEW YORK lay lulled that night.

Too lulled to please The Shadow, as he viewed broad avenues and narrow streets from the passing window of a limousine.

Traffic was as heavy as usual. Sidewalks had their full quota of pedestrians. Changing lights formed a colorful medley that added to the city's motion. Yet, to The Shadow, the scene had perceptibly slowed. He could sense the slackened pulse throbs of the metropolis.

Beneath the brilliance of Manhattan lay hidden enemies against whom The Shadow waged constant war. They were men of crime - who lurked; then struck. Most dangerous of these were the ones who waited until times when New York seemed placid; for then the law would be least ready to oppose them.

In his campaigns against crime, The Shadow had discovered that the city itself was an index to activities in the underworld. When crimedom was active, lesser crooks would be on the move. Rubbing shoulders with the populace, those small fry invariably created a tension. Like a mammoth creature, the city would

show nervous symptoms. New York would vibrate in its motion.

Tonight's smoothness told that crime was latent. There was a reason why the hidden underworld lay quiet. Recently, men of crime had been balked at every turn. Their thrusts had been met promptly by the law. Routed in battle, mobsters had been pursued, even to the confines of their hide-outs.

So-called big-shots had fled from Manhattan. Their henchmen had scattered to the hinterlands. They knew who was responsible for their defeats. The Shadow, penetrating to the very council rooms of crime, had been prepared for every evil move. He was the one who had made the counterthrusts.

Crime's complete collapse had produced the singular calmness that The Shadow could sense throughout the city. In that quiet lay danger. There were others beside The Shadow who could feel the lull. They were men of supercrime, hidden masters of evil who had long bided their time, awaiting the right opportunity to embark upon insidious campaigns.

Somewhere in New York, an unknown plotter might have already recognized that this was the time he wanted. Invariably, a lull like this marked the rise of some formidable foe of justice, whom only The Shadow could cut down. If that plotter chose to move, The Shadow could counter only after the first thrust arrived.

SOMETIMES, even masters of crime unwittingly let straws flurry in the wind. The Shadow had encountered cases where such wisps had reached the knowledge of the police, only to be overlooked. If there was any inkling of coming crime available, The Shadow intended to uncover it. That was why he was riding in the limousine.

The big car swung into an avenue where traffic was light. It pulled up in front of a gray-stone building, an old but well-kept edifice that bore an

appearance of wealth and influence. This was the exclusive Cobalt Club, the most high-toned rendezvous in New York. The Cobalt Club boasted a ten-year waiting list for membership; hence persons who were already members regarded themselves as fortunate.

Among the present members was Ralph Weston, police commissioner of New York City. Proud of the distinction that the Cobalt Club gave him, Weston visited the gray-stoned portals whenever he found occasion. Since crime had quieted in New York, the police commissioner had idle evenings. The Shadow knew that he would find Weston at the club.

When he alighted from the limousine, The Shadow presented a much different appearance than the one with which he was usually identified. Law and underworld alike knew The Shadow as a being in black. Cloaked shoulders; a downturned hat brim that shaded all features except a pair of blazing eyes; thin-gloved hands that gripped huge automatics; hidden lips, ever ready with a mocking laugh of challenge - those were the outstanding points of description that defined The Shadow. None of those details fitted him in his present guise.

The lights beneath the marquee that fronted the Cobalt Club showed The Shadow as a tall, calm-faced personage of leisurely bearing. His features, somewhat hawkish, were immobile; almost masklike. Attired in evening clothes, The Shadow had the distinguished appearance that marked him as a member of the Cobalt Club. Both the tall doorman and the chunky cab starter recognized him as such.

When he visited the Cobalt Club, The Shadow passed as Lamont Cranston, millionaire life member, close friend of Police Commissioner Ralph Weston.

The doorman, slightly taller than The Shadow, tipped his hat and bowed. The squatty starter, about to assign the limousine to a choice space, learned that Mr. Cranston no longer wanted the car. The limousine pulled away while the doorman was ushering The Shadow into the lobby.

JUST inside the door, a pudgy-faced man brushed past The Shadow and brusquely questioned the doorman:

"Are you sure that messenger hasn't come yet?"

"Not yet, Mr. Zanwood," replied the doorman. "Both the starter and myself are on the lookout for him."

"I can't wait much longer." Zanwood jerked a watch from his pocket. "I am leaving for Boston on a late train, but I may want to go to my apartment first."

"I understand, sir."

Zanwood began to pace impatiently, confining himself to the small area just inside the door. The doorman spoke politely to The Shadow:

"Commissioner Weston is in the library, Mr. Cranston. He expects you there, sir."

Strolling toward the library, which opened from the lobby, The Shadow found the police commissioner in the broad doorway. Weston was a man of military appearance, straight-shouldered and pompous even to his well-clipped, short-pointed mustache. He had eyed the scene at the doorway; he spoke indignantly as he shook hands with The Shadow.

"That fellow Zanwood is a bounder!" asserted Weston. "Bah! For all his importance as a Wall Street operator, he does not belong in this club. How did he ever manage to pass the admittance committee, Cranston?"

"George Zanwood is a life member," remarked The Shadow. "He joined the Cobalt Club about six years ago, before the bars were raised."

Weston winced. The statement had a double significance. It meant that Zanwood might have been lucky in joining the Cobalt Club; but it also placed

the pudgy-faced man in an exclusive class to which more recent members - including Weston - did not belong. One of Weston's greatest disappointments was the fact that the Cobalt Club no longer granted life memberships.

"Let us go into the library," suggested Weston, abruptly. Then, as an afterthought, he added, "These life members. Humph! It's time a few of them died off!"

Weston was forgetful in that statement, for his friend Cranston happened to be a life member of the club. However, The Shadow merely indulged in a quiet smile, for he knew that Weston referred specifically to George Zanwood.

IN a corner of the library, Commissioner Weston began to chat on the subject that pleased him most: his own activities as police commissioner. Weston found a ready listener in his friend Cranston, but he did not suspect the reason for The Shadow's attentiveness.

Weston had a penchant for recounting odd cases that came to the notice of the police. Ninety-nine per cent of them were chaff; but in one out of a hundred, The Shadow found something of note that had escaped Weston entirely. Those rare clues could prove worthwhile, particularly at a time when The Shadow expected moves from some hidden hand of supercrime. Unfortunately, the incidents that Weston recounted on this occasion were dry and pointless.

As Weston talked, his voice rose higher. With every pause, a sharp "ahem" came from a corner of the library. A withery old club member named Throckmorton was mulling through his newspaper and did not enjoy the disturbance that Weston's tones created.

Oblivious to Throckmorton's coughs, Weston kept on talking. At last, old Throckmorton flung his newspaper aside and pounded the table beside him.

Weston looked around to see the old man rising, to stalk in spindly fashion from the library. It dawned on him that he had violated the first rule of the Cobalt Club, that called for absolute silence in the library. Weston spoke quickly to The Shadow.

"Come, Cranston," suggested the commissioner, "let us go to the grillroom. We can talk better there."

With that, Weston hurried after Throckmorton and overtook the old man before he reached the lobby. Weston was complete in his apology; but Throckmorton did not want to be appeased. When The Shadow joined the pair, they

were still moving toward the doorway that led to the lobby, Weston's humble excuses mingling with Throckmorton's outraged cackle.

Close by the two, The Shadow looked out into the lobby. He saw George Zanwood suddenly stop pacing beside the door. The doorman had stepped out to the sidewalk; Zanwood hurried to join him. A few seconds later, Zanwood came back, carrying a bag that looked like a physician's satchel. The tall doorman was following close behind Zanwood.

The pudgy man halted within five paces. The Shadow saw a puzzled look on his face; with it, Zanwood inclined his ear toward the bag. He had raised the satchel with one hand; with the other, he beckoned quickly to the doorman.

It was too late for The Shadow to reach them. Even a shouted warning would have been useless, for the uniformed doorman, like Zanwood, had recognized what was wrong. He was reaching to yank open the door, while Zanwood was turning to dash outside with the bag.

IN that instant, however, The Shadow performed another action. Wheeling, he launched himself upon Weston and Throckmorton; hurled the pair backward from the lobby into the library, bowling them bodily against a table near an inner corner. As the arguing men sprawled, a huge, glass-shaded lamp pitched from the table to the floor, ahead of them.

The shatter of that falling lamp was never heard. Before it had time to crash to the floor, a tremendous blast sounded from the outer door of the Cobalt Club. The roar of that explosion drowned all else.

Following Weston and Throckmorton, The Shadow completed a dive that carried him just free of the hoisted debris that came with the concussion. Tiled floor and walls were winging from the lobby, like shells in a barrage. Chunks of shattered chandeliers, pieces of mahogany woodwork, masses of plaster came as added bombardment.

Volcanic flame accompanied the blast; walls of masonry shook as though an earth tremor had seized them. The air quivered with the shock; it left eardrums ringing after the thunderous echoes had died. In their corner, Weston and Throckmorton lay momentarily stunned by the cataclysm.

Flattened on the floor within the library, The Shadow saw that the blast's effect had ended. Rising, he gazed toward the space that had once been the lobby of the Cobalt Club. That scene was a void.

A chasm had replaced the tiled floor. The great front door of the club was gone; with it, the whole front of the building had been banished. The Shadow could see the shreds of the marquee; beyond that, the avenue, littered with masses of gray stone.

George Zanwood had vanished; with him had perished the uniformed doorman. Ruthless murder had been done, with Zanwood as its victim. The doorman, a mere bystander, had been slain also. Only The Shadow's quick action had saved three other lives: his own, and those of Weston and Throckmorton.

Crime's blast had arrived. A master crook had struck in The Shadow's own domain. With his first thrust, the murderer of George Zanwood had almost gained The Shadow as an added victim.

CHAPTER II

THE MESSENGER CLUE

DUST had settled amid the ruins of the lobby when Commissioner Weston joined The Shadow at the library door. The chaotic scene awed Weston; made him shudder when he realized how close he had been to death. In bewildered tone, he gulped:

"What - what was it, Cranston? How did you guess - how did you know what was coming?"

"Zanwood's bag arrived," replied The Shadow. "I saw him take it from the doorman. From the startled way in which they acted, I knew that they had heard the ticking of a bomb."

"Then they were blown to atoms -"

"Yes. The Cobalt Club is short one life member and a doorman."

The Shadow's statement was a solemn one. It brought a pang to Weston. The commissioner remembered his own remark about life members dying off; he

realized that it could be interpreted to mean that he had wanted Zanwood's death. The grimness of the situation was sufficient to rouse Weston to excitement.

"I must call headquarters!" exclaimed Weston, edging out into the shattered lobby. "We can lose no time! The perpetrator of this outrage must be captured! This is the work of some terrorist, who will be a menace as long as he remains at large!"

Getting across the space to the front of the lobby was no small task. Though he could guide himself by the lights that still glowed from the library,

Weston nearly came to disaster when he tested the broken lobby floor.

One mass of cracked tile gave under the commissioner's weight and crashed into the basement. Weston would have followed it but for The Shadow's restraining grip. Again, Weston jarred an edge of the crumbled wall; The Shadow

pulled him back as a gray stone dislodged and clattered almost at Weston's feet.

Trapped club members poked their heads from a stairway at the rear of the lobby. They had been in the downstairs grillroom when the explosion came.

Their

panic ended when they saw Weston and The Shadow threading their way out to the street. They congratulated themselves because the explosion had come during the

dinner hour, when the lobby was almost deserted.

By the time The Shadow had brought Weston past the pitfalls that blocked their route, the commissioner's need for a call to headquarters was ended.

Shrieking sirens announced the arrival of police cars. Bluecoats recognized the

commissioner, when he reached the street.

While Weston was giving orders, another car pulled up; from it stepped a swarthy, stocky-built police inspector. Weston uttered a pleased exclamation when he saw that the arrival was Joe Cardona, ace investigator of the New York force.

Cardona had heard the explosion while riding in his police car more than a

dozen blocks from the Cobalt Club. He had made a rapid trip to the location of the blast. Weston gave brief details and put Cardona in immediate charge of the

search for the man who had delivered the bomb to Zanwood.

That done, Weston looked for a spot that would serve him as temporary headquarters. There was a drug store on the corner nearest the Cobalt Club. Accompanied by The Shadow, Weston strode there and commandeered the place for his own use.

PLAIN-CLOTHES men had arrived. Weston ordered one to look up Zanwood's telephone number and call to learn if anyone was there. The call proved a blank.

By that time, Throckmorton and other members of the Cobalt Club were arriving at the drug store. One of them was well-acquainted with Zanwood. He told Weston that Zanwood's family had gone out of town; that the Wall Street man had been staying alone at his apartment and having his meals at the club.

"We shall go to Zanwood's apartment later," decided Weston. "It is named in the telephone book: the Everglades Apartments. I must make a note of the address."

Weston found the address and jotted it down. Hardly had he done so before Cardona appeared, followed by two husky patrolmen who were helping a wilted man

into the drug store. They let the dazed fellow sink heavily into a chair.

Weston

recognized the stocky cab starter who worked for the Cobalt Club.

"Found him in the gutter," explained Cardona, "half under a parked car. He's been trying to tell us something, commissioner. He mentioned a green cab that pulled up and let out a passenger. I'll try to locate that hack while you quiz this fellow."

The druggist provided the cab starter with a stimulant. After a gulped drink, the fellow revived. His manner showed that he might prove a valuable witness. Weston urged him to give his story.

"It was this way," declared the starter. "Mr. Zanwood kept talking to the doorman, about a bag that he expected from the Apex Security Co."

"He mentioned that company?" queried Weston. "You heard him?"

"Sure thing," returned the stocky starter. "He's had 'em come to the club before, Mr. Zanwood has - or did, I ought to say. A couple of times, but brought by different messengers. That's why I didn't suspect the fellow that showed up tonight, only I ought to have, because the bag was funny looking. It wasn't flat, like the others were."

"The guy gets out of a green cab. He asks for Mr. Zanwood, so I pointed to the doorway. Jimmy - he was the doorman - comes out to take the bag, but the fellow wants to be sure that Mr. Zanwood got it, so he starts crowding into the club. I saw Mr. Zanwood meet him at the door. The bag was sort of changing hands."

"That was the last I saw of it. The hackie in the green cab was hollering to know if there was a parking space. I started down the sidewalk to show him one. He saw it, so I was coming back. Just then - bang! - out goes the whole front of the club and leaves me lying in the street."

THE starter settled back in his chair, tired by his exertion. The Shadow offered him a cigarette from a platinum case. The fellow accepted it eagerly. He was shaky when he drew at the flame of The Shadow's lighter; but a few puffs

eased him. He lifted the cigarette from his lips to say:

"Thanks, Mr. Cranston."

Weston had ordered one of his men to call the Apex Security Co., on the assumption that its office was still open. While that was being done, he questioned the starter for a description of the man who had delivered the bomb to Zanwood.

"He was a tall guy," declared the witness. "Shoulders straight back. He walked with a long stride; I saw that when he came across the sidewalk. Say! That makes me remember it must have been him I saw later, just before the blow-up came! Sure enough, he was clear up here by the drug store, making time with those long legs of his, though he didn't look like he was in a hurry."

"A good point," commended Weston. "But get back to the description. Did you see the man's face?"

"Yeah. It was kind of blunt. His hair was dark, pretty near black, I'd say, and his eyes were about the same."

"His complexion?"

"I couldn't say. Dark, I guess. He was a youngish man, though. I'm sure of that."

The starter's recollection ended. Weston was called to the telephone. The Apex Security Co. was on the wire. Weston held brief conversation, hung up; then announced:

"The Apex Co. says that the messenger left only five minutes ago. It couldn't have been their man who delivered the bag."

Cardona arrived just as the commissioner completed his statement. Joe had located the driver of the green cab; he had the man with him. Scared, the hackie told how he had just parked his cab when the blast came. He had still

been slouched behind his wheel when Cardona found him.

"I picked up the fare over near Times Square," testified the cab driver. "On Forty-sixth Street, to be exact. He was in a hurry; asked me if I knewed where the Cobalt Club was, and when I said yes, he told me to hop here in a hurry."

"Did you see his face?" quizzed Weston. "Can you describe him?"

"I got a look at his mug when he was payin' me. He was usin' one hand to get his money, on account of carryin' a bag. He had his thumb on the handle of it. Guess he was holdin' a spring down, until he could get rid of the bag -"

"But what did he look like?"

"His face looked dark; because his back was to the light, maybe. He had a big chin, though. Kind of stuck it at me when he pushed his mitt in through the

window to give me my fare. His face was flattish, I guess; it could have looked

that way because his cheeks bulged up underneath his eyes."

"He was tall?"

"Yeah. A big guy. I could tell that when he was going into the door of the club."

When it came to minor details, such as a description of the bomb-carrier's

voice, both the starter and the cab driver were hazy. They did define the man's

tone as a quick one; but that was hardly adequate, as his conversation with both witnesses had been brief and hurried.

It was a certainty that the man had taken a quick, uptown route immediately after delivering the bomb. The starter's recollection of the long-striding figure was backed by the cab driver. The latter had parked just south of the Cobalt Club and swore that he would have recognized his ex-passenger, if the man had come in his direction.

FULLY ten minutes had passed before the police had begun a proper search of the neighboring blocks about the Cobalt Club. The bomb carrier had profited by that interval to clear the vicinity. Joe Cardona, however, was confident that other persons would be found who had observed the killer's flight. They would add new details of description.

While Cardona was making such comment, detectives brought in the messenger

from the Apex Security Co., a mild-looking man who carried a bag that resembled

a briefcase. The contents proved to be stocks and bonds that belonged to Zanwood. The dead man had intended to take them to some customers in Boston. They tallied with a list that the security company had read to Weston over the telephone.

The messenger explained that he was one of several who worked for the Apex

Co. and other security houses. That news brought an immediate response from Weston.

"One of the other messengers may be responsible," declared the commissioner.

"Knowing that securities were going to Zanwood, he could have preceded the

actual messenger to the Cobalt Club. Our course is plain, Cardona. We shall go at once to the office of the Apex Security Co. and continue our investigation there."

That decided, Weston looked about for his friend Cranston, only to find that he had left the drug store. A detective explained that Mr. Cranston had remembered an appointment elsewhere; and had asked to be conducted through the

police cordon. The dick had obliged, knowing Cranston to be a friend of the commissioner.

"I can't quite fathom Cranston," confided Weston to Cardona, as they entered an automobile for their ride to Wall Street. "He has an amazing ability to recognize sudden danger, as he demonstrated tonight; yet, ordinarily, he is lackadaisical and seldom seems to be alert.

"Here we are, Cardona, on the one trail that promises to solve the mystery, and Cranston chooses to be elsewhere."

Commissioner Weston might have reversed his verdict, had he seen his friend Cranston at that moment. The Shadow had already arrived near Times Square.

There, on a side street, he was boarding a streamlined taxi that seemed to have been waiting for this particular passage.

When The Shadow spoke to the driver, his tone was whispered. The address that The Shadow gave was that of the Everglades Apartments.

While Weston and Cardona were traveling to the office that had done business with George Zanwood, The Shadow was making a trip to the dead man's residence.

The Shadow had chosen his own trail in preference to the law's.

CHAPTER III

A MURDERER'S SNARE

WHATEVER the mystery enshrouding the death of George Zanwood, The Shadow felt sure that it was something that had risen from the past. Zanwood had been ruthlessly bombed into oblivion, and whoever had timed the murder did not care if others perished. The fact that only the doorman had gone with Zanwood was sheer accident.

In his unending search for crime-makers, The Shadow never failed to note matters close at hand. One of his fundamental methods was to keep tabs on the members of the Cobalt Club - not because he expected to find crooks among them, but because they represented the wealthiest men in New York, the sort against whom criminals would strike.

The Shadow had checked the name of George Zanwood. The man was prosperous, precise in his business methods. His activities were not the sort that would have made him a target for crime. Yet Zanwood had been done to death in a fashion that was not only fiendish, but well planned. Someone had wanted to remove Zanwood so completely that not even a trace of him would remain.

The Shadow's records concerning Zanwood began only a few years back. It would be necessary to trace his earlier activities. Zanwood, himself, could have described them; but Zanwood was dead. Therefore, The Shadow was choosing the nearest point that might offer evidence concerning Zanwood's own career. That point was the apartment where the dead man had been living alone.

Commissioner Weston had chosen a useless trail. Nothing of consequence would be learned at the Apex Security Co. No ordinary runner from a security house would risk his life by carrying a bomb. He would know that even if he did deliver it, the law would immediately be upon him.

Weston's trail, though useless to himself, was valuable to The Shadow. It meant that the commissioner would forget Zanwood's apartment until later. The Shadow, therefore, had time for his own investigation.

WHEN the cab neared the Everglades Apartments, it parked some distance

from the building. This cab was The Shadow's own. Its driver, Moe Shrevnitz, was a speedy hackie whose life The Shadow had once saved. Moe followed The Shadow's orders to the last detail; he was always in readiness for his chief's command. Hence, when he parked near the Everglades, Moe turned off the motor and sat waiting behind the wheel.

Moe did not see The Shadow alight. In fact, the keenest eyes could not have spied the shrouded figure that emerged in darkness. The Shadow had donned his cloak and hat from a bag beneath the rear seat of the taxi. Garbed in blackness, he was moving silently into the night. He reached the front of the apartment house; entered its lobby like a gliding, ghostly shape.

The Everglades was an antiquated type of apartment house; but its choice location had kept it filled with tenants who paid high rentals. The floors were served by an automatic elevator; encountering no one in the lobby, The Shadow had no difficulty in reaching Zanwood's apartment, which occupied a rear quarter of the fourth floor.

Working with plierlike instruments of his own invention, The Shadow opened the lock within a few minutes. He entered the darkness of a large apartment and closed the door behind him.

Investigation with a flashlight showed that the apartment was entirely empty. The Shadow lowered the shades in the living room and turned on the light. Though the glow could be noticed from the windows of other rooms, no outsider could possibly have glimpsed The Shadow.

In one corner of the living room was a door that looked like a possible exit. The Shadow examined it, found it fitted with a heavy latch. Opening the door, he saw an entrance to a steep stairway that turned at a landing, a dozen feet below. The stairway was a fire exit, that could be reached either from this apartment or the one that adjoined it. Familiar with this type of exit, The Shadow knew that there would be a heavy, latched door at the bottom of the stairway.

This type of exit was always ready for people who lived in the apartments; but the door below could not be opened, except with the janitor's master key. Thus the exit was as completely barred as the front doors of the apartments.

CLOSING the fire exit door, The Shadow began an inspection of Zanwood's living room. There was a writing desk in a corner; two of the drawers were locked, but scratches on the mahogany surface indicated that someone had worked with different keys to open them.

The Shadow picked the locks with ease. Inside the drawers he found stacks of papers in disarray. One space gave proof that a small batch had been removed. If any documents pertaining to Zanwood's past had been here, they were gone.

There was a chance that a searcher had overlooked something important; nevertheless, The Shadow preferred to inspect elsewhere before returning to this field that had been previously searched. He went to a table in a corner, found its drawer empty. A bookcase was likewise barren of results, even though The Shadow was complete in his quick search.

Straight across the living room from the fire exit was a square-shaped cabinet mounted on a pedestal. It served a double purpose. It was a humidor wherein Zanwood evidently kept his tobacco and cigars. It was also a stand for the telephone that rested upon it. There was a chair and reading lamp close by.

Evidently, Zanwood's favorite spot was close beside the square-shaped humidor.

Stooping beside the stand, The Shadow observed that it had no lock;

merely

a small knob that controlled a catch to keep the door shut. There were faint scratches, though, beside that knob; they were much like the marks on the locks

of the desk drawers. Only The Shadow would have observed that oddity. It impressed him particularly, for here there was no lock to pick.

Instead of opening the foot-square door, The Shadow lifted the telephone from the top of the humidor stand. He wedged a thin piece of bladelike steel between the sides of the stand and the top. Careful prying enabled him to loosen the top of the stand. He lifted it away, to find a copper lining riveted beneath.

The Shadow made short work of the rivets. Lifting away the top section of the lining, he saw the interior of the humidor. It contained two boxes of cigars. The Shadow removed them and examined the remaining sections of the copper lining.

He noted sharp scratches on the inside copper of the door; the screw that held the catch was projecting slightly inward, and hooked about it was a tight bit of wire that had been broken away.

THE humidor had been fixed as a death trap. Someone had entered the apartment, opened the humidor and removed the cigar boxes to insert a bomb instead. The knob had been fixed, with an inside wire connection, so that a simple turn would snap the detonator of the bomb. Had Zanwood come to his apartment and opened the humidor, he would have been blasted to nothingness here, instead of at the Cobalt Club.

Two killers had teamed to get Zanwood. Tools of a supercreek who wanted Zanwood's death, each of those workers had undertaken a different course to make sure of the victim's doom. One had fixed a bomb in the humidor, while the other had carried a bag to the Cobalt Club.

Without question, the man who had succeeded at the Cobalt Club had promptly contacted his fellow worker in crime. The second man had decided to remove the bomb that he had placed in the humidor, as it was no longer needed, and replace the cigars. His task was no easy one, since the thing had been set to blow the moment that the knob was turned.

The Shadow could picture two active workers. One - a man with iron nerve

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who had handed Zanwood the bag, made strides for safety, called his pal by telephone and arranged to cover the apartment afterward. The other - an expert who could handle explosives; who did not fear to plant bombs and remove them.

The Shadow had taken no chances with the humidor; he had known that the bomb might still be inside it. Finding the bomb gone, The Shadow simply closed the door of the humidor; then put the cigar boxes in at the top. He replaced the copper lining, wedged it in place and added the wooden top of the cabinet.

With one hand resting on the stout humidor, The Shadow started to reach for the telephone. He made the move mechanically, for his thought were concerned with his surroundings. The Shadow was planning his next move. His eyes were fixed on a wall mirror that hung just above the humidor. From the mirror, The Shadow could see the major portion of the living room.

He saw the door of the fire exit. A movement of that barrier made him pause. The door was edging inward. Someone had unlocked it from the other side and was peering through the darkened crack. As token of an immediate menace, The Shadow saw a metal barrel slide noiselessly through the space at the edge of the door.

Murderous men had not been far from Zanwood's apartment. They had seen the light come on there. One, at least, had returned by the fire tower, to which the pair must have gained access with a stolen key. A steady hand had opened that

door; the same firm fist was covering The Shadow with a gun muzzle.

ALL that flashed instantly to The Shadow's mind, together with the knowledge that the hidden foe was taking deliberate aim. All that stayed the hand of the murderer was The Shadow's own slow motion. The killer at the inner door did not suspect that his presence was known.

One false move would have been fatal to The Shadow. Time was too short to draw a gun, then wheel and open fire. That murderer would blaze away, protected by the bulk of the door. The Shadow's fire would be futile. He was in a lighted room; it was a dozen feet to the wall switch by the outer door.

Steadily, The Shadow's eyes remained fixed upon the mirror, watching the slow motion of the leveled gun. His right hand ceased its motion toward the telephone; it came slowly upward, like his left, it gripped the humidor stand.

In one brief second, The Shadow had devised a daring course that would put him on equal terms with the enemy who sought his life. Muscles taut, The Shadow was ready to deliver a surprise that would nullify the sure aim of the hidden marksman.

This apartment had again become a murderer's snare; but The Shadow had found a way to break the trap.

CHAPTER IV

BURSTS IN THE DARK

LEVELED, the gun muzzle gave a slight downward tilt, as its owner took perfect sight along the barrel. It was the instant that The Shadow wanted; the moment when the marksman, fully confident, would expect no move from his black-cloaked target.

The Shadow wheeled away from the mirror. His twist was a speedy spin, straight toward the door from which death threatened. There was reason for the power that The Shadow put into that whirl. With him, his gripping hands were bringing a needed object.

The Shadow had wrested the humidor stand from beside the wall. His long arms swung it like a bludgeon; his hands released it. A flying barrier, the blocky stand scaled on a dead level toward the fire exit door.

The hurling move was a split-second ahead of the killer's trigger squeeze.

The gun spoke while the humidor was traveling the direct path between the pistol muzzle and The Shadow. The marksman never wavered; his barking gun tongued a straight bullet that splintered the woodwork of the humidor cabinet. Had that flying bulwark been wood alone, the slug would have traveled through to reach The Shadow.

The copper lining was the real shield upon which The Shadow counted. The metal did its part. Deflected by one layer, the bullet failed to cleave the second. Nor could the flying chunk of lead stop the impetus of The Shadow's hurl. The splintered humidor rammed the door edge squarely at the spot where the gun projected.

The gun half jolted from his hand, the killer had no chance for new aim while The Shadow remained within his immediate range of fire. By the time he had wedged the door farther open, to jab his gun deeper in the room, The Shadow

had reached the wall switch with a long, accurate dive. The killer caught a

flash of swirling blackness; then the room was plunged into darkness.

Leaping from the fire exit, the man with the gun blazed three shots for the wall switch. Silence followed the gun bursts. With a muttered oath, the killer produced a flashlight and flicked its rays on the wall. He was moving forward as he used the light.

He stopped short; this time, snarled words in Spanish came spontaneously from his lips. It was not his usual language, for his mutters had been in English. Evidently, this hardened killer reserved a Spanish epithet for times when he experienced total surprise.

The space below the wall switch was vacant. No black-cloaked figure lay upon the floor. The Shadow had not stopped his swift swirl when he reached that

point. He had faded farther in the darkness, toward a spot of safety.

The killer had supposed that The Shadow, if still alive, would fire in return. That guess was wrong. The Shadow had tricked his enemy; and with double

purpose. First, to bring the man from his spot of security behind the fire door;

second, to produce a hand-to-hand struggle in which the assassin could be captured alive. For The Shadow was positive that this man was the one who had delivered the bomb to Zanwood. The rogue formed a direct link to the unknown master crook who had plotted Zanwood's murder.

BEFORE the startled marksman could realize how fully he had been tricked, The Shadow surged upon him from the darkness. The flashlight was extinguished as it skimmed across the floor. The killer's wild swing of the pistol was met by the clashing return stroke from one of The Shadow's automatics. Sledging hard, The Shadow drove the pistol from the assassin's grasp.

The fighters locked. In the darkness, The Shadow recognized that he had met a powerful grappler. The man was big, but wiry despite his size. His shoulders were not broad in proportion to his height, and he had a way of shifting them to elude The Shadow's clutch. The big man's mistake was in not recognizing this grapple as a mere preliminary. He did not guess that The Shadow was shifting him into position for a jujutsu hold.

The right time came. Tense in the darkness, both strugglers seemed equal; but The Shadow was ready to give the big man a long hoist through the air. The fellow's snarls in English, with occasional words of Spanish, seemed of little help to him. They aided, however, without the big man knowing it. Those mouthed

words covered a sound from the outer door.

That door swung open suddenly - even without The Shadow expecting it. In from the doorway came a husky man of middleweight proportions, his face obscured because the light was behind him. The Shadow saw broad shoulders, a head thrust forward in turtlish fashion. He knew that this was the second of the killers - the man who had planted the humidor bomb and removed it.

To meet the middleweight, The Shadow disposed of the big man in a hurry. Lunging forward, he snapped back like a trip hammer and scaled the big rogue over his shoulders, headlong toward the window.

Even before the big man thudded the floor, The Shadow was swinging to meet

his new adversary. He met the middleweight's charge; stopped the downward drive

of a gun hand. A moment later, he had the fellow off his feet and was whirling him helplessly toward the center of the room.

The middleweight sagged; lost his clutch completely. The Shadow whipped him sidewise to complete his daze. Lunging toward the corner by the fire exit, The Shadow was planning an abrupt stop when the unexpected came. The big man on

the floor, though half groggy, managed a lucky grab at The Shadow's ankle.

That

move completely changed the climax.

Carried by his own lunge, The Shadow lost his hold upon the second man; he

tripped, and dived toward the wall. His hands, thrust ahead of him, found vacancy. Headlong, The Shadow plunged through the open doorway of the fire exit

and somersaulted down the steps, to finish with a crash upon the landing.

THE big man came to hands and knees, snapped a harsh command to his shaken

pal. The other came up beside the wall; supplied the glow of a flashlight. By the glimmer, the big man found his gun and his own flashlight. He rose and flicked a glare of light down the fire tower steps.

There, he saw The Shadow in motion. The cloaked fighter had taken the fall

with the skill of a professional tumbler. Instinctively, The Shadow had drawn an

automatic; though he had lost all sense of direction, the flashlight's shaft gave him a target.

Without waiting to take sure aim, The Shadow raised his arm and jabbed shots upward. Bullets sizzled past the ear of the big assassin above.

The killer did not chance a return fire. He flattened on the floor, grabbed the fire exit door and slammed it shut. He knew what combat with The Shadow could mean; he did not care to risk it further. All that he wanted was a

chance for a get-away, out through the front of the apartment, taking his smaller pal with him.

The crook's move struck The Shadow, a few seconds later. Though his head was swimming, The Shadow recognized the quickest course by which he could follow the fleeing men. That was down through the fire tower. Finding a flashlight, The Shadow stumbled down the stairs, hoping to cut off his enemies before they could make a get-away outside.

Reaching the latched bottom door, The Shadow yanked it inward. He came into the confines of a blind alleyway behind the apartment house. Finding the right direction, he made for the front street. A coupe slithered past the outlet while The Shadow was on the way. Coming out into the glare of a street lamp, The Shadow saw the small car turn the corner.

Across the street, Moe Shrevnitz saw The Shadow and pointed after the speeding car. Then Moe sensed that something was wrong; otherwise, The Shadow would not have come blindly out into the light. Moe scrambled from the wheel, dashed across the street to meet his chief. The Shadow was already in swift motion.

Pushing Moe aside, The Shadow sprang for the wheel of the taxi. Moe was just in time to leap into the back seat when the cab roared away. From his unusual post, the cabby watched The Shadow; saw the cloaked driver produce an automatic, to have the gun in readiness. Whirling the corner, The Shadow spotted the lights of the coupe, four blocks ahead.

THE chase that followed made Moe's own feats of driving fade into insignificance. That fall down the steps had jolted The Shadow badly; his mind was working in one channel only. He was out to overtake the coupe; and his driving skill proved uncanny. The car ahead had dodged into another street. It weaved at every corner; yet The Shadow picked up the trail at every turn.

Sirens were shrilling, telling that the police had learned of the chase. At one corner, coupe and taxicab whizzed by so fast that they left a patrol car

at its post. At another block, the coupe lurched left; the cab followed it so

rapidly that a second patrol car missed the turn completely. There would be more, however; they might cut in from anywhere.

The Shadow had cut the distance to a single block. He lessened that by a third as the coupe took another corner. They were heading toward the river. Ahead, high to the right, loomed the superstructure of an East River bridge. There were only two outlets from the street.

The first was a narrow thoroughfare to the right - a blind alley that was stopped by the high ramp to the bridge. The second, farther on, was a street to the left that ran parallel to the river. That was the outlet that the coupe wanted.

Just as The Shadow viewed this scene, a police car swung in from the thoroughfare that fringed the river. Turning right, the police car was coming, head-on toward the coupe, certain to block its path. Crooks were in a bad spot; for The Shadow was hot behind them. Their only course was to take the little street that went off to the right, even though it ended blind within half a block.

The coupe made the swerve. The Shadow saw quick motion from the man beside the driver. He spied the police car veering wide, hoping to cut into the blind street before The Shadow's cab arrived.

Instantly, The Shadow performed an amazing move; for he had foreseen a catastrophe to come.

Giving the cab the gas, The Shadow beat the police car to the turn. Instead of swinging right, he jammed the brakes and cut hard toward the police car, forcing it to the curb. Skidding around at the entrance of the blind street, The Shadow alone could see events at the inner end of that thoroughfare, for the police car had overrun it.

THE two men had halted their coupe at the buttress of the bridge. Scrambling from the car, they were finding a way from the cul-de-sac, through a broken fence beneath the bridge pillars. Their scurry was quick; they were gone almost as soon as The Shadow spied them. They had need for haste.

Five seconds passed; barely time enough for irate policemen to scramble from their halted car and dash over toward The Shadow's cab. Then came the shock that left the officers rooted.

Unlike The Shadow, they did not expect it.

A sudden flare spouted from the coupe - a fountain of blaze that lighted the dullish structure of the big bridge. Air quivered with that volcanic burst;

hard upon it came a booming roar that echoed from the steel girders above.

The coupe vanished like a bursting cannon cracker. High in the air went chunks of metal, slivers of paling from the board fence. Debris bombed everywhere; strips of rubber tires and loosened cobblestones settled in the space where the shattered car had been.

Windows from old houses answered with their tinkle. Cars passing on the bridge above quivered and came to quick stops. The last sounds came from the fall of the coupes broken fenders; a license plate dropped with them from the darkness above.

Two murderous men had escaped. To halt the chase, they had set off the bomb that they had taken from Zanwood's apartment; it had been stowed in their car when they had gone back to meet The Shadow. Viciously, they had hoped to massacre their pursuers.

It dawned upon the police that the blocking tactics of the cab had saved them; but the rescued officers had no chance to ask questions or give thanks. As they stared, bewildered, into the vacancy of the blind street, they heard

The Shadow's cab pull away.

Heading toward the river, The Shadow took the turn to the left. He chose a weaving course from street to street; then halted. Wearily, he stepped to the curb; motioned Moe to take the wheel. When the cab started again, The Shadow was reclining in the back seat.

Though his head still throbbed, The Shadow had regained his full faculties. That explosion, which he had instinctively foreseen, had been sufficient to dispel the last traces of his daze. He realized that he had carried on the desperate chase through set determination alone.

A grim laugh whispered from The Shadow's lips. It was one of solemn foreboding; it told that he considered his quest a failure, even though he had driven two foemen to maddened measures and saved the lives of the officers in the patrol car.

Menacing men were still at large. Tools of a supercrook would be ready for new murder, if their master commanded. The Shadow could foresee coming doom for others like George Zanwood, if such victims were slated for destruction.

CHAPTER V

FACTS FOR THE LAW

LATE the next afternoon, Commissioner Weston entered the Merrimac Club, where members of the Cobalt Club had found temporary welcome and shelter from the hubbub of Manhattan. Weston merely stopped there to give the place his stamp of approval; but as he looked into the lounge, he spied his friend Cranston seated by the window. Weston approached.

"Hello, Cranston," greeted the commissioner. "I suppose that you have read the newspapers and have, therefore, learned about the second explosion that occurred last night?"

The Shadow nodded, as though the matter scarcely interested him. He was playing the leisurely role of Cranston in his most effective style.

"We took the wrong trail last night," admitted Weston, ruefully. "We should have gone to Zanwood's apartment instead of the Apex Security Co. While we were checking the air-tight alibis of the Apex Co.'s messengers, the actual criminal visited Zanwood's apartment."

"I read about it in the papers," reminded The Shadow. "Apparently, they encountered some trouble there."

"They?" queried Weston. "Just whom do you mean by 'they'? We are searching for a lone criminal - a terrorist who seems to be determined in his purpose of blasting helpless victims into eternity. We are after one man; not several."

With that, Weston decided to explain matters thoroughly to his friend. Seating himself, the commissioner gave the law's version of the whole case.

It began with the previous afternoon, when the janitor of the Everglades Apartments had missed the master keys that he kept in his little office. At dusk, he had heard someone in the office; he had found the keys back where they belonged. Up the street, the janitor had spied a man climbing into an old coupe.

"One man only," emphasized Weston, with a wag of his forefinger. "The janitor could see him through the rear window, taking his place behind the wheel. Then the car drove away."

"The man was tall?" questioned The Shadow, reflectively.

"Of course. The janitor said that he was stooping as he entered his coupe." Weston paused to smile triumphantly. "There you have it, Cranston. A

tall man at Zanwood's apartment. The very man who, later, arrived at the Cobalt Club."

The Shadow made no comment. He saw how the commissioner had deceived himself. Any man of average height would have to stoop to get into the coupe. The man that the janitor had spotted was probably the middleweight. He had duplicated the master keys and had planted the bomb in Zanwood's humidor.

SINCE The Shadow made no comment, Weston proceeded with his details. The janitor figured in the story. He had seen the same coupe cruise past the apartment house, a short while later. Then came the testimony of a patrolman who had seen the same car parked a few blocks away. The coupe had been empty at the time; the patrolman remembered it because it was just barely the required distance from a fire plug. The officer had thought it necessary to measure the car's position.

That incident, according to Weston, proved that the occupant of the coupe had started for the Cobalt Club, choosing to take a taxicab for the finish of the journey, rather than risk the trip in his own car. After handing the bomb to Zanwood, he had come back to his coupe. Since everything was quiet near the Everglades Apartments, he had for some reason decided to enter Zanwood's apartment.

There, the crook had opened gunfire. He had made a hurried flight, riding away in his coupe. A chance taxicab had pursued him, spurred to the chase by the sound of police car sirens. The crook had driven his coupe into a blind alley near a big bridge; there, he had blown up his car and escaped.

The driver of the pursuing cab had missed the turn, probably through bad handling of the wheel. That had been fortunate, though, for the cab had blocked an incoming police car. Neither machine had driven into the blind street; hence both were safe when the blast came.

The Shadow repressed a smile when Weston referred to the bad management of the taxicab. He realized that his departure had made the men from the patrol car fail to appreciate their rescue.

"So you see, Cranston," summed Weston, "we have traced the movements of the man whom we seek. We are after a lone hand; a terrorist who carried a second bomb to blow up some other hapless person like Zanwood."

"You spoke of gunfire at the apartment," reminded The Shadow. "I read about it in the newspapers. That would indicate more than one person, commissioner."

"Not more than one criminal," returned Weston. "Such men would not have been firing at themselves. There was only one man, Cranston; that much is obvious. The gunfire proves simply that the criminal became excited. He must have thought that he heard someone outside of Zanwood's apartment. So he opened fire and ran away."

The Shadow did not appear fully convinced. Weston chuckled, as he added further details.

"The patrolman who saw the parked coupe took its license number," declared

Weston. "That was just before he made the measurement from the fire plug. The janitor recalled the number when we showed it to him. The number tallies with a broken license plate found at the spot where the coupe exploded below the East River bridge. Hence, there is complete evidence to support our well-formed theory."

THIS was news that The Shadow had not yet heard. It aroused his interest. Weston saw a slight fading of the listlessness that dominated the features of Cranston. The change ended; when The Shadow spoke, his question was scarcely more than casual:

"You have traced the owner of the coupe?"

"Yes," replied Weston. "He is a patient in a hospital on Long Island. A man named Burland, who underwent an operation three days ago. He had left his car on a parking lot not far from the hospital.

"The lot is managed by a man named Jerry Luffrey, who also sells used cars. Cardona found that Luffrey thought the coupe was still on the lot. It was

stolen from there and had not been missed. Since Burland had talked about selling it for five hundred dollars, Luffrey will be out that sum.

"However, that is irrelevant. Burland is in the hospital. Luffrey is a loser. Neither knew that the car was gone; and inquiry has failed to show how, when, or by whom it was stolen."

The Shadow became reflective. Weston watched him pleasantly, confident that his friend Cranston was at last willing to concede that the law had done a

thorough job. At last, The Shadow indulged in a quiet smile; made a slight gesture toward the doorway of the lounge room.

"Look, commissioner," he remarked, dryly. "There are some more fossils from the Cobalt Club. The poor chaps look bewildered in their new setting. I am

quite sorry for them."

Weston frowned. He was piqued because The Shadow had changed the subject. He remembered, though, that it was Cranston's usual way.

"I happen to be a member of the Merrimac Club," resumed The Shadow, in the

even tone of Cranston. "Therefore, in a sense, I am a host to my fellow members

of the Cobalt Club. I have tried to make them feel at home. I had long chats with several of them today."

Weston started to rise. He had business elsewhere; not time to waste in listening to the plight of old fogies who had been forced to abandon temporarily the peaceful surroundings of their beloved Cobalt Club. Still in a reflective tone, The Shadow remarked:

"Some of those old chaps are amazingly outspoken. They have good memories,

too. It surprised me, the caustic way in which they criticized George Zanwood, when I happened to mention his name."

"What's that?" Weston was abrupt; then, angrily: "There was nothing against Zanwood. We have looked into his business, thoroughly. He had handled all his transactions in a manner which was entirely aboveboard."

The Shadow nodded his agreement.

"Six years in the security business," added Weston. "A high financial rating. Reputed capital more than one hundred thousand dollars. That sums Zanwood's position. Humph! What fault can those old blatherskites find with that? Won't they recognize a man's merit unless he is worth more than a million dollars?"

"Their criticism of Zanwood was not unfounded," replied The Shadow. "Some of them knew facts concerning his earlier career; details that were learned too

late to prevent Zanwood becoming a life member of the Cobalt Club."

WESTON sat down immediately. He realized that he had missed something

important. In tracing Zanwood's past, Weston had been so impressed with the six-year record that he had gone no further back, except to check the fact that

Zanwood had once been a security salesman.

"Zanwood once sold bonds," declared The Shadow, confirming Weston's knowledge. "He worked for a good house; but he handled freak issues on the side."

"And swindled people with them?" demanded Weston. "Did you learn that, Cranston?"

"No. Oddly, Zanwood was very weak at the game. People seem to have dodged him very easily; which makes it all the more odd."

"Makes what more odd."

"The fact that Zanwood suddenly acquired enough money to go into business on his own."

Weston began to rub his chin. It was odd, when he came to think of it. He had pictured Zanwood as a man who had put his savings into a new business. The more that he considered it, the more he realized that the jump had been too great.

"Zanwood had a friend who also sold wildcat stocks," added The Shadow. "The friend's name was Dudley Mook."

"Then that explains it," decided Weston. "Mook became Zanwood's silent partner."

"Not at all," declared The Shadow. "Mook merely adds to the puzzle. He was

as broke as Zanwood; but when Zanwood suddenly branched out on a big scale in the security business, Mook also took up large enterprises of his own. He went to the Middle West; bought out controlling interests in some important patents.

He has held them ever since."

Weston was totally amazed. Particularly because Zanwood's records contained no mention of a man named Dudley Mook. The obvious answer was that Zanwood and Mook had promptly parted after they came into money - for the very reason that their mutual prosperity would have been twice as suspicious.

An attendant entered the lounge room, paging Mr. Cranston, who was wanted on the telephone. Weston sat alone, staring from the window. He was pondering upon the amazing fact that his friend Cranston, without moving from the club, had gained essential facts that had escaped the law.

While Weston still held to his theory that a lone terrorist was responsible for Zanwood's death, he could at last see a motive for the murder. It was possible that an enemy had risen from the shady past to strike down George Zanwood.

Was that enemy Dudley Mook? Or was Mook another like Zanwood: a man whose own life was jeopardized?

Weston balanced the two questions. He was still pondering when The Shadow returned. The Shadow, too, seemed thoughtful, as though deciding whether or not

to give the commissioner further information. At last, The Shadow acted in Weston's favor. He approached and attracted the commissioner's attention.

"WHEN I learned of Dudley Mook," stated The Shadow, in a casual tone, "I decided to locate him. I understood that Mook makes his headquarters in Detroit. So I had a friend of mine - an investment broker named Rutledge Mann

-
make some long-distance calls to Michigan.

"Mann learned that Mook started for New York, a few days ago; that when he comes here, he stops at the Hotel Goliath. Mook must have changed his plans, for

he was not at the Goliath when Mann telephoned there, today. However, I have

just heard from Mann. He tells me -"

"That Mook has arrived at the Goliath?"

Weston fairly blurted the interruption. His question brought a nod from his companion.

"Yes," replied The Shadow. "Dudley Mook registered at the Hotel Goliath one hour ago. He went out immediately afterward; but they expect him to return at any time. His room number is 2549."

Weston was on his feet.

"We must go to the hotel at once!" he exclaimed. "Come with me, Cranston. I may want you to act as spokesman when we meet Mook. Jove! You have made a lucky find!"

The Shadow was smiling as they left the Merrimac Club. Calculation, plus careful inquiry, had accounted for his discovery of Dudley Mook; but Commissioner Weston was welcome to his opinion that the find had been sheer luck.

If Weston had not appeared, The Shadow would have planned to visit Mook alone, the moment that he learned of the man's arrival in New York. Since Weston had come to the club, The Shadow had decided to give facts to the law.

That step had slightly delayed The Shadow's trip to the Hotel Goliath, where Dudley Mook was still absent. The halt was so short that it seemed unimportant, even to The Shadow.

Yet those few moments were to prove vital in the schemes of a master murderer, whose hidden hand poised ready for another stroke!

CHAPTER VI

DEATH'S NEW BLAST

ALMOST at the time of The Shadow's departure from the Merrimac Club, a stoop-shouldered man entered the glittering lobby of the Hotel Goliath. The arrival was middle-aged, droopy-faced; his eyes seemed tired and his lips painful. His hands had a floppy touch when he rested them on the marble desk and asked for the key to Room 2549.

The clerk told the droopy-faced man that he could get his key on his own floor. The Hotel Goliath employed the system of individual desks on each floor.

The droopy-faced man smiled. He had forgotten about the upstairs floor clerk. This was his first stay at the Goliath, in several months.

Another man had reached the desk just in time to hear the inquiry. This arrival was Joe Cardona. Catching the mention of Room 2549, the stocky inspector hurried after the droopy-faced man and overtook him at the elevators.

Joe was prompt with his inquiry:

"You're Dudley Mook?"

The man blinked; then nodded. As they stepped into the elevator, Cardona flashed his badge and stated his identity. Mook looked perplexed. Cardona noted it.

"You called me at headquarters, didn't you?" he queried. "I found a note there, saying you wanted to see me. Dudley Mook, Room 2549, Hotel Goliath."

"No, no, inspector," protested Mook. "I never called you."

"The message said you could tell me something about George Zanwood."

Mook chewed his lips as the elevator rode upward. Then, in strained tone, he stated:

"I knew George Zanwood. Years ago. I know very little about him. Nothing that would interest the law."

"Maybe it would," supplied Cardona. "Anything about George Zanwood may mean something."

"Come to my room then," suggested Mook, tensely. "Only, I cannot

understand who could have called headquarters."

Cardona thought he understood. Eying Mook, he decided that the tired man had something to tell, and had, therefore, made the call himself. Afterward, Mook had thought things over and become jittery. It happened frequently with volunteer informants. Cardona decided that Mook would talk freely, once he got started; would probably confess that he had called headquarters and lost his nerve later.

THEY reached the twenty-fifth floor. The desk was just to the left of the elevators; branching from it were several passages. Cardona saw the one that led to 2549. While Mook was inquiring for his key, Cardona strode over and took a look along the short passage. It was deserted. The number, 2549, showed on the door at the very end.

Coming back to the desk, Cardona found Mook listening to the girl who was seated there. The floor clerk was looking up toward Mook, telling him about a visitor who had called to see him.

"He was a young man, Mr. Mook," said the girl. "I told him that you were not in your room. I even rang your telephone. He said that you were probably asleep."

Mook looked puzzled. He could not place the visitor. Shaking his head, he picked up his big room key. Everything about the Hotel Goliath was massive, like its name, even to the door locks and the room keys.

"Wait a minute, Mr. Mook," suggested Cardona. Then, to the girl:

"What did this caller look like?"

"He was quite tall," replied the clerk. "His face was squarish, particularly his chin. It was quite broad and square."

"Was his face flattish?"

"That could describe it," replied the girl, "though he was not ugly. His hair was dark-brown; so were his eyes."

"And he was dark-complexioned -"

The girl thought; then nodded.

"He was young," she added. "Certainly under thirty. He talked very briskly; and he insisted on going to the end of the corridor to knock at Mr. Mook's door. I heard him rapping there, quite loudly. He would stop for ten or fifteen seconds and then begin again. At last, I had to send an elevator operator to tell him it was against the rules."

"Then the man stopped knocking?"

"Yes. He seemed convinced that Mr. Mook was out."

MAKING notes of the clerk's description of the man who had pounded at the door of 2549, Cardona could see a resemblance between him and the mysterious assassin who had handed the bomb to Zanwood.

Linking these descriptions, Cardona came to the assumption that Mook's visitor might be Zanwood's assassin. The connection was a good one, for it allowed for nervousness exhibited by Dudley Mook. Whether or not Mook had called headquarters, he had certainly acknowledged an acquaintanceship with Zanwood.

Cardona remembered the second bomb that had exploded in the abandoned coupe. It struck him that that bomb could have been intended for Dudley Mook.

Looking at Mook, Cardona finally classed him as an innocent man; an unfortunate who stood in danger. Mook, however, misunderstood Cardona's gaze. Again chewing his lips, Mook showed that he felt himself under suspicion. He began a sincere protest:

"I tell you, inspector, I did not call your office. I swear it!"

"Then who did?" demanded Cardona, seeing a good chance to begin his quiz. "Someone else who knows Zanwood?"

"I have no idea," returned Mook. "George Zanwood and I have scarcely seen each other in the past six years. Whatever Zanwood has done during that period has been his own affair. I read of his death; I was sorry for it. But it cannot possibly concern me. Someone is using me, inspector."

"I get it," nodded Cardona. "Your idea is that Zanwood's murderer is trying to throw us off the trail. Don't worry about that, Mr. Mook. I'm not classing you as a suspect. I'm just wondering if you're due for trouble, like Zanwood was."

Mook's droopy face quivered. The suggestion made the man shaky, as Cardona had intended it. The room key rattled against its tag as Mook gripped it in his trembling hand. With an effort, Mook gave his head a violent shake of denial. "No, no," he insisted. "It couldn't be that! I have no enemies. I don't want to be mixed in this."

"You won't be," promised Cardona, "if you tell what you know about Zanwood."

"I'll make a statement. I'll give the few details that I can. But I must have time to think; to recall Zanwood, when I knew him, years ago. If we go to my room, inspector -"

"That's just where we are going. We'll talk there, Mr. Mook."

CARDONA knew that the corridor was clear, for he had looked along it. He wanted to be certain on one other point; namely, that the afternoon's visitor had not entered 2549. To assure himself on that, Cardona turned again to the clerk.

"You're positive that the young man knocked steadily?" asked Joe. "He didn't stop a while, so that he could try to unlock the door?"

"The knocking was steady," affirmed the girl. "As I said before, he never paused longer than a dozen seconds; just as anyone would do if expecting a response."

The repeated testimony settled it for Cardona. Since the visitor could not have entered 2549; since he had left nothing in the corridor, the place was certainly clear.

Turning about, Cardona started to tell Mook to accompany him, then blinked when he saw that the stoop-shouldered man was no longer beside him. Joe shot a quick glance toward the elevators, as if suspecting that Mook, had tried to give him the slip. The girl clerk smiled.

"Mr. Mook went to his room," she said. "I saw him start while you were speaking to me. The carpets on these floors are so thick that it is impossible to hear footsteps."

"Thanks," returned Cardona, gruffly. "I'll join Mr. Mook in his room. If anyone calls up, put it through. I'll want to talk to them."

Stepping away from the low desk, Cardona started quick strides toward the short corridor where Mook's room was located.

As Joe stepped away, the door of an elevator slid smoothly open. Cardona did not hear it; he was too anxious to overtake Mook. Hence Joe did not see the two arrivals who stepped forth - both persons whom he would immediately have recognized.

The first was Commissioner Ralph Weston. Close behind him was The Shadow, whom Joe Cardona would have, at present, identified as Lamont Cranston. Both were turning toward the desk; they saw Cardona and recognized him.

Weston was too astonished to blurt a call to the ace inspector. The commissioner was amazed to discover that Cardona had arrived here ahead of him.

Nor did The Shadow give a shout to Cardona. He did more than that.

Instantly, The Shadow recognized that Dudley Mook must have returned; that the man from Detroit was either in his room or on the way there. The fact that Cardona had learned of Dudley Mook told that something out of the ordinary had happened. It smacked of the machinations that marked the methods of a supercrook. It meant grim danger, with which The Shadow preferred to cope before Joe Cardona could step into trouble.

THRUSTING Weston aside, The Shadow took a long, swift leap across the hallway. Cardona did not hear the rapid strides because of the thick-tufted carpeting that covered the entire floor. Joe's first knowledge of The Shadow's arrival came just as he was making the turn into the short corridor.

There, The Shadow's long arms swept forward and clamped Cardona's shoulders with a powerful, restraining grip. Cardona had one momentary glimpse of Dudley Mook, stooping at the door of 2549 to insert his big key in the lock;

then Joe felt himself whipped backward. Sprawling to the floor of main hall, in the direction of the desk, he saw the immobile face of Lamont Cranston just above him.

Those glimpses were mere snatches that Cardona was to recall later. The thing that happened next was vastly more important.

Cardona's sprawl was transformed to a quivering jolt by a huge roar that came from the short corridor. It was a sudden blast that sent the air from the passage outward with galelike force, carrying the deafening repercussion of a new explosion. Cardona felt the carpeted floor wobble beneath him. He saw Cranston's figure waver; heard the frightened shriek of the girl at the desk.

Flattened, Cardona recovered and came to his feet. He saw The Shadow helping Commissioner Weston to rise.

It was The Shadow again, swift despite his pose of Cranston, who was the first to reach the corridor that led to 2549. As The Shadow stopped there, Weston and Cardona joined him, to gawk past his shoulders.

The end of the corridor was gone. The door marked "2549" had totally vanished, with the side walls that adjoined it. Through the gap, the viewers could see the room; its furniture was wrecked, its windows shattered.

Even the floor at the doorway had been wiped to nothingness, leaving a gap to a corridor below it. Amid the settling debris, there was no remnant of a human being.

Dudley Mook had been blasted to eternity; wiped from the earth as completely as George Zanwood had been banished the night before.

Only The Shadow's quick intervention had saved Joe Cardona from the same destruction.

CHAPTER VII

THE VARIED QUEST

A FEW hours later, Commissioner Ralph Weston was seated in the small office that formed a part of his apartment. Across the desk was Joe Cardona. Seated in a corner chair was The Shadow, more leisurely than ever in his pose as Cranston. He was listening to a heated discussion between Weston and Cardona.

"Before we discuss the murderer further," declared Weston, bluntly, "there are questions that must be settled. The first is: How did he set a bomb for Dudley Mook without going inside the man's room?"

"I can't answer that one," admitted Cardona, sourly. "I'll take the girl's testimony though, that he had no chance to get inside. It's her business to keep track of what goes on along her floor."

"The girl must have been wrong," decided Weston, his tone stubborn. "Let's settle it that way."

"I can't agree with you, commissioner," insisted Cardona. "I questioned her twice -"

"Suppose we let Cranston settle it," interrupted Weston. "He has heard us argue back and forth for the last half hour. After all, his opinion should be worthwhile. He showed remarkable intuition when he saved you tonight, Cardona."

The Shadow smiled slightly from his corner.

"That was nothing," he declared. "Merely an instinctive reaction, commissioner. Last night, I grabbed you and Throckmorton when I saw Zanwood take the bag. Tonight, my nerves were still on edge. Seeing Cardona on the move, I made a dash and grabbed him. The explosion happened to follow. If it had not come, my action would have been ridiculous."

"We appreciate your modesty, Cranston," remarked the commissioner. "We would also like to hear your opinion. How did the murderer get into Mook's room?"

The Shadow pondered a few moments. Weston watched him light a thin cigar. After a few puffs on the panetela, The Shadow spoke in Cranston's tone.

"The man never entered Mook's room," he decided, "nor did he leave a bomb in the corridor. The results of the explosion showed that it must have occurred

at the middle of the doorway. That gives us the logical answer. The charge was placed in the large keyhole."

WESTON started to make caustic comment; then stopped himself. He knew the powerful effects that could be produced by a small quantity of TNT. Cardona was quick to accept The Shadow's theory.

"That would have done it, commissioner!" exclaimed the ace. "The fellow souped the keyhole. Shoved a powerful pill in there while he kept on knocking at the door, It took nerve; but we're dealing with a man that's got plenty of it."

Weston was almost convinced; finally he shook his head.

"That would not account for the explosion," he declared. "There could have been no time fuse; nor any wire to supply an electric spark."

The Shadow was drawing a key from his pocket. He handed it to Cardona, then looked approvingly at the thick rug on the floor of Weston's office.

"Walk over to the door, inspector," suggested The Shadow. "Shuffle your feet a bit, and don't step off the rug. Put this key into the lock."

Cardona obliged. When he neared the door, he stretched to touch the key to the lock. A spark clicked as metal contacted metal.

"The carpets at the Hotel Goliath are very thick," reminded The Shadow. "They cover every inch of the hallway floors. All that Mook had to do was apply

his key to the lock."

"That explains it!" exclaimed Weston. "You are right, Cranston! Static electricity supplied the spark. Since your mind is working so keenly, perhaps you can answer the next question that has puzzled me."

The Shadow flicked ashes from his cigar, waiting for the question. It came.

"Why did someone call Cardona?" asked Weston. "What was the purpose in

having him meet Mook?"

"Simply to get rid of him," replied The Shadow, calmly. "Cardona is a competent investigator."

"But if Mook had talked -"

"Mook would not have talked. Nor could Cardona arrest him with no evidence. Whoever called headquarters, wanted Cardona to join Mook, hoping that

the two had gone to that room at the Goliath. If they had talked elsewhere, Cardona would have learned nothing from Mook; and Mook would have been killed later, when he went back to his room. It was merely a chance to get two birds instead of one."

Weston thought that over for a while. He agreed.

"You are right, Cranston," he declared. "There is a deep mystery behind these murders. George Zanwood and Dudley Mook were slain for the same reason; and it dates back six years, to the time when each gained a huge sum of money through some illicit scheme. Mook did not guess that the past was the cause of Zanwood's death; therefore, Mook would never have told the truth about Zanwood, because he would have incriminated himself."

THE brisk summary brought a slight smile from The Shadow. Weston had gathered up all of The Shadow's own suggestions and inferences, to come to the very conclusion that The Shadow had held all along.

"We are ready to discuss the appearance of the murderer," decided Weston. "Let me see the completed chart that you brought from headquarters, Cardona."

Joe produced the chart; he unrolled it like a map and hung it on the wall.

The chart showed a head and shoulders, larger than lifesize, which had been sketched in color by rapid, capable artists. In the space beneath the portrait were tabulated statements, adding other items of description.

The portrait showed a wide, flat-featured face, distinguished by its broad, square-shaped jaw. Eyes were dark-brown; above them were bushy eyebrows and hair of the same color: dark-brown. Cheek bones were high; broad enough to correspond with the face. The complexion was sallow.

"An excellent composograph," approved Weston, consulting a mimeographed sheet that Cardona handed him. "One point, though. Are you sure about the heavy eyebrows?"

"The cab starter remembered that detail."

"Good. Yes, I see that you have checked it here."

As an afterthought, Weston put a question to Cardona:

"What about this chap Luffrey, who owns the parking lot? I see no mention of any descriptive details supplied by him."

"Luffrey never saw the murderer," returned Cardona. "The coupe was stolen while Luffrey was away. He goes up to Connecticut pretty near every day."

"And none of his men saw a suspicious character about the lot?"

"Not one of them. We grilled the whole bunch this afternoon. Luffrey helped us; but they were pretty dumb. They sleep on the job most of the time. Luffrey will probably fire half of them."

SOON afterward, The Shadow left Weston's. Later, he arrived in his own headquarters, a black-walled room that served as his sanctum. There, beneath a bluish light that shone on a polished table, The Shadow studied the list from which the police picture had been formed.

There was no question as to the accuracy of certain details. Cardona had produced the testimony of new observers: a panhandler who had seen the tall man

at a corner not far from the Cobalt Club; a taxi driver who had picked up a

fare

suspiciously like the assassin who had finished Zanwood.

As for the man who had planted TNT in Mook's door, the floor clerk's description was amplified by the doorman outside the Hotel Goliath. Like the janitor at the Everglades, the Goliath doorman remembered seeing a man stoop hurriedly to board a cab outside the hotel. He also recalled a square-jawed face that peered from the taxi; but the light was dim and he could describe the

features, hair and eyes only as darkish.

Half closing his eyes, The Shadow pictured the chart that he had seen at Weston's. It showed youth, along with its other features. The portrait fully depicted a rugged young athlete, whose six-foot body would have weighed about one hundred and eighty pounds. The Shadow could foresee that the picture might lead to the arrest of many suspects; but none would be him the law wanted.

The police had simply confused the descriptions of two men, who had just enough in common to make the law think there was only one. The Shadow had encountered both of them in the dark; he knew something of their comparative sizes.

Since Weston had insisted that there was but one suspect, a lone-hand assassin, The Shadow had decided to let the police follow their own theory. He was positive that an unknown schemer lay behind the game - a master crook who used two active workers.

For the present, however, it was best that The Shadow should follow the trail alone. Every time the police had come close to the master crook's active workers, The Shadow had been forced to stage a rescue. Commissioner Weston, the

officers in the patrol car, Joe Cardona - all owed their lives to The Shadow.

Hence, The Shadow began a task that he intended to keep strictly for his own use, until the trail developed further.

THE SHADOW produced a large box that contained many small compartments, each filled with little blocks like the portions of a jig-saw puzzle. Each of these pieces was cut square; it was a simple task to fit them.

One compartment contained eyes of varied shapes and hues; another had noses of varying sorts. There were portions of lips, cheeks, chins, ears, hair - everything needed to form the portrait of a human face. The Shadow began to choose the labeled fragments that he wanted.

Oddly, he was performing two tasks at once. He placed some of the pieces to the left of the box; others to the right. Those to the left fitted the descriptions of the man who had come to the Cobalt Club; the others, the one who had visited the Hotel Goliath.

Minutes became hours while The Shadow continued his arduous task. Comparing descriptions, he made subtle changes, such as one less shade of brown

to the hair of the picture on the right. When the job was complete, The Shadow surveyed his handiwork.

On the left, he had the picture of a long, darkish face with rounded jaw. Eyes that were almost blackish in hue peered from beneath heavy brows. Those eyes were deep-set, for they had high cheek bones beneath them. Black hair topped off the picture.

The face looked oddly familiar. The Shadow visualized it above the straight shoulders of a wiry body. He considered the man as six feet tall.

Leaving the table, The Shadow returned, bearing a portfolio filled with photographs. They were not the sort that the police would possess. These were pictures of men who had gained odd reputations in foreign lands: adventurers and soldiers of fortune.

Going through the file, The Shadow came to the picture of a man in fancy uniform, with rows of medals on his chest. The photograph was ten years old; it

showed the man to be slightly more than thirty. The picture was that of Captain Stanley Chabron, commander of the presidential bodyguard in the Central American republic.

Chabron had held that post only temporarily; the records that went with the portrait did not tell why he had been ousted. However, they gave a list of some of Chabron's other activities. The free-lance captain had stirred up revolutions in several small countries, and had been on the pay roll of temporary dictators in others.

Most important, though, was the similarity between Chabron's photograph and the patchwork picture that The Shadow had formed. The two were almost identical. Moreover, Chabron's size fitted specifications. The "youngish" man of forty who had visited the Cobalt Club could easily have been Stanley Chabron.

The Shadow's laugh was whispered. He had gained this link from a clue of his own; those Spanish oaths that the wiry man had uttered during the struggle in the apartment. The Shadow had scored a bull's-eye. He had found the man whom he must hunt in New York.

THAT settled, The Shadow studied the second portrait, to the right of the box. Chances were that it was a correct one. It showed a squarish face, well-molded, straight-profiled. Eyes and hair were of dark-brown; the complexion tanned rather than sallow. The Shadow considered this man as under thirty years in age; slightly over five feet eight in height, and broad-shouldered.

The man's vocation was probably that of a mining engineer, a profession not represented in The Shadow's file of photographs. There would be places, however, where this man might be more easily located than Chabron. Engineers were clannish; had their own clubs in Manhattan.

Harry Vincent, an agent of The Shadow, had posed as an engineer on certain occasions in the past. It would be Harry's job to haunt the proper meeting places in search for the second man The Shadow wanted.

The bluish light clicked off. The Shadow's task was complete. The blackness of the sanctum caught the tones of a whispered laugh. Shrouded walls echoed the sinister tones that marked The Shadow's departure.

The law had begun its manhunt. The Shadow had gone the police twice better.

CHAPTER VIII

TOOLS OF CRIME

THE blackness of The Shadow's sanctum had covered those pieced together faces that peered from the table. Sunlight revealed them side by side, at noon the next day; but not in the spot where The Shadow had left them.

The faces that the sun's rays showed were living visages, above a secluded corner in a sidewalk cafe, where blue sky showed above and a row of boxed shrubbery hid the table and those who occupied it from the view of chance passers.

The two men who had served as tools of crime were having lunch together.

One was Captain Stanley Chabron, older than The Shadow's filed photograph had shown him, but very much like the pieced picture that The Shadow had put together. Chabron was tall and slender for his size. His hundred and fifty pounds were all bone and muscle. He was the sort who would appear younger by night, for sunlight displayed lines in his cheeks, deep wrinkles in his

forehead. By day, Chabron showed his age of forty-five.

His long, high-cheeked face displayed a pleased grin that showed tobacco-stained teeth not mentioned in the police descriptions. Inclining his head forward, Chabron rested his rounded chin in a long-fingered band, while he watched the man across the table.

The younger man had brown hair and eyes that were distinctly lighter than the hotel floor clerk had described them. The Shadow, though, had guessed their shade almost exactly, by allowing for the artificial light in the hotel. The young man's face was wide, but well-proportioned, considering the broad shoulders beneath them. His profile was well-formed, but straight; therefore, his nose and brows were not conspicuous when viewed full face. The description "flattish," however, did not fit him.

Like Chabron, the young man was smiling. His broad lips formed the slightest of upward curves, almost matching the contour of his squarish chin. As he produced a wallet to pay the lunch check, the young man dropped a piece of pasteboard. He picked it up, replaced it in his wallet. The card was a guest membership to a New York engineers' club, made out to Gary Leed.

As soon as a waiter had taken Leed's lunch money, Chabron produced a newspaper from beneath the table. He spread it so that he and his companion could study a large picture on the front page. The portrait was the police composograph. Beneath it, in large type, were printed details.

"Approximate height, six, feet," read Chabron. "Weight, one hundred and eighty pounds. Broad shoulders, carried well back. Say, Gary!" Chabron pretended mock alarm. "There's something that fits both of us. We carry our shoulders back."

"We'll have to slouch around a bit," snorted Leed. "Some bad guesser as to height and weight might spot us because we stand up straight."

Chabron threw the newspaper to the cement; produced a pair of Cuban cigars and tendered one to Leed.

"They've botched it nicely," observed the tall man. "My height, my forehead, eyebrows, nose and checks mixed with your hair, your eyes, mouth and chin. Your shoulders to go with my height."

"Which makes the picture look like neither of us," added Leed. "So we can forget it, Stan. The more corrections they try to make, the worse it will become. Unless -"

Leed paused. Chabron's eyes watched him sharply. Leed gave a shrug of his broad shoulders and completed:

"Unless they guess that there are two of us. That might put them on the right track."

"They'll never get on the right track."

"They might get off the wrong one, Stan. Particularly if Jerry Luffrey did some talking."

Chabron leaned across the table and spoke in a harsh undertone.

"Luffrey never got a good look at me," he declared. "It was dark when I talked to him. We sat in that car of Burland's and made the deal right there. I slipped him the thousand dollars; he climbed out and counted it. He gave me the nod and I drove away."

"Maybe he didn't see you closely," objected Leed, "but he told you where to get that truck in Weehawken."

Chabron mouthed a favorite oath in Spanish.

"Nobody will identify that truck, after I'm through with it tonight." Chabron stabbed his words like rapier thrusts. "I'll fake the license plates

on
it. Luffrey has kept his mouth shut, so far. He'll be clammier than ever,
after
he reads tomorrow's newspapers."

Chabron's words carried conviction. Leed gave a slight nod; then stated:
"Getting the car and the truck was your job, Stan. Fixing the bombs was
mine. You haven't criticized my work, so I won't find fault with yours. Where
we've teamed together, we've done well."

There was a definite significance to Leed's tone. It made Chabron
remember
the battle in Zanwood's apartment. The tall man showed his ugly toothed smile.
Though strangers to New York, both he and Leed had guessed the identity of
their antagonist. They knew that they had battled with The Shadow.

GLANCING down beside the table, Chabron saw the staring face of the
police
picture, that portrait that had proven worse than useless. It looked funny
enough to bring a chuckle to his lips; but the mirth died suddenly.

Chabron had gained an unpleasant thought. So far, he and Leed had
profited
by the police theory that only one man was responsible for crime. The law had
no
proof that there had been two; but The Shadow did have. That meant that The
Shadow might be heard from again, in a way more potent than pleasant.

"Thinking of The Shadow, Stan?"

Leed's low-tone query came across the table. Chabron nodded; his eyes
showed a glower.

"I was thinking of him, too," observed Leed. "There'd be trouble if he
pinned down Jerry Luffrey."

That comment brought a grin from Chabron.

"That would be great," declared the tall man. "That's the one thing I've
prepared for. Didn't the chief tell you?"

A headshake from Leed.

"Skip Duggle is in New York," explained Chabron. "He's the A-1 ammunition
runner. Has his crew here with him; but he doesn't know I'm in town. I called
him up - he'd never have guessed the voice was mine - and tipped him off that
The Shadow was out to queer his little racket. I told him to cover Jerry
Luffrey; maybe he'd spot The Shadow there. So Skip will take care of The
Shadow, if he shows up."

"Which makes it jake," grinned Leed. "You should have told me that
before."

The two arose. They strolled from the cafe, followed a side street and
reached the avenue beyond.

Leed stopped by a taxicab that was empty, its driver lunching in a
near-by
hash-house.

"I'm taking a cab," remarked Leed. "There'll be a couple of minutes
before
the driver gets here. Just a few words to make everything certain. We'll team
again, like we did with Zanwood."

"And intended to do with Mook," reminded Chabron, "but he didn't show up
the day that we expected."

"We teamed well enough," complimented Leed. "Your call to headquarters
was
neat. It nearly pulled Cardona into the soup. Regarding tonight, though. If
you
need me, give me a call at Hedden's. I'll be up there, instead of at the
club."

"Good," nodded Chabron. "That's a swell place to reach you. Too bad you

can't call me at Tyrick's. It wouldn't do, though."

LEED'S silence showed that he agreed. Whoever Hedden and Tyrick were; why it was all right to call the former's house but not the latter's, neither Chabron nor Leed thought it necessary to explain. It was plain that the two were following a set routine; a grim game that had been patterned for them by a superplotter whom they served.

Murder was their game. They were going through a list. Zanwood and Mook had been obliterated. The law had been left baffled and confused. So far as Chabron and Leed knew, The Shadow was bewildered likewise; but they had seen the weak link in their chain. That was the matter of Jerry Luffrey, owner of the Long Island parking lot.

A hidden chief of crime had seen the weak link also. That was why he had approved Chabron's suggestion to put a crew of angered munitions runners on the lookout for The Shadow. As crooks sized it, Luffrey would not talk, even if The Shadow tried to force him. Nevertheless, The Shadow was provided for, if he attempted to reach Luffrey.

The way seemed fully cleared for murder that was due tonight: a third death to follow those of Zanwood and Mook.

CHAPTER IX

ONE MAN TALKS

THE master crook had no inkling that The Shadow had advanced far along the trail; that Luffrey, as a point of contact, was The Shadow's third choice. All that day, The Shadow was engaged in search for two others, whom he considered as actually important. Had The Shadow, or any of his agents, encountered either Stanley Chabron or Gary Leed, recognition would have been immediate.

Unwittingly, the two tools balked The Shadow's hunt.

Chabron, instead of visiting the logical places where a man of his ilk would be found, decided upon business elsewhere. Leed did not appear at the engineers' club where Harry Vincent had posted himself. Thus, when dusk arrived, The Shadow's cause had scored a blank.

Since there had been murder on two successive nights, The Shadow knew that a third crime might threaten. That was why he resorted to a chance that promised comparatively little: a visit to Jerry Luffrey.

The owner of the Long Island parking lot was seldom there. Luffrey's principal business was the purchase and sale of used cars; lately, he had been doing business in Connecticut instead of working against Long Island competition. It was after dinner when he arrived at the parking lot. He stayed there only long enough to check on the day's receipts.

Without directly questioning his employees, Luffrey learned that there had been no further visits from the police. Pleased by that information, Luffrey drove to his house, which was located near Long Island Sound. He parked his car in the garage and went into the house.

Luffrey's home was a modest one. It was surrounded by a large area of open ground, solely because he had been the only person to build in a poorly

developed section. Luffrey, himself, was the type of man who preferred solitude. He was a chunkily built husky with a face like a bulldog. It would have been difficult to picture a man more close-mouthed than Jerry Luffrey.

That had impressed Joe Cardona. When Luffrey had made a direct, short-clipped statement, Joe had accepted it as complete. Luffrey had disclaimed all knowledge of how Burland's coupe had been stolen. There had seemed nothing else that he could say.

IF Luffrey had made a misstatement to the law, it had not weighed on his conscience. When he sat down in his plainly furnished front parlor, Luffrey had the appearance of a man who would worry at nothing.

Soon after he lighted a pipe, Luffrey heard the low throb of a passing automobile. He listened, to make sure that the car had gone by; then picked up a newspaper and began to read the accounts of recent bombings. Luffrey's face showed no change of expression.

Outside the house, there were whispers beneath the shelter of trees. Two men were in conference: one seated at the wheel of a parked roadster, the other standing beside the car. They were well away from the front of the house; its door was not visible from the spot where they waited.

"That was Skip went by, Luke," confided the man at the wheel of the roadster. He referred to the car that Luffrey had heard pass. "Better take a look around, before he comes by again."

"How long will he be, Sarge?" queried Luke. "Ten minutes?"

"More likely fifteen."

"I'll stick here a couple of minutes, then."

Ears heard those comments. A blackened shape glided from darkness close by the roadster. Unseen, it approached the house. That shrouded figure was The Shadow.

On a visit of his own to Luffrey's, The Shadow had come upon the two posted members of "Skip" Duggle's crew. Recognizing that their duty was an outside one, The Shadow came to the correct assumption that they were expecting his visit. That known, The Shadow would find a way to handle them.

His present mission, however, concerned Jerry Luffrey. The Shadow had ample time to complete the preliminaries before Luke began to patrol about the house.

SOON afterward, Jerry Luffrey heard a slight tingle of the front doorbell.

Laying his pipe aside, the chunky man arose and went out into the hall. He listened at the front door a moment, then yanked the door open. The dim hall light showed a square package lying on the step.

Luffrey grunted a laugh; picked up the package and closed the door. He decided that the package was an order from a local store, something that his wife had ordered before going into New York, where she frequently visited her sister. Local delivery boys had a habit of rolling up on their bicycles, ringing the bell and riding away, leaving only the package as token of their brief stay.

Taking the package into the parlor, Luffrey felt its weight and decided it was a large ash tray of a type that he had long wanted. He tore off the paper wrapper, found a well-tied cardboard box within. The box was cubical, measuring about six inches in each dimension.

Luffrey thrust the wrapping paper in the fireplace. Since the room seemed

chill, he added some lengths of kindling and a log. He applied a match; while the fire crackled, he turned to the table and cut the string of the package with a knife. With both hands, Luffrey was about to lift the cover of the cardboard box when something stopped him.

Into Luffrey's range of vision crept a black-gloved hand that moved like a detached creature. For an instant, Luffrey mistook it for a mammoth spider. He jerked away as the hand clamped itself upon the wedge box top. Luffrey saw an arm beyond the hand. Looking up, he faced the gaze of eyes that burned upon him.

The slight tightening of Luffrey's lips told that he recognized the cloaked figure of The Shadow.

A slight breeze from an opened window told how the cloaked visitor had entered during Luffrey's visit to the front door.

Luffrey's instant recognition of The Shadow did not mark the parking lot owner as a man of crime. Many had heard of The Shadow; knew how ceaselessly he toiled to ferret out facts concerning crime. Luffrey's expression was one of surprise, rather than admission of guilt. After it had ended, Luffrey tightened.

"I know why you're here," he told The Shadow, in harsh tone. "You want to ask me about that car that was swiped from my parking lot. I've told all I know about it! The police have the straight story."

The Shadow's eyes maintained their steady gaze. Luffrey wavered; then displayed anger.

"I know nothing, I tell you!" he insisted. "Burland's car was gone when the cops came to look for it. It's their job to guess who grabbed it."

LUFFREY halted. He knew that The Shadow was trying to shake his nerve. Just in time, the chunky man resorted to the close-mouthed policy that was always his best bet. Lips shut tight, he faced The Shadow and waited.

He was a smart customer, Luffrey. In the back of his head, he remembered facts that he had heard about The Shadow. Crooks, alone, were The Shadow's game. Any man clear of crime had nothing to fear from the cloaked avenger. No one had the goods on Jerry Luffrey. He was willing to play the game through, even when faced by The Shadow.

To show his indifference toward The Shadow's visit, Luffrey tightened his grip on the top of the pasteboard box. He prepared to wrench the cover free. The pressure of The Shadow's hand prevented it. A second gloved hand moved forward. Luffrey shifted back; stared downward to watch The Shadow's action.

Gloved fingers pried up one corner of the box top. The other hand slid through; it seemed to probe beneath the cover. Then the first hand whipped the lid away. A hoarse gasp came from Luffrey.

Inside the cardboard box was a shiny bomb. The Shadow's fingers had found a lever; they were holding the detonator to prevent its spring from snapping. Had Luffrey lifted the box lid, the detonator would have clicked!

Luffrey wilted. He shook as he gripped the table edge; his voice became pleading. He saw his life hanging by the mere pressure of The Shadow's fingers.

"I'll talk!" gulped Luffrey. "I wouldn't have, only the guy has double-crossed me - he's trying to get rid of me -"

He halted. The Shadow did not budge. Still restraining the spring lever as

a threat, he gave the whispered command:

"Proceed!"

"The guy came to the parking lot about a week ago," declared Luffrey.

"Got

talking to me while I was busy; I didn't hardly see him. He was a tall guy, with

a hard voice; wanted to know what I had in the way of a good coupe, cheap.

"I pointed over to Burland's car. The guy got into it. I found him there, trying the wheel, and I sat down in the dark alongside of him. I told him about

Burland being in the hospital, wanting to get rid of the car for five hundred bucks.

"That's when the guy made his proposition. A thousand bucks flat, if I'd let him drive the bus away and say it was stolen if anybody ever asked me. I took the money and gave him the nod. I've kept mum since; but the mug don't trust me. That's why he sent this."

By "this," Luffrey referred to the bomb. Sight of it had completely changed his mistaken idea of loyalty; Luffrey had swung over to The Shadow's side. He was hopeful that the move would help him.

"I couldn't blab," he explained, "because I was in five hundred smackers. The cops would've pinched me if I'd told the straight story. But I'm no accomplice. I swear to that! Who the guy was, I don't know. I only thought he wanted to drive somewhere without being recognized.

"I don't know what his racket is, but I'll give you the only guess I've got. He may be running bootleg gasoline in from Jersey. That's because he wanted to know where he could buy a truck over in Weehawken. I told him to try Cassler's Used Car lot."

LUFFREY ended his statement; licked his thick lips and looked up to meet The Shadow's gaze.

"That's all I know," Luffrey whined. "Honest! Only I'm in a jam. The guy may send another bomb!"

"You have five hundred dollars," reminded The Shadow, in a tone that carried accusation. "Spend it on a trip from New York."

The suggestion clicked with Luffrey; brought a hopeful gleam to his terrified eyes.

"I'll do that!" he promised. "I'll pack and start into New York. I'll get my wife and we'll grab a train for Chicago. I've been telling her we'd go for a

vacation there. Only" - Luffrey's tone was plaintive - "only what about this bomb? And what about while I'm getting packed? Suppose the guy is around here, waiting to hear this place blow?"

"I shall handle the bomb," replied The Shadow. "Prepare for your trip. Your safety will be guaranteed."

The steadiness of The Shadow's tone convinced Luffrey. Shakily, the fellow

hurried from the room. The Shadow could hear him stumbling up the stairs to the

second floor. A low-toned laugh followed. The Shadow's guarantee of Luffrey's future safety had been a simple one, for the reason that the man was under no immediate threat.

The Shadow lifted his finger from the detonator. The lever clicked, but the bomb did not explode. Picking the rounded object from the box, The Shadow twisted it. The bomb unscrewed in the center. Lifting the top half, The Shadow revealed the interior filled with a metallic powder that had given the bomb its necessary weight.

Stepping to the fireplace, he dumped the powder there. The pulverized substance merely added greenish crackles to the flames.

The bomb was a harmless one that The Shadow himself had placed on Luffrey's door step.

Stacking the broken hemispheres one within the other, The Shadow placed the collapsed bomb beneath his cloak. The ruse had worked. The fake bomb had made Jerry Luffrey talk in a hurry. The Shadow had pictured Luffrey's part correctly; had known that the man might stubbornly stick to his story about

the stolen car. All that Luffrey had needed was the proper urge. Supposed evidence of a double cross had supplied it. Luffrey's details regarding the shattered coupe were valueless; but his statement regarding the truck in Weehawken promised a new trail. It was one that The Shadow intended to follow with as little delay as possible. That meant immediate work ahead. The Shadow had not forgotten Skip Duggle's outside watchers.

The Shadow could easily slip past those crooks, in order to avoid delay; but that might produce unfortunate consequences. Skip and his men might suspect something when Luffrey appeared and started a quick trip to Manhattan. Not having seen The Shadow, they might go after Luffrey.

The only course was to settle those lurking men of crime. Planning that task, The Shadow saw how it could be accomplished without losing time in his race toward Weehawken. Again, the walls of Luffrey's parlor caught the whispers of The Shadow's laugh. The sound ended in emptiness. The Shadow had moved forth into the night.

CHAPTER X

THE JERSEY TRAIL

DURING The Shadow's interview with Luffrey, outside lurkers had not been idle. One, in particular, was on the move. He was Luke, the rowdy whose job was to prowl about the premises.

Though well away from the house, Luke had glimpsed light when Luffrey opened the front door. On that account, he narrowed his circuit. He went around the house in spiral fashion, coming closer with each trip. His third round brought him almost beneath the parlor windows.

Peering over the sill, Luke saw that the window was opened. He saw the fire crackling on the hearth, throwing off its last tinges of greenish sparks. Luke wondered why Luffrey was not in the room. He was puzzled also why a fire had been started to relieve the chill, while the window remained open. Luke, stretched farther; his shoulders, like his head, were outlined against the light.

A swish came from the outside darkness, almost by the house wall. It arrived before Luke could twist away from the window. A living battering-ram bowled the startled rowdy from his feet. Luke smacked the turf; felt the grip of gloved fingers on his neck, the weight of knees against his chest. Groggy from a thump that met the back of his head, Luke subsided.

Out in the roadster, "Sarge" craned from above the wheel. The patrol was not his job; but he could see something unusual, and he wondered why Luke had not reported it.

A light had appeared in a second-floor window. Against a drawn window shade, Sarge could see the motions of a chunky figure, which he knew was Luffrey's. The man was busy at something; his shaded outline proved it. Sarge had a hunch that Luffrey was packing, and doing the job in a hurry.

"Luke!"

Sarge uttered the name hoarsely, as he heard a sound beside the roadster. He thought that his pal had returned; he leaned farther out when he received no reply. Like Luke's head at the window, Sarge's formed an outline, but only when viewed from below. Sarge's background was the sky, which carried a slight glow from the distant lights of Manhattan. The illumination was sufficient for eyes

that looked upward from the car step.

Long arms thrust up from a crouched figure. Again, gloved hands took an instantaneous clutch upon a waiting neck. Before Sarge could gargle for aid, he was helpless. Rising, The Shadow tightened his clutch; he gave a powerful shoulder heave. The hoist snaked Sarge out from behind the wheel, launched him headlong across the grass.

A few minutes later, Sarge was bound and gagged, motionless beneath a tree.

His predicament was the same as Luke's. Sarge's pal was similarly trussed beneath the window of Luffrey's parlor.

THE SHADOW entered the roadster; released the hand brake and let the car coast from a low knoll. He caught it in gear; then put the car in neutral, letting the motor thrum softly. Watching along the street, The Shadow kept on the lookout for approaching lights.

They came: dimmed bulbs that announced Skip Duggle. The slowly approaching auto was a long touring car; its size indicated that it carried a crew of at least four. The driver knew the location of the roadster and expected a signal from it. He could not hear the purr of the small car's motor, for his own muffled engine drowned it.

Whatever the expected signal, it could not have resembled the one that the men in the touring car received.

From blackness burst the strident challenge of a mocking laugh; an outlandish taunt that quivered the stilled air. Sardonic, that cry rose to a fierce crescendo, then shuddered into echoes that seemed to answer from every side. It came as a lone fighter's defiance to the enemies who sought him.

Skip Duggle and his crew knew who the author of that mirth must be. They had found The Shadow.

Instantly, lights clicked on from a spot where Skip did not expect them; for they were fully thirty feet in front of the roadster's supposed position. A

low gear grated as the car shot forward, then shifted to a whining, high-speed second as the roadster gathered new momentum.

With an oath, Skip jammed his accelerator to the floor board. The powerful touring car picked up in high, to take up the chase of the departing roadster.

The Shadow had gained a hundred-foot start. With the roadster in high gear, he was holding the distance. He increased it, by taking a sharp turn into

another street. The touring car's tires screamed as Skip stabbed the brake pedal and made the swerve.

The Shadow was well ahead; too far to be reached by the vicious gunshots that burst from the weapons of Skip's crew.

Despite his threading tactics, The Shadow was picking a definite course. He wanted to reach the highway that led to Manhattan, for he had business across in New Jersey. He allowed a scant ten minutes of zigzag driving and doubling on his trail, always coming closer to the goal he wanted.

All the while, the intermittent barks of guns proved futile. Crooks were wasting bullets, as they tried to drill the elusive roadster.

Skip was fuming; for his big car had far more speed than the roadster. He wanted a straightaway. Given it, he would guarantee to overtake The Shadow within a single mile. Bright lights on, Skipper caught flashes of Long Island Sound at several turns. He gained new confidence. Soon, The Shadow would be forced to take a straighter road.

THE break came when The Shadow swung the roadster on to a paved highway. Skip gave his car the gas. It responded with a brutish roar. Like a living creature of prey, the touring car took after the roadster, gobbling stretches of paving so rapidly that they seemed to pour beneath the headlamps.

A curve lay a quarter mile ahead, on the very fringe of Flushing Bay. After that, another straightaway, half a mile in length. Skip knew this road. It would be curtains for The Shadow before he reached the end of it. Already, the touring car had cut into the roadster's lead. Skip's crew were firing their rifles as the roadster neared the turn.

The light car wavered, skidded as it swung leftward. It swung from sight; but it had been forced to stop. Skip was sure that a lucky bullet had found The Shadow. To speed the moment of triumph, Skipper pushed the touring car to its limit; veered to the right of the road as he neared the turn.

Ahead was the fence along the Bay, painted conspicuously in black and white; Skipper intended to brake when he neared it, then cut leftward and bear down on The Shadow's halted car. Eager sharpshooters had their gun in readiness. Skip shouted as he caught a slanted view of the roadster, twisted about just past the turn.

With Skip's shout came the stab of guns.

The shots were not from the touring car. They were delivered by The Shadow, who was on the ground beside the roadster. They were The Shadow's first

reply to the shots of his pursuers; they were delivered with deadly accuracy, the moment that the touring car appeared at the turn.

Low, straight shots, that skimmed the surface of the road. Slugs from two pumping automatics, directed at an approaching target, the front wheel of Skip's car. That quick-timed barrage could not fail to miss, the way The Shadow handled it. Skip was driving squarely into it.

Only one bullet needed to find its mark. One such bullet did, before Skip's men could open fire with their guns. There was a sharp report from one of the touring car's front wheels. The Shadow had clipped the fat tire.

The touring car jolted as the tire flattened. Skip never had a chance to regain control. The touring car ripped through the board fence that formed a frail bulwark at the curve.

SLUING off a low embankment, the crook-manned car landed sidelong in the waters of the Bay. It rolled over and poked nose upward from a shoal. Guns splashed right and left. Head's bobbed into view. Skip and his pals were pulling themselves from the wreckage to flounder shoreward.

Fortunately for them, these gun-runners were mostly good swimmers; but they were due for an unpleasant welcome. Their wild gunfire had raised a continuous alarm. Police patrol cars and other automobiles had headed in the direction of the chase. The Shadow's dodging tactics had given those new pursuers time to come close.

As he turned to board the roadster, The Shadow could see approaching lights that twinkled from the highway to the rear. Police would arrive to find the broken fence. They would take Skip and his outfit into prompt custody as soon as they came ashore. Guns gone in their dive, crooks would make no trouble.

The Shadow drove off speedily in the roadster. He reached the through highway; joined the speeding traffic toward the city. As soon as he had crossed

a big East River bridge, he turned toward downtown Manhattan. Picking avenues

where green lights lasted long, The Shadow soon reached the neighborhood of the Holland Tunnel.

Traffic there was light at this hour. The Shadow took the fast lane through the tube. Reaching the New Jersey side, he picked a northward course through Hoboken, and thence into Weehawken.

The Shadow had little trouble finding Cassler's. He saw the name above the entrance to a darkened lot, at the end of a row of dingy houses. The place looked but little better than a junkyard, judging by the condition of some of the used cars that were on sale.

The lot was closed for the night, as a chain across the entrance testified. A watchman was on duty, however, for prowlers could easily have stolen accessories from the used cars, if the place had been left unguarded. Noting The Shadow's roadster, the watchman came out to see what the arrival wanted.

"I came to see about a truck," remarked The Shadow, speaking in a quiet tone that resembled Cranston's. "One that was purchased here less than a week ago."

From the roadster's darkened interior, The Shadow saw the watchman nod. There were few trucks on the lot; evidently the fellow knew the one that The Shadow meant.

"That truck stayed here," declared the watchman. "It was loaded up with boxes this afternoon. They told me not to bother about it. Said the new owner had the key; he'd come and take it."

"Where is the truck - on the parking lot?"

"It's gone. The fellow came for it, put on his own license tags and started down the hill to the ferry. The one that goes over to Twenty-third Street, Manhattan."

"How long ago?"

"Only just before you got here. You wouldn't have a chance to catch him, though. He's aboard the ferry. It pulls out in about five minutes -"

THE watchman was talking to thin air. The Shadow had shot the roadster forward. Like a meteor, the car was hurtling for the long hill that led down to the ferry. The watchman gaped as he saw the tail-light twinkle from sight over the slope.

At that breakneck rate, the roadster might make the ferry slip in time, despite the maze of roads and blocking traffic that lay along the water front. The odds, though, were against it.

To The Shadow, it was not a question of odds. It was one of life or death.

Clutching the wheel of the borrowed roadster, The Shadow was grimly determined to reach the ferry slip before the waiting boat began its trip to Manhattan.

CHAPTER XI

THE BLAST THAT MISSED

DOWN by the Weehawken ferry slip, a gray-haired man was seated behind the steering wheel of a large coupe. There was something birdlike in his appearance, both in his peaked features and the quick way in which he darted glances here and there.

Other cars were behind the coupe; but there was no semblance of a regular line, for traffic was not heavy. Even the dock workers seemed lazy and indifferent, as they prepared for the next trip of the old ferry boat that

bore

the name Jersey Highlands above its pilot house.

A ticket-taker stopped beside the coupe. The birdlike man exhibited a pass that gave his name as Kent Darrier. The ticket-taker nodded. He had seen that pass before.

Kent Darrier was a shipping man who controlled a small fleet of coastwise freighters that docked at piers in Weehawken. He had acquired those boats about six years before; previously, he had been an unimportant figure in the shipping industry.

Twice a week, Darrier came over to Weehawken in the evening. He always went back on the same boat; and he always reached the ferry slip in time to be the first aboard.

There was a rumble as a truck rolled up beside the other cars and nosed into a vacant space behind Darrier's coupe. The ticket-taker shouted angrily. The driver of the truck poked his head into view.

"Why the argument?" he snapped. "There's not many cars going aboard. What difference does it make whether I come up here or get in line at the back?"

"No difference, I guess," admitted the ticket-taker, "so long as you've paid your fare."

"Here's my ticket."

The driver of the truck grinned after the ticket-taker had gone. His smile displayed a set of yellowed teeth that did not add to the appearance of his flattish face.

The truck driver was Stanley Chabron.

THE order was given for the cars to go aboard the Jersey Highlands. Darrier's coupe led the procession; it took the passage to the right of the engine room and stopped near the front deck of the ferry.

A few moments later, Chabron's truck came through the passage on the left and halted on a line with the coupe. Chabron eyed Darrier with a sidelong glance; but Darrier did not notice Chabron. The shipping man had become less restless. He was studying the night sky-line of Manhattan across the river.

Chabron had no time for the view. He was busy at the back of the truck, adjusting boxes, making preparations of his own. When he had finished a quick minute's work, Chabron walked back through the passage, going by the few cars that had lined up behind his truck. He reached the rear deck of the ferry and stepped ashore. Deck hands were too busy to notice him.

More minutes passed. A deep-throated whistle sounded from the Jersey Highlands. There was a clangor of chains at the end of the short pier. The ferry was ready to leave the Weehawken slip.

A sharp horn blasted from the entrance of the ferry station. Deck hands paused, as they saw a light roadster whiz into view.

The ferry was already moving. Had the deck hands closed the rear gates, the light car would have crashed them. They held the gates open; the wheels of the roadster bounded over the three-foot space that had opened between the ferry and the slip. Jouncing after it finished the leap, the car righted itself

and came to a slithery stop in the passage on the left. The driver had applied the brakes to perfection.

The Shadow had completed his breakneck dash to the Weehawken ferry.

One crew member growled angrily when he approached the roadster; but objections were useless, since the car was already aboard the moving boat. The deck hand took the cash fare that The Shadow thrust him. As soon as the fellow had gone, The Shadow alighted from the roadster and took to the darkness of the

passage on the left. He was reversing the course that Chabron had used.

Chabron had departed promptly from the ferry slip. The Shadow had not arrived in time to spot him. The Shadow's important mission had been accomplished, however. He had boarded the Jersey Highlands. His next task was to find Chabron's truck.

THERE was only one truck that carried New Jersey license plates. It was the one at the very front of the ferry. When he neared it, The Shadow approached it from the right. He came between it and Darrier's coupe. Pausing, he heard conversation.

The ferry boat's mate had recognized Darrier and was speaking to him by name. The Shadow heard talk that concerned freight steamships. He placed Kent Darrier immediately.

As soon as the mate had gone, The Shadow moved toward the cab of the truck. The moment that he reached the seat, he sniffed the faint aroma of burning powder.

The Shadow flicked a flashlight among the boxes in the truck. He could guess their contents: dynamite. Chabron had set a time fuse and had buried it somewhere. The problem was to find it.

Glancing forward, The Shadow saw that the Jersey Highlands had reached midstream and was turning southward. She had more than a mile to travel, straight down the mid-channel of the Hudson, until she turned east to negotiate the Manhattan slip at Twenty-third Street.

Somewhere on that route, Chabron's fuse would complete its fizz. The finish might come at any minute. Chabron would certainly have timed it long enough for the Jersey Highlands to gain midstream; but not too long. Otherwise, the ferry might reach the Manhattan dock without disaster.

The Jersey Highlands was already in the channel. The faint powder fumes were as evasive as before. The burning fuse might be anywhere among these stacks of boxes. Time was too short to play a game that was much like locating a needle in a haystack. The Shadow resorted to swifter measures.

Dropping from the front seat of the truck, he bent low and reached the radiator. There, he pulled aside the huge iron block that a deck hand had wedged under the front wheel. Without longer wait, The Shadow swung aboard the truck; found the starter and pressed it.

Kent Darrier heard the motor's roar; caught the sound of a grating gear. Leaning from his coupe he raised a shout. A foolish one, had Darrier known it, for The Shadow had already placed him as the man whose life Chabron had been told to get.

The mate, back in the passage, heard Darrier's call, saw the shipping man pointing to the truck. With a long bound, the mate came up to board the truck.

THE Shadow was still pressing the clutch pedal while he released the hand brake. He saw the mate coming; shoved the gear into neutral and swung to meet the man with a long-armed punch. The mate did not see the gloved fist coming; but his head bobbed sidewise as his foot chanced to slip on the step. The Shadow's jab missed.

The husky mate grappled. For a moment, he had the edge. The Shadow managed to lock with him to make the struggle equal. The seconds that followed were tense ones. Every moment counted to The Shadow. He had no time for explanations; those would mean delay.

As the Jersey Highlands plodded down channel, every thump of its old motors signified another time space lost. The tenacious mate was making a greater mistake than Darrier.

A deck hand came dashing past the coupe and clambered up the truck's step

to add his weight to the struggle. The Shadow saw him over the mate's shoulder and knew that if the second man joined in, the whole cause would be lost.

The Shadow tried the only strategy that remained. He gave suddenly beneath the mate's attack, rolled halfway from the left side of the truck. As the mate thrust down upon him, The Shadow grabbed the steering wheel with his left hand; wedged his left foot between the fender and the hood. Thus braced, he caught the mate's neck in a half-nelson clutch with his right arm.

Pivoting with all his strength, The Shadow felt the mate heave upward. Releasing, he sent the brawny fellow clear of the truck. The mate floundered through the air, landed on the deck. Regaining his balance, The Shadow bobbed up beside the wheel just as the deck hand came thrusting through from the other side of the front seat.

This time, The Shadow's punch did not miss.

The six-inch jab that met the deck hand's jaw stopped the fellow cold. He slumped to the seat. The Shadow pitched him out the right side, where he rolled to the wheels of Darrier's coupe.

Others were coming for the truck. The Shadow did not wait for them. The hand brake was free; the throttle opened. He shoved the clutch pedal, yanked the screeching gear shift into low.

The engines of the Jersey Highlands were churning in reverse, for the pilot planned to coast with the outgoing tide before he reached the ferry slip.

Hence the boat was barely moving when the truck took its forward leap. It was that factor that made the lurch appear terrific.

The Shadow dived leftward as he let the truck go. He hit the deck shoulders first, close beside the half-dazed mate. The truck swooped past him; its front ripped away the deck gates as if they were tinsel. Roaring onward, it catapulted its full length in mid-air. Kicked by the last impetus of the driving wheels, it turned a half somersault as it dived toward the river.

JUST as the inverted truck splashed the water, the fuse completed its run.

The truck's explosion was terrific; had it happened aboard the Jersey Highlands, the ferry would have been half obliterated. As it was, the power of the blast was damaging, but its full effect was lost. Overturned, the truck was half submerged when the dynamite blew up.

The mass of bursting flame cleaved the water, spread it a part with the effect of a tidal wave. Great geysers spouted wide. Wheels and portions of the truck's chassis arched away in all directions.

The shock quivered the Jersey Highlands; ruined the ferry's front propeller. A powerful surge of water jolted the blunt end upward; when the bow thumped downward, the deck scooped a deluge that poured inward to the wheels of

Darrier's coupe. The ferry righted; another wave lashed the bow and sprayed foam

upon The Shadow and the mate, who was stretched beside him.

All on board had been floored by the shock that the ferry had taken. Windows had shattered in the pilot house. The river still swirled as the Jersey

Highlands plowed over the spot where the remnants of the truck had disappeared.

The damage done was trivial, however, compared with the destruction that had been averted.

The Shadow had nullified crime's blast. The ferry boat had not become the floating hulk that crooks had intended: a death hull, its front deck lined with corpses. Instead, it was limping into dock with all on board alive and uninjured.

Among those passengers was Kent Darrier, the man for whom the blast had been intended. A master crook would gladly have snuffed out a score of lives to finish Darrier's with them.

Again, The Shadow had saved chance bystanders from destruction. This time, he had also rescued the one man marked for death.

CHAPTER XII

THE VICTIM'S FLIGHT

THE blast at the bow of the Jersey Highlands had attracted the attention of the entire harbor. Seen from a distance, the burst of flame appeared to have come from the ferry itself. The commotion that resulted sounded like a New York welcome to a party of South Pole explorers.

Whistles blared everywhere, from ferries, tugs and ocean-going vessels. Big foghorns bellowed, from barges and the shore. Some of the notes from smaller boats were shrill; among them responded the siren shriek of a police boat.

From that bedlam hoarsed the crippled ferry's signal. The Jersey Highlands was making for its dock. There was no further need for harbor boats to wail the news of a fellow-creature's distress. Blares died, except for necessary signals given by tugs and ferries that were returning to their course.

Aboard the Jersey Highlands, The Shadow had left the space where the truck had been. Amid the commotion, he moved back through the passage, reached his roadster and sat there, listening to the whistles from the river. Among the few that persisted was one that did not please The Shadow. It was the peculiar wail of the police boat.

The Shadow considered contact with Kent Darrier important. It could not be made aboard the ferry. The only course was to follow Darrier's coupe when it went ashore. That would be difficult, if the police were on hand when the Jersey Highlands docked.

The ferry boat was swinging into its berth. Silent in the roadster, The Shadow felt the crippled bow thump the pilings of the ferry slip. The clatter of tightening chains followed. Cars began to move ashore.

The Shadow put the roadster in line with others. As they filed out through the ferry house, he could see Darrier's coupe several cars ahead. It rolled to the street; another car followed; then a third. The fourth one stopped. The Shadow pulled up beside it.

Police on shore had received word from the harbor patrol. Officers had arrived in time to stop further cars from leaving the ferry house. Darrier's

and two others had gone. That settled The Shadow's policy. As a burly officer sprang out to halt him, The Shadow gave the roadster full speed. Dodging the traffic along the water front, he started out on Darrier's trail.

A POLICE car, wheeling toward the ferry house, saw the roadster's quick get-away and tried to block it. The Shadow was forced to swing southward. With that, the chase began. The chance to overtake Darrier was ended. Within two blocks, The Shadow saw another police car coming from the opposite direction. He cut for a side street just in time to avoid the trap.

Again, this was a time when explanations were out of the question. The Shadow had taken a long chance and luck had turned against him. The roadster lacked the speed he needed to properly shake off the patrol cars. There was an area, though, where he could dodge them; and it was close at hand. The Shadow took for the twisted streets of the Greenwich Village section of Manhattan.

When he reached that terrain, The Shadow performed wonders. He doubled back upon his course; followed in behind one of the very patrol cars that was seeking him. He dodged away when another pursuing car appeared, and shook it quite effectively.

Coming to the outskirts where he had first entered the maze of streets, The Shadow parked the roadster and left it. The police were welcome to that car. It would lead them back to Skip Duggle.

On foot, cloak and hat on arm, The Shadow took a darkened route along a narrow thoroughfare, to a drug store.

The Shadow entered there to consult a telephone book. He learned that Kent

Darrier's name was unlisted. That meant a call to Burbank, The Shadow's contact

man, who kept files of all such information. From Burbank, The Shadow learned Darrier's telephone number and address. He put in a call, but received no response. The Shadow decided to make a prompt trip to the shipping man's home.

Burbank had supplied the fact that Darrier occupied a penthouse atop an apartment building. The contact man had put in a call to Moe Shrevnitz, at The Shadow's order. Hence Moe's streamlined cab arrived immediately after The Shadow ceased his attempt to get Darrier by telephone.

THOUGH Darrier had failed to answer the telephone call, the birdish man was actually in his penthouse at the time the ring came. Darrier had made a quick trip from the Twenty-third Street ferry slip.

At present, he was pacing the big living room, bobbing his head from side to side, in the nervous fashion of a canary. A puzzled Filipino house man was watching him.

"Telephone still ringing, Mr. Darrier," reminded the house man, politely. "Maybe I better answer it for you."

"Let it ring, I tell you!" shrilled Darrier. "Get out of here, Manuel. Stay in the reception room. Leave me to myself."

The Filipino shrugged his white-jacketed shoulders. He could not understand the reason for his master's excitement. He left the living room. Darrier continued his jittery pacing until the tingling of the telephone bell completely distracted him. Half hopping toward French windows at the end of the living room, Darrier yanked those barriers open and stepped out to the penthouse terrace.

The bell's jangle ceased. Darrier smiled his relief. He wanted a chance to think matters over, without intrusion. He felt comfortably lulled as he strolled the terrace.

Though only a dozen stories above the street, this terrace formed a secluded esplanade; for the apartment building was situated among lower structures.

The terrace where Darrier stood was quite picturesque. It formed a forty-foot promenade; its sides were lined by a high parapet, concealed beyond rows of potted evergreens. The center was a shallow fish pond, a basin ten feet long and six across. There were marble benches at each end. Darrier sat on the nearer bench and brooded.

The center of the fish pond had a small, cuplike fountain, from which water splashed into the pool. The trickly tinkle soothed Darrier's nerves. From

the bench he watched the idly swimming goldfish that shimmered in the pool.

Darrier's hobby was the collection of Japanese goldfish. He had stocked the pool heavily with magnificent long-tailed specimens. They showed to advantage against the white-tiled sides and bottom of the shallow pond.

Darrier's short spell of quiet ended with a burst of impatience. He arose from the bench. His lips twitched, while he pummeled his left palm with his right fist. Acting upon some sudden impulse, Darrier left the calm surroundings

of the open terrace. He hurried back into his living room, picked up the telephone and dialed the operator. When the girl's voice responded, Darrier asked for a connection to police headquarters.

Almost immediately, Darrier was interrupted. There were voices from the reception room; a stocky, swarthy-faced man swung into view, growling as Manuel

offered protests. Darrier quickly dropped the receiver on its hook, and took a defensive pose as if to throw the telephone. The stocky man saw the move and promptly flashed a badge.

"You're from headquarters?" exclaimed Darrier. "You're a detective?"

"An acting inspector," returned the stocky man. "My name is Cardona."

DARRIER recognized the name; Cardona was the investigator who was handling recent explosion cases. There was no doubt as to his identity. Darrier was pleased.

"You are the very man I wanted to meet," he told Cardona. "I was just calling headquarters in the hope that you would be there. But how" - Darrier's pointed face showed puzzlement - "how did you manage to get here so quickly?"

Cardona smiled wisely; then gave the explanation.

"You left a trail a mile wide," he informed. "A police boat was on the job when the Jersey Highlands docked; but you drove away before you could be stopped. The mate knew who you were; he said a truck had blown up right alongside your car. I received an immediate report at headquarters. I left the job of telephoning to someone else, so I could come straight up here."

Darrier was relieved by the news about the telephone call. He remembered that the bell had rung intermittently, as though different persons had tried to get him on the wire; but he decided that someone at headquarters had made repeated efforts to get an answer.

"I'll get straight to business, Mr. Darrier," began Cardona, briskly. "I've got a hunch that you can help me -"

Darrier waved his hand in interruption. Manuel was standing at the door. Darrier ordered the Filipino out into the reception room; told him to close the door between. Manuel obeyed.

"I'm after a murderer," announced Cardona. "Here's his picture." Joe produced a reproduction of the police composograph. "Did you ever see this man

before, Mr. Darrier?"

"No," returned Darrier. "At least, not close enough to observe his face."

"What about the fellow who drove that dynamite truck on board the ferryboat?"

"I did not see him."

"He was fighting in the front seat of the truck -"

"It was too dark to see him. Nor do I know where he went afterward. My one hope is that he went into the river with the truck."

"He didn't." Cardona shook his head grimly. "He made a get-away in a roadster. The patrol cars were still chasing him, the last I knew. Looks like he brought the truck aboard, then didn't have time to get off the boat before it started. He had to sink the truck, because he'd started a fuse to blow the dynamite. He was desperate."

Cardona was eying Darrier, trying to impress the bird-faced man. Darrier was becoming nervous. Cardona decided it was time to grill him.

"That killer blasted George Zanwood clear out of the Cobalt Club," reminded Cardona, gruffly. "He blew up Dudley Mook and the hotel corridor with him. He was set to wipe out somebody on that ferry, along with the whole front half of the boat. The man he was after was you, Mr. Darrier!"

DARRIER was shaky, clutching the heavy table on which the telephone stood.

He tried to nod; failing, he sank toward a chair. Cardona guided him; poured questions into the frightened man's ear.

"Did you know George Zanwood?"

A nod from Darrier.

"And Dudley Mook?"

Another nod.

"How long since you'd last seen the two men?"

Darrier choked; then gulped the answer:

"Nearly - nearly six years ago."

Cardona stepped back. Coolly eying Darrier, Joe questioned:

"That was the time Zanwood and Mook came into the big money, wasn't it?"

Darrier hesitated; finally, he nodded.

"And I guess you found dough about that time, didn't you?" quizzed Cardona. "You might as well answer me, Mr. Darrier. I'll find out, anyway. The best thing you can do is talk."

"I shall do so," clucked Darrier. His tone, though weak, carried decision.

"That was why I called headquarters - because I wanted to talk. I can tell you about Zanwood; about Mook; about myself. I can tell you the name of the person whom I think -"

"The one you think is the murderer?"

"Yes. I can give the name of the murderer!"

"Wait a minute." Cardona thought it a good time to insert an interruption.

"First you think you know who the murderer is; then you're sure you can name him. Explain that, Mr. Darrier."

Wearily, Darrier gave a sickly smile.

"There are two men," he explained. "Both persons of considerable wealth - like Zanwood, Mook and myself. Until tonight, I did not suspect either of them.

Neither answers the description that the police picture shows.

"I know, at last, that either that picture is inaccurate, or the actual murderer is employing someone to set off the explosions. Yet I hesitate to give

you the names of the two men. In fact, I cannot do so until I have told you other details."

"Why not, Mr. Darrier?"

"Because one or the other is innocent. I must not jeopardize his position in order to condemn the actual criminal. In fact, inspector, I must have your surety that all I say is confidential; that it will not be used to incriminate anyone for anything other than these actual crimes of murder."

For a moment, Cardona was impatient; watching Darrier, he saw the man's thin lips clamp shut. Joe realized the weakness of his own position. Darrier, merely a threatened victim, could not be cross-examined like a criminal.

"I'll take your terms," decided Cardona. "Whatever you tell me stays confidential. Let's have the story, Mr. Darrier."

Leaning back in his chair, Kent Darrier smiled. His expression denoted regained calmness. Feeling that he could keep his own past secure, Darrier was prepared to furnish the facts that he knew the law required.

CHAPTER XIII

FACTS UNSUPPLIED

"Six years ago," began Darrier, "five men arranged a way to raise a million dollars, for equal division among them. They took a large amount of negotiable securities to a banker and asked him to accept them in return for a loan."

Darrier paused. Cardona curbed his impatience by taking a chair opposite the shipping man. Joe could see nothing remarkable in the beginning of the tale. When business men wanted money, they usually borrowed it and gave a bank securities instead.

"George Zanwood and Dudley Mook supplied some of those securities," explained Darrier. "Two other men provided the rest. I was the man who contacted the banker and arranged the loan, in accordance with unusual terms.

"No record of that loan was made. The banker simply took the securities and paid one million, two hundred thousand dollars for them, writing off the funds under the head of other business. In return for that special service, the

banker received one-sixth of the borrowed sum: two hundred thousand dollars."

Cardona's interest was fully aroused. The unusual transaction smacked of shady activities. Joe leaned forward, tense, as Darrier proceeded.

"There was a run on that bank," declared Darrier. "The directors voted to liquidate the securities that I have mentioned. They talked down the vice president who had arranged the loan. The securities were brought from the vault. When examined, their numbers did not tally with the vice president's records. It was discovered that they were stolen securities."

Cardona found his feet with a jump.

"The Scarborough National!" he exclaimed. "I remember when that bank folded. Randolph Greville was the vice president!"

DARRIER'S nod of corroboration was unneeded. Cardona had gained the story in a nutshell. A mystery of six years' standing was cleared. It concerned the unsolved case of Randolph Greville, vice president of the Scarborough National Bank.

Greville, the only son of an indulgent father, had gone through several fortunes before he reached the age of thirty. His father, whose resources were plentiful, had finally given Randolph a quarter million dollars with the understanding that he should settle down in a legitimate business. The young man had gone into banking; he had purchased a large holding in the Scarborough National Bank, and in return had been elected a vice president.

Not only had Randolph Greville spent his entire salary and income; he had borrowed on his bank stock. No one, though, had considered his extravagances criminal, until the Scarborough National had crashed. The bank's failure led

to the discovery that one million, two hundred thousand dollars of assets - in the form of negotiable securities - were stolen funds. Randolph Greville was the man who had slipped them past the other officials by listing the bonds under wrong numbers.

Immediately after his exposure, Randolph Greville disappeared. He had paid a short visit to the home of his father, Conrad Greville; but had left there before the elder Greville learned the news about the pilfered funds. While the police still hunted Randolph Greville, the young man committed suicide by leaping from the thirtieth floor of a large New York hotel.

The mystery that followed his death was twofold. First, how had Randolph Greville acquired the stolen securities? Second, what had he done with the one million two hundred thousand dollars that he had embezzled when he deposited the stolen bonds in their place?

Police had found it impossible to link Greville with the actual thefts. Checking on all his expenditures, the law could not account for Greville's disposal of funds in excess of two hundred thousand dollars. Old Conrad Greville, disowning his wayward son, had hired private detectives to help the law unearth the whereabouts of the missing million dollars. The hunt had failed.

TONIGHT, Joe Cardona had learned the answer to the double mystery. The explanation given by Kent Darrier was both complete and simple. Five opportune crooks had gained those stolen securities. One of them - Kent Darrier - had contacted Randolph Greville to unload them.

Randolph had taken two hundred thousand dollars for his part in the deal. The million had been divided by the others. With Randolph Greville's suicide, the connecting link was gone. Crooks had their stolen gains and were safe.

"I did not know the securities were stolen," insisted Darrier, suddenly. "Not until after I had swung the deal with young Greville. He thought that we five intended to make our fortunes with the capital we gained; that afterward, we would lift the securities by paying back the money. I was out of town when the crash came."

Darrier was weaving a fabric of truth and lies, and Cardona knew it. Darrier had known all along that the securities were stolen. So, probably, had Randolph Greville; but he had taken the risk to gain two hundred thousand dollars. Greville had figured that in a pinch, Darrier and the others would help him; but they had not.

It was then that Randolph Greville had realized his plight. He had no records to show that he had dealt with Darrier; even if he knew the names of the man's associates, he could not prove the connection.

Darrier had conveniently gone from New York. Randolph Greville could not reach him. An accusation would have produced Darrier's denial. A weakling by nature, Randolph Greville stiffened himself for the only bold deed of his entire lifetime: that thirty-story jump from a hotel room.

Brief moments were all that Joe Cardona required to piece this plain story. All the while, Kent Darrier watched him with quick, birdish eyes. Darrier had taken a long chance, telling as much as he had; but he was relying upon two factors to protect himself. The first was Cardona's promise to keep mum; the other was Darrier's own claim of ignorance regarding the theft of the securities.

Randolph Greville had taken the blame for a crime committed by others. In court, Darrier could claim innocence; could even deny the story that he had just told to Cardona. Without witnesses or tangible evidence, Darrier would be cleared.

THE thought of witnesses reminded Cardona of Zanwood and Mook. They were dead; that was why Darrier had mentioned them freely. He would have good cause, however, to avoid naming the other two members of the five-fold combine. Darrier was thinking of that very fact himself.

"There were two others," he declared, cagily. "One of them has become a murderer, anxious to kill the four who were his past associates. That leaves another as a possible victim, like myself. Just why that one man has decided to murder us, I cannot explain. Therefore, I do not know which of the two he is.

"When George Zanwood died, I did not connect his murder with the past. I thought that he had meddled somewhere, recently. Even Mook's death did not perturb me. Dudley Mook was always a meddler. Once, he had worked closely with George Zanwood. I thought that crime simply concerned the pair of them.

"Tonight, when a thrust was delivered against me, I saw the light. It showed that Zanwood and Mook had died because of what happened six years ago. I was the third in line. A fourth is listed. As for the fifth" - Darrier shrugged

- "there you have the murderer."

"That hits it, Mr. Darrier," agreed Cardona. "So it's up to you to name the other two men you've mentioned. We'll protect you while we watch the pair of them. The one that's threatened will be protected, as you will be. The murderer will give himself away."

Darrier pursed his lips. He was thinking closely.

"That doesn't quite cover it," he declared, slowly. "I want to be sure of something else. I must know that the Scarborough National case is closed."

"Maybe it is," volunteered Cardona, promptly. "The statutes of limitation would take care of that."

Darrier chuckled wisely.

"Do not try to bluff me, inspector," he rejoined. "The statutes of limitation would not cover criminal cases. Nevertheless, if nothing should be done to reopen the bank investigation -"

"Look here, Mr. Darrier," interposed Cardona, "you're worrying about things that don't matter. I want to get that murderer. When I do, what if he does accuse you about the past? You kept quiet when young Greville was on the spot, didn't you? Can't you do it again?"

"Yes," admitted Darrier, "but there is another man threatened, in the manner I am."

"And he kept mum, too, six years ago. He'll do the same again. Give me those two names. I'll spot which man is the killer. The other will be clear. You're taking no chances."

ARDENT in his desire for a clue to the murderer, Cardona was implying that he would preserve silence regarding the past, even though he was making no actual promise. The bargain looked good to Kent Darrier. He was convinced that Cardona, when he trapped the murderer, would prefer to take all the credit; and, therefore, would forget other facts.

"Very well, inspector," clucked Darrier. "I shall name both men and tell you where to find them. The first -"

Darrier stopped as the door opened. Manuel was on the threshold. The Filipino had an announcement:

"Gentleman come to see you, Mr. Darrier. Elevator boy come up to tell me."

"Who was it?" demanded Darrier. "Is he still downstairs?"

"Elevator boy says gentleman was in a hurry. Might not wait very long."

"Send the elevator downstairs," ordered Darrier. "Tell the operator to

find out who the visitor is. If the man has started outside, I want the operator to run and overtake him."

"Very good, Mr. Darrier."

Manuel went out through the reception room. Darrier stood with his head cocked to one side. He was thinking that the visitor might be one of the very men whom he intended to name. Cardona had the same thought also; therefore, he decided not to hurry Darrier.

They heard the elevator door clang shut. Manuel came shuffling back through the reception room. The Filipino was carrying an oblong package that measured two feet in length. Its height was about one foot; its breadth the same.

"Talk to elevator boy," informed Manuel. "He say he think gentleman go away; but he say he will run out to see. Gentleman didn't have to wait."

"Why not?" demanded Darrier.

"Gentleman left package," replied Manuel, simply. "Elevator boy bring it up. Package for you, Mr. Darrier."

Darrier took the package, turned and laid it on the table. Before he could make a move to open it, Cardona was beside him. The ace pushed Darrier aside; inclined his head close to the package. Hearing no tick, Cardona lifted the package slightly; nodded as he felt its weight.

"It might be a bomb," he declared. "Don't be alarmed, Mr. Darrier. It won't be timed to go off in a big hurry. Where's the bathtub? We'll put it there and soak it."

"Get rid of it!" shrilled Darrier. He clutched for the package. "Hurry! Out on the terrace!"

"We can't throw it from there," rejoined Cardona, sternly. "Take it easy, Mr. Darrier. I'll handle it."

"I mean the fish pond," added Darrier. "On the terrace! It's nearly a foot deep. Throw the bomb in there! Quick!"

The suggestion was good. Cardona turned to grab the long package. His hands never reached it. He was not the only person who had heard Darrier's frantic order.

Through from the reception room swished a shape in black. The Shadow had reached the penthouse, taking the elevator that the operator had left open when

he reached the ground floor. Clad in his guise of black, The Shadow had not delayed his entry. He saw danger in the move that Cardona intended.

CLUTCHING Joe, The Shadow wheeled him away from the table. For the moment,

Cardona did not realize who had seized him. He struggled. The Shadow swirled him

across the floor and hurtled him into a chair. Cardona recognized The Shadow; knew instantly that the cloaked arrival had some reason for wanting to handle the package alone.

Cardona saw something else. Beyond The Shadow was Darrier. Totally alarmed, the shipping man was making a birdlike hop for the table to snatch up the package and carry it outdoors himself. Almost beside Darrier was Manuel. Cardona pointed, and shouted to the Filipino.

"Stop him! Don't let him take it!"

Joe was pointing toward Darrier. The Shadow, swinging about, happened to be directly in line with Cardona's finger. Manuel misunderstood the shout and the gesture. He thought that Cardona meant The Shadow, not Darrier.

As The Shadow sprang toward the table, Manuel interfered. The wiry little Filipino made a flying dive from the side. His body came like a bullet; his shoulders hit The Shadow's knees. The black-clad rescuer was bowled sidewise, to roll halfway across the floor.

Coming up, The Shadow flung Manuel aside before the fellow could make a grab. Cardona was out of his chair; like The Shadow, he hoped to stop Darrier. But the frantic man had acted with insane speed. The package clutched in his arms, Darrier was already through the French windows, heading full speed for the fish pond.

The Shadow, leaping forward, had only time to grab Cardona and again swing the ace aside. Darrier had reached the end bench; his arms shot forward as he let the bundle scale to the water beneath the base of the tinkling fountain.

Impelled by his own momentum, Darrier sprawled half across the bench, to cling there, leaning toward the pool.

That odd pose was Darrier's last in life.

A split-second after the package hit the water, it exploded.

BRILLIANCE flashed in all directions. Flaming tongues spat outward, upward. A huge concussion shook the penthouse; amid the roar and quiver, the outside scene was obliterated.

Darrier and his fish pond, with its fountain and its benches, were blotted into nothingness. Water sprayed everywhere from the shallow pool. It vanished into vapor, as completely scattered as the tiles and stone that crumbled into dust. The terrace displayed a jagged hole, where pond and promenade had been.

The Shadow had guessed the nature of the bomb that had been delivered to Kent Darrier, as substitute for the truckload of dynamite. The master crook who

had plotted Darrier's finish had known of the convenient fish pond, the logical

place where a frantic man would throw a suspicious package.

The bomb had been made watertight; its fuse was a chemical element that would ignite when it contacted water. Thus equipped, it needed only Darrier's own action to explode it.

Joe Cardona grasped that explanation as he came to his feet in Darrier's living room. The floor still seemed shaky, as Cardona tried to steady himself. There was something, though, that concerned Cardona more than the means whereby

the bomb had done its work.

Kent Darrier had vanished into the void, his final words unspoken. The facts that Darrier had failed to furnish, troubled Cardona more than the death of the self-confessed crook. The names that Darrier had promised were to remain unknown.

Only the semblance of a new trail had been gained. The slim facts would require a supermind to handle them. One being alone could make the trail a real

one. Joe Cardona was thinking of The Shadow. He turned to look for the timely rescuer who had again wrenched him from doom.

Only Manuel was in the living room; the scared Filipino was still staring toward the terrace. To Cardona's ears came the faint clang of the elevator door. Joe thought that he caught the dim echo of a solemn, mirthless laugh.

The Shadow had gone; yet Joe Cardona held a hunch that there was purpose in his departure. Sooner or later, The Shadow would, somehow, learn the facts that Cardona had gleaned.

The Shadow always did.

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER SIX YEARS

APPROXIMATELY thirty minutes after the bomb explosion at Darrier's, Joe Cardona arrived at Weston's apartment. He found the police commissioner in his little office, anxiously awaiting details. Before Cardona began, Weston spoke a reminder.

"Cranston will be with us shortly," he said. "I just had a call from the Merrimac Club, stating that he has expected me there all evening. Since he was a witness to two previous explosions, I have invited him here."

Weston had barely finished speaking when a buzzer announced a visitor. A minute later, The Shadow appeared, in the guise of Lamont Cranston. Like Weston, Cardona thought that he had come from a quiet evening at the club. Neither would have believed that their visitor had witnessed two more explosions on this very night.

Since Weston already had details of the ferry-boat explosion, Cardona gave a prompt description of his visit to the penthouse, not admitting The Shadow's arrival there. Weston was highly impressed with the story.

"It is obvious," declared the commissioner, "that the murderer came to Darrier's with another bomb, after eluding the chase in Greenwich Village. Did you get a description of him from the elevator operator?"

"A partial one," replied Joe. "He called the operator to the outside door to hand him the package; but he was standing in the darkness. The operator says

he was husky, but he didn't remember him as tall. The operator was standing on the step, though, so he couldn't well have judged the man's height."

"But what about his face?"

"The operator doesn't remember it. He was busy looking at the package."

The Shadow inserted no comment. He knew that the operator was right; a shorter man had come to Darrier's. The taller of the two bomb handlers - Chabron - had been left in Weehawken. He must have telephoned his pal. Leed, whom The Shadow could identify by appearance, but not by name, had delivered the second bomb.

THE police commissioner shifted to the most important subject: Kent Darrier's confession.

"You scored there, Cardona," he commended. "We have found a motive for these bomb murders: the extermination of men responsible for the Scarborough Bank failure. Kent Darrier was one of the five. He knew that his life was threatened. His statement that one of that group is eliminating the others has logic.

"But the fact that Darrier did not name the two who remain has left us totally in the dark. How can we find that pair? - one a potential victim; the other a murderer. We cannot wait until a fourth death strikes. Our last chance will be gone if that occurs."

Cardona had a suggestion.

"Darrier made his clean-up six years ago," said Joe. "Just like Zanwood and Mook. The two men we're looking for did the same -"

"And you expect to find them through that?" interrupted Weston, with a snort. "Impossible, Cardona! Zanwood, Mook and Darrier each went into a different type of business. We can be sure that the other two adopted varied enterprises, Six years ago, times were changing. Thousands of men pulled stakes

and sought new opportunities with their capital. We could never find the pair we want."

Weston finished the statement glumly. He looked to The Shadow for corroboration. This time, The Shadow had a suggestion.

"Why not call on Conrad Greville?" he asked. "His son was implicated in the Scarborough crash. Conrad Greville spent a fortune in the search for the

missing million."

"And found nothing," reminded Weston. "He was totally unable to shift the blame from his son."

"Because the link was missing," declared The Shadow. "He may have learned of Zanwood, Mook, Darrier and two others. The names would have meant nothing without facts. Darrier's confession supplies a starting point."

"You're right, Cranston!" Weston pounded the desk emphatically. "It is still early enough to visit Conrad Greville. Suppose we pay him a call."

THERE was no difficulty in finding the residence of Conrad Greville. It was the most conspicuous mansion in Manhattan. Greville's great fortune consisted chiefly in real estate. Ten years before, he had sold almost an entire block, reserving only a small center property where his own home stood.

The result had been two towering skyscrapers, separated by a space of less

than twenty feet. Between those massive, white-walled monoliths stood the pygmy brownstone residence where Greville still dwelt. The sight was one of those curious New York contrasts that was pointed out to sight-seers.

Weston's big official car pulled up in front of the ancient residence. Weston told his chauffeur to park near by.

Accompanied by The Shadow and Joe Cardona, Weston rang the doorbell at the

top of the worn old brownstone steps. A melancholy tingle came from the interior

of the squatty dwelling, like an answer from a forgotten tomb. The ring was answered by a long-limbed, withered-faced servant, who blinked in surprise at the sight of visitors.

Weston introduced himself briskly; asked if Conrad Greville could receive him. The servant felt sure that it was not too late for visitors. He ushered the trio into a gloomy hall that needed nothing more than cobwebs to make it look like a spot that time had long forgotten.

Weston sat in a high-backed chair opposite a tall grandfather's clock, from which one eye of a moon peeked at him. The Shadow chose an old morris chair in a deep corner. Cardona picked the seat of an old-fashioned hat rack; found that the benchlike space had an umbrella and a pair of overshoes resting on it. He crossed the hall and perched on the steps of the front stairs.

While Weston was studying the grandfather's clock, The Shadow enjoyed himself watching Cardona. Joe was gawking at the ancient furniture with the interest of a ten-year-old boy.

The withery servant returned, to say that Conrad Greville would receive the visitors in his study. He ushered the three to the rear of the deep hallway

and knocked at a door on the left. After a minute, the door opened. Conrad Greville stood there, awaiting his unexpected guests.

FEW persons in New York had seen Conrad Greville, although the old man was

widely known. A multimillionaire, Greville had retired from active business a dozen years before; following the death of his son, he had become something of a recluse.

Though his age was at least seventy, Greville was spry and alert. He had the lean build that enables an elderly man to retain youthful activity. His face, though dry, lacked wrinkles; his smallish eyes carried a keen twinkle, as

they peered through the pince-nez spectacles that adorned his aristocratic nose.

His lips, however, did not smile. They were pleasant; but their corners had a

saddened droop that bore a permanent appearance.

Thin, gray hair and eyebrows added to the old man's dignity. So did his attire: morning coat, striped trousers, button patent-leather shoes.

With the hospitable dignity that one would have expected from him, Greville shook hands with Weston. He repeated the clasp when the commissioner introduced him to Cardona and The Shadow. Greville's eyes showed interest when he heard the name of Cranston. The old man was evidently acquainted with the names of all wealthy New Yorkers.

The room that Greville termed his office was both modern and old-fashioned. Its fireplace, its paneled walls and bookcases, the old safe in the corner, were survivals of the '90s. His flat-topped mahogany desk, the chairs, the metal filing cabinets, had evidently replaced older equipment.

Greville sat down behind the desk; lifted a cradle telephone and laid it to one side. His visitors were seating themselves; so the old man looked toward

the door and spoke to the servant: "You may go, Lawrence. Inform me if there are other callers."

Lawrence stepped out and closed the door. Greville rested his elbows on the table, laced his fingers and looked questioningly at the visitors. His inquiring gaze centered upon Weston.

"We have come for information, Mr. Greville," informed Weston. "It is not our desire to recall a subject that may distress you -"

"It is about my son?"

Greville's interruption came sharply, but with no show of emotion. Weston nodded.

"You may speak freely." Greville clipped his words. "My son, Randolph, was no credit to my name. I have disowned even his memory. No new statements of his dishonesty can pain me. He is past reclaim, by his own choice."

"This concerns others beside Randolph," asserted Weston, relieved by old Greville's attitude. "We have learned tonight that your son was encouraged in his deeds by men who later betrayed him. They were the actual possessors of the stolen securities."

"Do not condone my son's crime." Greville's tone had changed. His words carried the weight of solemn judgment. "His own sins were upon him. His death was the final penalty!"

"Yet you spent a fortune in your own investigation -"

"Only in the hope that I might reclaim the funds that Randolph had squandered; I failed in that endeavor."

The downturn of Greville's lips had increased. His expression was one of profound disappointment.

"THREE Men have been murdered," declared Weston. "I shall name them: George Zanwood, Dudley Mook, Kent Darrier. Are those names familiar, Mr. Greville?"

"I have seen the first two in the newspapers," replied the old man, his tone a surprised one. "I read of their deaths. But who is Kent Darrier?"

Weston explained. He gave the details of Darrier's confession; laid emphasis upon the shipping man's statement that two others were concerned.

When Weston expressed the theory that one was the murderer who blasted his victims from the earth, Greville showed immediate willingness to aid in the search for the killer.

The old man went to a filing cabinet; he produced a sheaf of papers and brought them to the desk.

"These concern my son," he explained. "Most of them are documents

compiled

by investigators; but some of Randolph's own papers are among them. They furnished no light upon his case; but some of them refer to certain individuals. The names you want may be mentioned."

Sorting the papers, Greville passed them across the desk. He put them into

different groups; laid aside those that he considered unimportant. Weston examined one batch; passed others to his companions. Scanning for names, they found no mention of Zanwood or Mook; not even of Darrier. All names were those of legitimate bank depositors, directors and examiners.

"These do not help us," declared Weston, returning the papers to Greville.

"There is always the chance, however, that you might aid us, Mr. Greville. That

very fact raises one problem. Your own safety."

Greville looked perplexed. Weston explained.

"The murderer seems determined to wipe out every one who knew his past," declared the commissioner. "He is evidently inspired by some fearful mistrust in all with whom he was associated."

"Quite true," agreed Greville. "But how does that concern me?"

"Your son belonged to the combine," reminded Weston. "You investigated your son's affairs. Given the slightest suspicion, the murderer might add you to his list."

"But how could he suspect that I had information concerning him? He would know that I would have given such data to the law, long ago."

"This visit might arouse him," declared Weston. "That was something that did not occur to me, until after I arrived here. When Mook was murdered, the killer tried to strike down Inspector Cardona also. He may vent his malice upon

anyone who seems to be an obstacle."

Conrad Greville arose from behind his desk. Though he retained his dignity, the old man was a-quiver. He compressed his lips firmly; his voice was

steady when he declared:

"You are right, commissioner. I shall inform Lawrence and my other servants to be vigilant. First, however, I shall instruct Lawrence to learn if all are loyal."

"Some of your servants are new ones?"

"Yes. Only Lawrence and old Foster are dependable. The others are temporary help, hired each time I return to the city."

Cardona offered a suggestion.

"Better let me handle this, commissioner," he said. "I can put in some headquarters men to look over these extra servants. First thing you know, the murderer may show up here, with a servant fixed to let him through."

Weston looked to Greville. The old man nodded.

"You are right," he declared. "I may be marked, commissioner. By all means, post men in this house. Tonight would not be too early. If your moves have been followed before, they may be watched again -"

GREVILLE paused, as he saw Joe Cardona become suddenly alert. Cardona was close beside the hallway door; he had heard a sound that even The Shadow had failed to detect.

It was the jangle of the front doorbell, sounding with a brisk ring that carried a demand for prompt admittance. Keyed by the thought that a murderer might have planned a visit here, Cardona grabbed the sudden hunch that the summons meant danger.

With a quick gesture to the others, Joe sprang to the door, waited until they had joined him, then yanked the door open and swung into the hallway. Weston crowded close behind him; The Shadow was next, with Conrad Greville

last.

Lawrence had already answered the door. The servant was standing just inside the vestibule, near the ancient hat rack. Facing Lawrence was a tall man, whose outstretched hands held a squarish package. Lawrence had his hands beneath it. The withery servant was nodding as he received instructions.

A package for Conrad Greville - one like the bomb that had come to Kent Darrier! Given by a tall man, whose height matched the description of the assassin at the Cobalt Club, even though his shoulders lacked their supposed broadness!

Cardona gave a shout and sprang forward. The tall man darted a quick look down the hall. Cardona was too excited to note his face. It was The Shadow who recognized it. With that glimpse, The Shadow knew that Cardona's hunch, though hazy, was a good one.

The man at the doorway was an emissary of crime, one who served a master murderer. The Shadow had spied the living face of Captain Stanley Chabron.

CHAPTER XV

DEATH CLAIMS THE TRAIL

SPIED at the moment when the package was exchanging hands, Chabron gave immediate proof that he was a man the law wanted. The Spanish oath that he spat expressed neither fear nor alarm. It was simply the vicious utterance of a rogue, thwarted in a deed that he deemed completed. His move indicated his mood.

Snatching the package from Lawrence's hands, Chabron gave the withery servant a shoulder jolt that staggered him against the wall beside the hat rack. Nestling the burden against his chest, Chabron hunched his shoulders like

a half back starting an end run. Head lowered, he started through the door.

Cardona gave the old police cry: "Stop, or I'll shoot!"

Chabron took the brownstone steps with a downward lope. Lawrence, hearing Joe's shout, went after him. Cardona, still leading the rush from Greville's office, had a stub-nosed revolver in his fist when he reached the door. He stopped to fire two shots above Chabron's head.

The Shadow arrived soon enough to halt Joe's fire; but he made no move to grab Cardona's arm. The Shadow saw the high aim of the gun; knew that Cardona did not intend to have his bullets take effect. Joe was a good man in a pinch. He knew that the bomb in Chabron's package might explode if he dropped the fellow.

Chabron was racing along the sidewalk, Lawrence was keeping up the chase, losing ground at every stride. Cardona fired two more shots, hoping to frighten

Chabron to a halt. Chabron did not heed them.

Keenly, The Shadow watched the racing assassin. He wanted to gain what slender clues he could: the direction of Chabron's spontaneous flight; whether he chose to continue his run, or pick a convenient taxi for his get-away.

Traffic had halted at sound of Cardona's shots; pedestrians were taking for cover. Chabron's chances looked bad. He was marked.

Long strides carried Chabron past Weston's car. It was then that The Shadow saw Chabron's goal, a halted taxicab nosed in toward the curb, thirty feet beyond. The driver was on the sidewalk, holding the door open. Chabron was

going to make it, a long way ahead of Lawrence.

Cardona shouted and fired his last two bullets. The taximan shifted away from the door. He was frightened, if Chabron wasn't. He started to get in the front seat of the cab. Then came shots from a fresh gun; quick stabs that meant

business.

Weston's chauffeur was on the sidewalk. He had seen Cardona fire; he thought that the range accounted for Joe's misses. The chauffeur took cool aim;

his second bullet clipped Chabron. The crook staggered beside the open door of the cab; stumbled as he poked his foot upon the step.

The taxi driver made a wild scramble for the street. He was right in a line with the chauffeur's aim. Lawrence came puffing up to Chabron; reached him

just as the chauffeur fired again.

Chabron must have taken that slug in the shoulder. He twisted, and sprawled into the cab. The package slid from his arms.

An instant later, space yawned where the taxicab had been.

JOE CARDONA clapped his hands to his eyes, to relieve them from the blinding flash that followed. The street was reechoing with a roaring peal that

resembled thunder. The Shadow felt the shock that quivered the brownstone steps beneath his feet.

The taxicab had been blasted as cleanly as had the truck that roared off the ferry boat; but this explosion was unintended. It carried its unwilling author with it; and another, also. Stanley Chabron was blown to atoms; Lawrence

had perished with him. Cars along the curb and in the street were jolted in all directions and showered with clattering chunks of the demolished cab.

Though the taxicab had withered like frail tissue, its steel frame had taken the brunt of the explosion. Except for Lawrence, no one was close enough to be severely injured. People were sprawled on the sidewalks; others were crawling dazed from automobiles. First-aid was on its way to those who needed it.

On the step above The Shadow and Joe Cardona, two men were standing, staring at the vacancy where the cab had been. One was Commissioner Ralph Weston; the other, old Conrad Greville. Each was gripped by a different emotion.

To Weston, that blast had marked the finish of the law's hard quest; a retribution, sudden and unheralded. Weston believed that a lone murderer was dead; for in Stanley Chabron, he visualized a single perpetrator of crime. It seemed justice, of a horrendous sort; but the murderer had deserved it.

Weston's regret concerned the fact that certain important points must remain unsolved. The two most vital were the identity of the murderer, and that

of another victim whom the killer would never reach.

To Greville, the explosion brought tragedy. Chabron's deserved fate was not the sight that stirred the old man's emotion. He had seen the end of his faithful servitor, Lawrence. Chance death had taken Greville's most trusted retainer. Slowly, Greville raised his hand to his eyes and bowed his grayed head with grief.

The Shadow spoke to Cardona, gave a calm reminder that awoke Joe to action.

"The cab driver," said The Shadow. "You will need him as a witness."

Cardona hurried from the steps; he found the cab driver crawling from beside the wall of the towering skyscraper that flanked one side of Greville's house. Joe took the man into custody. The cabby offered no protest.

THE cabby said he had picked up Chabron at the Forty-second Street ferry slip, where boats came in from Weehawken. Then he had driven Chabron to

Greville's house. When they stopped, Chabron had told the driver to wait for him.

From the cabby's story, The Shadow knew that Chabron had boarded another ferry at Weehawken, one that made a shorter crossing than the Jersey Highlands, which docked down at Twenty-third Street. Evidently, Chabron had watched the failure of the exploding truck and had communicated with Gary Leed, telling him to take a bomb to Darrier's penthouse to make another attempt on his life. Then Chabron had come to Greville's.

The police commissioner was still thinking of only one murderer. Weston was certain that with the blowing up of the taxicab, the man who had met his doom was the real killer.

Weston looked toward Conrad Greville, hoping that he would relieve the old man of anxiety concerning the future. Greville was seated with hands folded on the desk, his head bowed.

"I feel sure your danger is ended, Mr. Greville," declared Weston. "Your son must have known more than you supposed. The murderer feared that you had learned the name's of the five conspirators; that with the deaths of Zanwood, Mook and Darrier, you had guessed the truth."

"He wanted to be free to murder the fourth of his associates. He knew that if his name and that of his intended victim were made public, his last stroke would be balked. He made a bold attempt to deliver a bomb to you, hoping that when your servant brought the package in here, all of us would be slain. That attempt proved a boomerang that produced the killer's own death."

Conrad Greville raised his head. His eyes had a far-away gaze, as though they sought to pierce the veil of years.

"My son, forget not my law," quoted Greville, his tone solemn. "'Enter not into the path of the wicked; and go not in the way of evil.'"

Those words were Greville's recollection of past advice; the precepts that he had given his son Randolph. They had not been followed. Dry-eyed, Greville was contemplating the fate that had befallen his son, whom he had counted as forgotten for six years.

The old man's features softened, but not in recollection of Randolph. The dimming of his eyes concerned another. He was thinking of his servant, Lawrence.

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'" The words were choked with sorrow, "The memory of thy service shall dwell with me. Faithful unto death."

With that appreciation of his perished retainer, Conrad Greville again bowed his head. Weston was moved by the old man's grief. Though Lawrence had made a foolhardy pursuit, it could not be denied that the servant's loyalty to Greville had inspired him to the effort of overtaking Chabron. Weston regretted

Lawrence's death; but there was nothing he could say to soften it.

"Let us go, Cranston," suggested the commissioner, in an undertone. "We shall wait for Cardona outside. I shall arrange for plain-clothes men to cover this vicinity. I can call Mr. Greville later, to learn if he requires others inside."

THE SHADOW accompanied the commissioner through the deserted hall, which seemed gloomier than before, with Lawrence absent. The grandfather's clock chimed the hour with melodious tone; then followed donging strokes that could have been a knell for Lawrence.

On the front steps, they found two patrolmen whom Weston had stationed there. The officers saluted as the commissioner passed.

When they reached the official car, The Shadow decided not to wait until Cardona returned. Leaving Weston, he strolled in the direction of Times Square, his pace leisurely. There was no need of hurry. The Shadow intended to reach Moe

Shrevnitz's taxi; there, don garments of black and start forth on a new quest.

There was sufficient reason, though, to avoid haste. The Shadow intended to return to Greville's; he did not want to arrive there until after Weston had gone.

The Shadow had come to definite conclusions, that he had not expressed while playing the part of Lamont Cranston.

The Shadow knew that the death of Stanley Chabron had not ended the trail of murder. The evil master who controlled the campaign of death had used Chabron as a tool; and he had another worker to replace him. There was still cause for murder. Kent Darrier's confession showed that two men remained of the five who had formed a crooked band.

The Shadow wanted the names of those two men. He had suggested once that they might be learned at Greville's. He believed it yet, despite the fact that the old files had not divulged the needed names. The Shadow's reason for such belief was based on Chabron's visit to the brownstone mansion.

Unless there was a chance that old Conrad Greville could have known those names, Chabron would never have risked the dangerous trip that had resulted in his death. Chabron had come to Greville's at the order of a master crook, a cunning plotter who regarded the move imperative.

To uncover the final clues he needed, The Shadow had resolved upon a silent search within the portals of the brownstone mansion.

Death had again claimed the trail. The Shadow intended to regain it.

CHAPTER XVI

TWO NAMES OF CRIME

THE skyscrapers that flanked Conrad Greville's mansion had windows that opened directly above the roof of the old house. They afforded easy access to the roof; but there were problems that made the route difficult.

First, the location and entry of a suitable office, in order to reach its window; furthermore, the barriers with which the roof was provided.

It was logical that a house so situated would be strengthened against entry from above. Otherwise, burglars would soon attempt to enter it from one of the office buildings. Rather than encounter delay and difficulties, The Shadow picked a different path. He decided to enter the house from the back.

There, a skeleton building was under construction, to serve as a link between the skyscrapers. It formed an open stretch of steel latticework between

the rear street and the back of Greville's house. Completely dark, the structural steel framework offered the very type of approach that The Shadow preferred.

When he began his journey, The Shadow followed ladders that took him several floors above the street. From the rear girders, he gained a bird's-eye view of the mansion, which showed quite plainly between the sheer white walls of the skyscrapers. The ancient structure was topped by a flat roof that formed a smooth, solid surface.

The roof had been completely tinned, probably at the time when the skyscrapers were built. Thus it afforded no means of entry, either by trapdoor or skylight. Since convenient access to the roof would be needed in case repairs were necessary, a metal ladder ran from one side of the roof up to a

ledge of the tall office building beside it.

The ladder was a metal one, built in the skyscraper wall; its height about eight feet. The high front of the brownstone house concealed it from the street; but it was plainly visible from The Shadow's present point of observation. Doubtless, provision had been made for this small detail when the skyscraper was constructed. Since Conrad Greville had originally owned the property where the big building stood, he could readily have arranged for this permanent right of way to his own roof.

The ladder was useless to The Shadow; he saw that the roof offered no access to the house. The back of the building, though barely visible in the darkness, promised a way of entry. Greville's mansion had a small back yard, which contained two trees, a rare sight in central Manhattan. There was a high stone wall in back of the yard, surmounted by a row of iron pickets. That barrier was easy for The Shadow.

DESCENDING to the second floor of the skeleton building, The Shadow followed a projecting girder. Swinging from it, he lowered his legs and began a pendulum motion, back and forth. His body gained momentum. The Shadow released his hold and launched forward through the air.

The long swing scaled him toward the pickets on the fence; the beginning of his plunge threatened to pin him on the iron spikes. Thanks to a sideward arm twist, The Shadow avoided them. He cleared the points like a pole vaulter; performed a half turn as he fell and thudded, feet-first, in the turf of Greville's back yard. From there, The Shadow approached the house.

The Shadow found bars on the rear windows of the ground floor. But the second floor was unprotected. It had massive iron shutters; but they were open.

Greville never ordered them barred, except when his house was unoccupied.

Gripping the wall with his fingers, The Shadow took a toehold. He reached the second floor and made immediate entry through a half-opened window.

Passing through a deserted room, The Shadow found a passage, reached the front stairs and descended to the gloomy hallway below.

The place was deserted - exactly as The Shadow had last seen it. He crossed the hallway toward the vestibule, increasing his glide when he heard a door open at the back of the hallway.

Reaching the darkness of the vestibule, The Shadow saw Conrad Greville come from his study, accompanied by a palsied old servant who looked twice as old as Lawrence.

The Shadow knew that the man must be Foster, the other retainer whom Greville had mentioned. Pale, stooped and shaky, Foster looked like a sick man who had been called from his bed and placed on duty, only because his services were absolutely required.

Greville paused when he reached the front hall. He looked wearied; the sigh that he gave was an expression of his grief for Lawrence's death. With a shake of his head, he turned to the old servant beside him.

"There is little to do here, Foster," he said, sadly. "Put things away; then you may retire. Remember that you are to take over Lawrence's duties. Call

upon the other servants for any aid that you require. Good night, Foster."

Greville turned toward the stairs. Foster quavered a question:

"Wouldn't you prefer to use the elevator, sir? Or shall I help you ascend the stairway?"

"Neither, Foster," replied Greville, with a tired smile. "My knee has not bothered me lately. I have been going upstairs without help for several weeks.

I thought that Lawrence had told you."

Greville exhibited a slight limp as he went upstairs. It had not been noticeable when visitors had called on him in his study. Greville's spryness was hampered only when he undertook a climb.

As soon as Greville had gone upstairs, Foster arranged the hallway. The old servant had little to do there. He straightened a rug that had been scuffed in the rush after Chabron; replaced the high-backed chair, for it had been pushed aside.

He came to the hat rack by the vestibule; there, he picked up Greville's overshoes from the floor beside it and raised the seat of the bench to drop them into the empty interior.

Greville's umbrella was standing on the floor, leaning against the hat rack. Foster started to lay it on the bench; then changed his mind and put it in an old umbrella stand that was almost out of sight behind the vestibule door.

In that action, Foster almost rubbed shoulders with The Shadow, who was standing squarely against the front door; but the old servant's eyes did not discern the black-clad form. Foster's sight was very dim; he had been forced to fumble, even when he located the umbrella stand.

Foster went away. When the hallway lay dim and silent, The Shadow came from the vestibule and glided toward Greville's study. He entered, closed the door and turned on the lights. On the opposite side of the room was a door. The

Shadow opened it, found the elevator of which Foster had spoken.

The elevator was a small automatic one that Greville had installed for his

own use. It had a large plate with buttons marked "1," "2" and "3," for the different floors. Below the vertical row of buttons, the plate was blank. It lacked the customary "Go" and "Stop" buttons found in most automatic elevators.

They were not needed in this private lift, as Greville would have no occasion to stop the car halfway up and return.

In the filing cabinet, The Shadow found the documents that pertained to Randolph Greville. He wanted to examine them more at leisure. He began to check

through the papers, studying them intently. Among them, he found typed references to letters and notebooks that had belonged to Randolph Greville.

Some of the wayward son's own notations were among the papers; they included tabulated figures referring to the finances of the Scarborough National Bank. Others, though, were missing.

Obviously, detectives had been given access in the past to Randolph's papers and had copied all references that seemed important. It was likely that the originals had been kept; they might be somewhere in Conrad Greville's safe.

It was natural enough that the old man should have forgotten them, since the files covered the important details.

BEFORE tackling the safe, The Shadow decided to search elsewhere. He started with the old bookcases. There was a drawer beneath each one. In the first drawer, The Shadow found bundles of old reports on building rentals. In the second were photographs, theater programs, opera librettos, all old souvenirs that had probably been kept by Conrad Greville.

Coming to the third narrow drawer, The Shadow found it jammed tight. It required five minutes for him to ease it open without making noise or injuring the woodwork.

The drawer was filled with a disarray of papers and notebooks that were crinkled; almost musty. They were the originals that The Shadow wanted.

It had become The Shadow's turn to scour these originals for clues that private investigators had missed. He was swift, but methodical, in his task. Nevertheless, when he had finished, The Shadow was forced to concede that the investigators had done a thorough job. Everything of worth had been gleaned from Randolph's papers.

There were certain references to sums of money, checked along with specified dates. Those could mean the loans that Randolph had made to the crooked combine, through Kent Darrier. Those references had been copied for the files; The Shadow had seen the same figures when he examined the records with Commissioner Weston. The notations were valueless in their present form. They might have been Randolph's own speculations of expenditures. The Shadow remembered that Weston had commented on that point.

Replacing the papers, The Shadow closed the drawer. His hand slowed its motion; his head inclined with one ear tilted. The Shadow pushed the drawer slightly inward; drew it out again. He had heard a faint crinkle, like a ghostly ruffle of the cluttered papers themselves. The Shadow tried to remove the drawer entirely. It would not come; there were projections at the back that held it.

Withdrawing one glove, The Shadow reached to the back of the drawer, wedged his fingers over the edge, pressing his knuckles against the solid surface above. He encountered crumpled paper; he fished for it, straightened it and gained a corner. Slowly, he pulled a wrinkled sheet into view. It was a hastily scrawled statement, in the hand of Randolph Greville.

THE date that the paper bore was the day of Randolph's suicide. The paper was a confession of his part in crime. In brief sentences, it corroborated Kent Darrier's story. Its last paragraph brought the information that The Shadow wanted.

"Knowing that Darrier had tricked me," The Shadow read, "I tried to learn the names of the others. Darrier once mentioned two stock promoters. They could be George Zanwood and Dudley Mook. He made telephone calls from my office, during my absence. I learned the numbers later. One was to Lester Tyrick, an importer, the other to James Hedden, who owns doubtful oil-well options. All four may be involved with Darrier. I have no way to prove it."

The note ended with a brief, disjointed paragraph, in which Randolph Greville stated that suicide would be his only out. The note was unsigned. Evidently, Randolph had hurriedly left it in the drawer where he had placed his own private papers. He had come here on a secret visit, during his father's absence.

The Shadow laid the scrawled paper upon those in the drawer. He pushed the drawer shut and slowly drew it open. He caught a momentary glimpse of the suicide note as it slithered past the back edge of the drawer. Pushing the drawer shut, The Shadow could hear the paper's faint crinkle.

The vanished paper told a plausible story of its own.

The Shadow could picture Randolph Greville thrusting it in that packed drawer, and closing the drawer hurriedly. He could see Conrad Greville, later, opening the drawer for the private investigators, to begin the search into his son's business transactions.

The drawer, when opened, had not revealed that added paper, which could so easily slide down in back of it. Randolph Greville's all-important testimony

had
remained forgotten.

The Shadow's whispered laugh was subdued. The Shadow had pieced facts from the past. To them, he had added discoveries of his own. He had gained the essential data that he needed. By letting the suicide note go back where it had been, The Shadow was keeping his findings for his own.

The Shadow had learned the two names that he needed - those of the men whom Kent Darrier had inferred but not named. Lester Tyrick - James Hedden. Darrier, himself, had not been able to choose between them, though he had classed one as a hidden murderer, the other as a certain victim. It would be The Shadow's task to determine the status of those two. His whispered laugh told that he regarded its accomplishment a certainty.

Lester Tyrick was still an importer; his business had swelled in recent years. James Hedden had given up his uncertain business in oil-well options. He had become a prominent controller of mining operations, with large, established holdings in Mexico.

THE study light clicked off. The Shadow glided silently out through the hallway, where a single night light gave insufficient glow to reveal his moving form. He mounted to the second floor, departed by the window of the empty room.

From one of the back-yard trees, The Shadow made a swinging drop across the picket-pointed wall.

Soon afterward, The Shadow's cab rolled past the front of the brownstone mansion. A watching headquarters man saw the vehicle pass, and took it for a chance cab going by. Peering outward, The Shadow gave a last look at the darkened windows of the gloomy old home.

There, Conrad Greville slept. The old man's awakened recollections of his son, Randolph, were obliterated by slumber, along with the sorrow that he felt for the death of his faithful servant, Lawrence. Yet, from that mansion, The Shadow had brought facts that had lain buried through six long years.

The law had failed to learn the names that Kent Darrier tried to give. The Shadow had gained them; he had also acquired other evidence that had slipped the law. He was ready to establish the identity of the supermurderer who blasted victims to their doom.

That killer intended further crime. Even with Stanley Chabron gone, he still possessed a working tool in Gary Leed. The latter's name was yet unknown to The Shadow; but he expected soon to learn it.

For The Shadow's quest had reached the crucial mark from which he could deal directly with all thrusts that a hidden murderer might make.

CHAPTER XVII

CONNECTED LINKS

AT eleven o'clock the next morning, a young man was standing by the window of a room in the Hotel Metrolite. His keen eyes had a steadiness; his clean-cut features did not reveal the tenseness of his thoughts. Through long experience in The Shadow's service, this young man had gained complete ability to curb

any impatient urge for action. He was Harry Vincent, most capable of The Shadow's agents.

Important duty lay ahead. Harry knew it from a message that he had received late the night before. That duty concerned the murderous explosions that had continued to terrorize New York. Awaiting instructions, Harry could only guess at the causes behind those frequent blasts. He had read the morning newspapers; but they did not help him greatly.

Those journals told of two explosions directed at a shipping man named Kent Darrier. The first had missed, while Darrier was aboard a ferry boat. The second had wrecked the terrace of Darrier's penthouse, abolishing him along with an expensive flotilla of Japanese goldfish.

With Darrier gone, there had been a third explosion - a thrust directed at

Conrad Greville, multimillionaire real-estate owner. The law had met that stroke. The murderer had been checked when he delivered the bomb. The blast came when he fled. The terrorist himself had been destroyed.

All that was unquestionably true; but there were many points not fully cleared.

While Harry still speculated on the subject, there was a knock at the door. Harry received a bulky envelope that bore the imprints "Investment Reports." It was from the office of Rutledge Mann, who acted as a contact for The Shadow. Dismissing the bell boy who had brought the envelope, Harry opened the packet.

One typewritten page gave Harry the facts that lay behind the news. He learned of Darrier's statement to Joe Cardona; that gave him the link between Darrier and Greville. There were added facts, however, that the law had not learned. Through The Shadow, Harry was provided with the names of the two men whom Darrier had been about to name: Lester Tyrick and James Hedden.

The Shadow had checked facts on both the importer and the mining operator.

Tyrick and Hedden were alive and well. If the police should learn of them, Commissioner Weston would completely reject his already slipping theory that the master murderer had died last night. Weston had told that to the newspapers, but was by no means certain of his statement that the superkiller was dead.

The Shadow's statement declared that the dead man was Stanley Chabron. That ended The Shadow's search for the soldier of fortune. The Shadow had chosen another man whom he intended to cover; one whom he would find without difficulty. The Shadow's choice was Lester Tyrick.

Harry's job would be to meet James Hedden.

THERE was a reason why The Shadow had assigned that duty to Harry. Hedden had a daughter, Daphne, who was well known in social circles. A month ago, society columns had announced her engagement to a young mining engineer named Gary Leed, formerly a manager of a Mexican mine controlled by Hedden.

The connection struck Harry instantly. Leed had the very qualifications of the man for whom Harry had searched. He could be the explosive expert who had teamed with Captain Chabron!

Harry had heard of Gary Leed; knew that the young engineer had guest privileges at the Moto Club, which was composed entirely of engineers. He had supposed, though, that Leed was a mechanical engineer; and the fact that the fellow was socially prominent had made his name seem an unlikely one. Harry understood why he had not met Leed at the Moto Club. Leed was probably living at Hedden's.

The Shadow's instructions were for Harry to meet Hedden through Leed. In order to further that meeting, The Shadow had arranged the proper introductions; that was why instructions had not arrived until eleven o'clock.

Examining the additional contents of the bulky envelope, Harry found himself plentifully armed with weapons of approach.

Here were testimonials of Harry's long service as an engineer in a Canadian mine; recommendations from his supposed employers; facts concerning the mine itself; the names of those who had worked with him. By the time Harry had memorized the details and pocketed the necessary papers, he felt that he could go up to Canada, hang his hat on the peg in the mining cabin and announce: "I'm back again, boys!"

He certainly had enough to work on Gary Leed and sell the mining engineer on the idea that he had worked in Canada. To make it all the better, Harry found a doctor's certificate with the papers. It stated that he, Harry Vincent, could not stand the heart strain that might come with future attacks of asthma; and advised him to sojourn in a Southern climate.

THE first step was to contact Gary Leed. That could best be done from the Moto Club. Harry headed there, and asked the secretary how he could get in immediate touch with Gary Leed.

"You're in luck, Vincent," the secretary informed him. "Leed just dropped in. The first time he's been here in weeks. He's out in the lobby, making a telephone call."

Harry went to the lobby. The second of two telephone booths was partly closed. Harry approached it; pausing, he overheard a man talking on the telephone. Harry caught the last words:

"Yes. I can work it all right, if he'll talk to me... It would be best to get a man, though. I can do it, easily enough. Maybe today... I understand. It wouldn't do to rush it..."

The voice ended. The telephone booth opened. Harry was prepared for the man who stepped out; nevertheless, he needed effort to cover his elation.

The man from the telephone booth was of medium height, and broad-shouldered. His eyes and hair were brown; his square-jawed face carried the fading remnant of a tan. Feature for feature, he fitted the picture that The Shadow had given Harry of the man who served as Chabron's running mate. The man that Harry wanted was Gary Leed.

Brown eyes were sharp as they noted Harry. The Shadow's agent met them with a dubious gaze. Hesitatingly, Harry asked:

"Mr. Leed?"

Leed nodded. Harry introduced himself; apologetically stated that it concerned a job. He mentioned, of course, that he was a qualified engineer, and

a member of the club. Leed's lips produced a half smile. He cut short Harry's apologies, suggested that they lunch together at the club.

They were halfway through lunch before Leed returned to the subject. He did so with the question:

"What did you mean by a job, Vincent? Something with one of Mr. Hedden's companies? You thought that I could gain you a hearing because I'm to be his son-in-law?"

"That's about it," admitted Harry. "Mine is an unusual case, though. There are plenty of jobs I could take, but I'm particularly anxious to get one in Mexico."

"Why is that?"

Harry began a smooth story about his experience in Canada. It registered with Leed. The fellow began to smile, though, when Harry brought up the subject of asthma.

"It's no laughing matter, Leed," expressed Harry. "When those attacks hit

me, I'm done! I went to the Bahamas a while last winter and never had a touch of it while I was there. I'm just hanging onto myself, here in New York, hoping

I can get South before it hits me again."

"I'm sorry, Vincent," apologized Leed. "it just seemed funny, your bringing in asthma as a final recommendation, with a physician's certificate to

back it. Why, with these facts you have given me, you are a find; the very sort

of man that is needed at the Mexicana Mines.

"I guess, though, that you were wise to include the statement about your health. It proves that you'd have stayed on your old job if you could have. It means, too, that you'll have reason to stick in Mexico. That's been our big trouble, holding men there."

Leed's tone had become oily. Harry suspected something. It came.

"You know, Vincent," confided Leed, "I was just talking to Mr. Hedden when

you met me. He was telling me that I ought to sign up a capable man for Mexicana. He said, though, that I shouldn't rush about it; he wanted me to make

sure that applicants were good ones. I'm going to call him up right now, and tell him about you."

Leed went out to the telephone. While he was gone, Harry pondered. He had caught enough of that previous conversation to wonder. The job that Leed had talked about over the wire didn't sound like one with the Mexicana Mines.

Leed came back with the information that he had talked to Hedden, but only

briefly. He suggested that they drive out to the house. Harry agreed. They took

Leed's expensive coupe for the journey. Harry watched Leed handle the car as they drove toward Long Island, where James Hedden lived.

In the past, Harry knew, Leed had been too foxy to use his own coupe for certain trips. That was why he had been in Burland's, the night that he and Chabron had found it necessary to demolish their car. Harry shook these thoughts in order to chat with Leed, asking him technical questions about the Mexicana Mines. In the course of the conversation, Harry learned that Leed had first met Hedden when the mine-owner made a visit to Mexico.

Leed had also met Daphne at that time. He had kept up correspondence with her. At last, he had saved enough money to take a vacation and come to New York. He had met Daphne again; they had become engaged. Hedden had promised Leed a New York job; so he had never returned to Mexico.

The story sounded like a true one; but Harry could see a possible purpose behind it. Leed could be trying to hide a close connection with Hedden, attributing his meeting with Daphne as a reason for close acquaintance. Harry saw that the case could be the other way about. He pictured Hedden as the master crook, using Leed as his tool, with Leed's engagement to Daphne as the blind.

WHEN they reached Hedden's home, Leed parked the coupe in a driveway behind the pretentious house. He suggested that he go in first; so Harry remained in the car, idly watching gardeners at work on a lawn as smooth as a golf green, noting a perfect tennis court that had been rolled to absolute smoothness, but which had no players.

It was half an hour before Leed returned; when he reentered the car, he started it from the driveway and headed toward the road back to New York.

"I couldn't arrange it this afternoon Vincent," informed Leed. "The old man was very much upset about something. He wanted me to handle an important matter for him. Tell me - are you doing anything this evening?"

Harry replied in the negative. Leed seemed pleased.

"Good," he decided. "I'll arrange it for you to go out to Hedden's for dinner. Come along with me, will you, while I see a chap that Mr. Hedden asked me about? After that, I'll call the house. He'll be in a better mood. The dinner invitation will be easily arranged."

Harry gave his agreement. Leed reached into his vest pocket and produced a slip of paper.

"Unfold that, will you, Vincent?" he asked. "Read me the name and address again, so I'll know where we're going. That's the slip that Mr. Hedden gave me."

Harry unfolded the paper. For a moment, his eyes stared. Promptly, he read the information, giving both name and address in an indifferent tone. With that, Harry passed the paper back to Leed, who was staring ahead, watching the road as he drove.

Gary Leed had not noticed Harry's momentary surprise; a fact which pleased The Shadow's agent immensely. For that slip of paper was another link - one that left Harry bewildered by its significance.

The name of the man whom James Hedden had instructed Gary Leed to visit was the very man whom The Shadow intended to cover in person. Gary Leed was taking Harry Vincent to the office of Lester Tyrick, the importer!

CHAPTER XVIII

CROSSED TRAILS

WHILE Harry Vincent and Gary Leed were riding in from Long Island, a visitor was present in the sumptuous offices of Lester Tyrick, the importer. Tall, calm-faced, his features almost masklike, this stranger sat in a finely paneled anteroom, while his name was being announced to Tyrick.

The sound of voices came from an opened transom; the girl secretary's announcement was answered by a rumbled tone, plainly audible in the anteroom:

"Certainly. I shall see him at once."

The girl reappeared from Tyrick's office, to relay the information:

"Mr. Tyrick will see you, Mr. Cranston."

The Shadow found Tyrick seated behind a huge desk in a room that was more than ample for a private office. Tyrick was a frail man, peak-faced and bespectacled. He looked very puny in his oversize office, but he was evidently a man who regarded himself as important. The flash of his grayish eyes showed it. So did the precise pursing of his narrow lips.

Tyrick arose, stretched far across the desk to shake hands. Dropping his important manner, the importer expressed his pleasure at receiving so celebrated a visitor.

"Being an importer," remarked Tyrick, "I keep close touch with business houses abroad. Time and again, Mr. Cranston, I have heard your name mentioned. Always by foreign merchants with whom you have dealt."

"I am glad that they remember me," replied The Shadow. "I meet many persons abroad, Mr. Tyrick; and some have mentioned you to me. By a curious coincidence, however, the latest mention occurred here in New York, last night."

"I have many friends in New York, Mr. Cranston."

"This man was not a New Yorker. He was a person whom I once met in Mexico. He gave me a message for you."

Tyrick's lips opened, as though they were about to phrase a name. As the

importer paused, The Shadow quietly supplied it:

"Captain Stanley Chabron."

TYRICK'S glance was nervous. The importer drummed the edge of his desk. He

twisted his head toward the window, then faced his visitor.

"Captain Chabron has been here to see me," asserted Tyrick. "Not frequently, you understand. Infrequently. He had a proposition that he wanted me to accept. Did he mention it to you?"

"Not specifically."

"It referred to imports. We are frequently troubled by changes in the government regulations of Central American countries. Certain taxes are made at

sources, after we have completed purchases. Generally, we have to pay them."

"Unless you know the proper government officials."

Tyrick smiled wanly.

"You have guessed it, Mr. Cranston. Rather, I should say, you are familiar with the ways of those governments. Chabron knows them, too. He wanted to work for me, making the proper contacts. He claimed that if I hired him as trouble-shooter in Mexico and Central America, he would save me a great deal of money.

"Unfortunately, Chabron has been more than a trouble-shooter. He has been a trouble-maker. You understand, Mr. Cranston, that is no reflection against Captain Chabron. He simply has a thirst for adventure. I am afraid that he might contact the wrong officials. I have decided, finally, that I have no place for him."

It was The Shadow's turn to smile. He was handling Tyrick just as he wanted.

"Chabron told me that, last night," remarked The Shadow. "He wanted me to tell you that he had taken over another job. He left on the Havana Special. I presume that he intends to do some trouble-shooting - or trouble-making - in Cuba."

Tyrick's eyes flashed in pleased fashion. His expression could have meant that he was glad to learn of Chabron's departure. It might have been that he was pleased to hear a report that indicated Chabron was still alive. The Shadow

had mentioned the Havana Special because it left an hour after the time of the explosion at Greville's.

"Tell me," questioned Tyrick, leaning forward. "Did you see Chabron aboard the Havana Special?"

"No," replied The Shadow, in a thoughtful tone that suited Cranston. "I saw him before the train left. Not very long before. I am positive, though, that he has left New York."

Tyrick's expression did not change. The importer expressed his thanks for the information. As The Shadow arose to leave, Tyrick accompanied him to the door, remarking:

"I had arranged to see Captain Chabron this evening. Since he has sent word of his departure, I shall cross out the appointment."

As The Shadow was leaving the anteroom, two men entered. He stepped aside;

they scarcely noticed him, for they were engaged in conversation. The Shadow recognized both. One was his agent, Harry Vincent; the other, Gary Leed. The Shadow had expected that Harry would find Gary to be the pictured man.

The Shadow gave a backward glance after the two had passed; again, he noticed the open transom above Tyrick's inner door. The Shadow continued along his way. He knew that he would hear from Harry, later.

The secretary appeared. Leed was introduced and admitted to Tyrick's office, while Harry remained in the anteroom. After the secretary had gone, Harry planned to listen at the inner door. He found it unnecessary. From where he sat, he could catch the voices that drifted through the transom.

The opening conversation made it plain that Tyrick had never met Leed before. Then came the importer's basso rumble, a tone that seemed hugely out of proportion to his size:

"Just why did James Hedden send you here, Mr. Leed?"

"To arrange a meeting," replied Leed. "Your secretaries have been calling back and forth, with no result. Mr. Hedden wanted me to call on you and set a time."

"Tell Hedden I'll see him any time he wishes -"

"This evening, Mr. Tyrick?"

"No. I have an appointment. Wait, though, it was canceled. What time does Hedden want to come and see me?"

"He can't get away this evening," informed Leed. "He has arranged to receive a guest at dinner. He would prefer to have you come out to Long Island."

Tyrick growled angrily, as though the suggestion did not suit him. At last, he decided to make the visit. Harry heard him arrange the appointment for half past eight.

After Leed rejoined Harry, he gave a sidelong look at the open transom, but made no comment. Harry was sure, however, that Leed knew the brief conference had been overheard. When they reached the street, Leed glanced at his watch, then said to Harry:

"It's getting late. I'll call the house and talk to Mr. Hedden. I'll fix it for you to come to dinner."

Leed walked to a corner cigar store. He had hardly gone before a paper fluttered in through the window of the coupe. Harry opened it; found a coded message from The Shadow. It was a single word: "Report."

The inked writing faded. That was the way with The Shadow's messages. Harry pulled a fountain pen from his pocket, lightly wrote a brief reply on the same sheet of paper, giving all the essential details of his meeting with Leed.

He kept adding brief sentences while he darted glances toward the cigar store.

Leed had not appeared when Harry finished. Folding the paper with the ink still damp, Harry pocketed his pen.

Leed came out from the cigar store; told Harry that the dinner date was fixed. He started to move his coupe from the curb. A streamlined taxi backed suddenly, locked bumpers with the shiny car. The jolt took place on Harry's side.

The driver of the cab clambered to the curb and hurried to look at the damage. He thrust his head through Harry's window and spoke to Leed:

"Sorry, bud. Didn't crack anything, though -"

"All right," snapped Leed. "Get that cab of yours out of the way before I shove it into the next car ahead!"

The cabby's hand was on the window ledge. So was Harry's. As Harry's hand moved back, the other slid over. As he hurried away, the cab driver took along Harry's folded report.

The cab driver was Moe Shrevnitz. As the coupe passed the taxi, Harry saw Moe speaking to a passenger in back. Though he could not see the passenger's face, Harry knew who was there. Moe had handed the report sheet to The Shadow.

HARRY kept up an intermittent conversation during the trip back to Long Island. His talk concerned mines and engineering; he listened while Gary Leed gave details regarding the Mexicana Mines. All the while, however, Harry kept

thinking of other matters.

The tie-up between Gary Leed and Stanley Chabron was obvious. The two had probably met in Mexico; had been hired there to come to New York on a secret mission of murder. The question was, who had employed the pair for that evil duty?

Certain evidence pointed to James Hedden. The mine-owner was one of the two men whom Darrier had sought to name. Leed was living at Hedden's home. His engagement to Hedden's daughter could be a bluff. Hedden wanted to see Tyrick, the one remaining man of the crooked band that had once included Zanwood, Mook and Darrier.

There were other points, though, that made Harry doubt Hedden's guilt, so far as murder was concerned.

Lester Tyrick could be the master criminal. Harry remembered Leed's call from the Moto Club. Leed had claimed that he had talked to Hedden; but Harry was suspicious of the statement. Maybe Leed had talked to Tyrick at that time. Picturing Tyrick as the master crook, Harry could see craft behind the game.

Tyrick could be watching Hedden, through Leed. He could have used Leed to talk Hedden into tonight's meeting. The talk that Harry had overheard between Leed and Tyrick could have been part of the game - a move to let a listener hear Tyrick's agreement to visit Hedden's home. Leed had made a telephone call after leaving Tyrick's. That could have been a call back to Tyrick, instead of a call to Hedden's home.

Had Harry guessed what The Shadow had divined and proven - that Lester Tyrick had known Stanley Chabron - Harry's suspicions of Tyrick would have increased. For The Shadow's information made the game an equal balance.

Even with that knowledge, however, Harry would still have been puzzled regarding the actual answer. Harry was confident on one point only: that tonight would settle all doubt as to who was murderer and who was victim. New crime would be due tonight; some way would have to be devised to thwart it.

The Shadow would know that way.

CHAPTER XIX

OLD FRIENDS MEET

DINNER at Hedden's was at seven.

Up until that hour, Harry Vincent did not meet James Hedden. He played a few sets of tennis with Gary Leed, until the latter suggested a swim in the Sound. Coming back from the private beach on Hedden's property, they met Daphne Hedden, returning from a horseback ride.

Leed introduced Harry to his fiancée, and the girl received the visitor cordially. Daphne was tall and willowy; her riding clothes made her appear abnormally thin. When Harry saw her later, after she had dressed for dinner, her appearance was considerably more graceful.

Through these two meetings, Harry was convinced that Daphne suspected nothing concerning her father's past, and that she was totally ignorant of Leed's present complicity in crime. The girl's dancing blue eyes seemed carefree, her blond head filled with no thoughts except those concerning social affairs.

In fact, Daphne gushed so much mild gossip concerning persons she had met during the day that Harry and Leed were forced to abandon all other conversation during the quarter hour that they spent awaiting dinner.

When a servant sounded the dinner chime, James Hedden arrived from a secluded corner room, puffing at the last remains of a cigar. Hedden was a bulky man, shorter than Leed and squattier. His face, like his hair, was grayish; his eyes stared beadily from the sides of his pudgy nose.

When Leed introduced Harry, Hedden looked puzzled for a moment. At last,

he mumbled with his pudgy lips:

"Yes, yes, of course. I remember, Gary, that you told me you would bring a friend for dinner. Glad to meet you, Mr. Vincent. Gary's friends are always welcome."

Increased dusk had rendered the interior of the large house quite gloomy. The dining room was immense; its chief light came from candles on the large, long table. Hedden ate morosely, in the manner of a dyspeptic, barely tasting some of the food that was placed before him.

He said nothing; seemed to hear little. He was not interested in the running conversation that Daphne provided. It could have been that Hedden was inured to his daughter's constant chatter; but Harry sensed that the mine-owner

was concerned with matters of his own. The proof of it came when Hedden asked a solitary question, addressed to Leed:

"You arranged the appointment, Gary?"

"Of course, sir," replied Leed. "For eight-thirty."

The question awakened Harry's suspicion that Leed had not called Hedden after the interview with Tyrick. At the time, he realized that Hedden might merely have asked it, absentmindedly; for it was certain that the squat mine owner was deeply concentrated upon his own affairs.

"I brought out a box of those special perfectos," added Leed. "I'll get them for you, Mr. Hedden."

Harry remembered that Leed had brought a box of cigars back to the car at the time he made the telephone call after he left Tyrick's. Hence, Harry did not recognize that Leed had made an excuse to leave the dining room.

EYES other than Harry's were the ones that followed Leed when he went out through the large hallway and up the broad stairs to the second floor.

There were many dark spaces in that hallway. One lay beside the stairway. From there, a shrouded figure was watching. The Shadow had arrived at Hedden's house. A side door, opening on the darkened lawn, showed the route by which The Shadow had entered.

Leed came downstairs carrying two packages. He turned sharply at the bottom step, so that he could not be seen from the dining room. He tiptoed past

the spot where The Shadow stood. He came to a short passage under the stairs; opened the door of a corner room.

The room was a small, square one, that served as Hedden's private den. Peering through the door that Leed left ajar, The Shadow saw the fellow lower the shades and turn on a single light. The room had a fireplace, chairs, ashstands and table. On the table was a radio. Leed laid his packages on the table; he opened the top of the radio cabinet.

One of the packages was flattish; it was the box of cigars. The other was larger and square. From it, Leed carefully removed a rounded object of metal. A

dial denoted its upper side. Leed set the dial and moved a little lever. He put

the object in the radio cabinet and replaced the lid. He tossed the telltale box into the fireplace, where glowing embers promptly ignited it.

Leed turned out the light and raised the shades. He picked up the cigar box, but did not come out through the door where The Shadow had watched. Moving

away from the passage, The Shadow heard Leed open a door that led through the living room. Watching by the stairs, The Shadow saw him steal from the living room into the hallway. The young man changed his pace; he strolled into the dining room, opening the cigar box as he arrived.

Since the dining room was on one side of the hallway, with the living room on the other, Leed's course had been an easy one. So was The Shadow's next move.

The den in back of the living room was a remote spot used only by Hedden. The Shadow had time to do some work there.

He entered, and repeated Leed's move with the light and the shades. He opened the radio cabinet, eyed the object that Leed had placed there. It was a bomb. Leed had set the time dial for quarter of nine. The Shadow carefully pressed back the switch that Leed had set. That bomb would not blow at its appointed time.

The bomb nullified, The Shadow began preparations of his own. He produced a tiny microphone, attached it behind one of the braces underneath the table. He ran a thin wire along the crack of the wall. Extinguishing the lights and raising the shade, he carried the wire through to the living room and terminated it in a corner nook. There, he attached earphones and hid them beneath a window seat.

The Shadow had brought this equipment specially. Its purpose would become evident by the end of the next half hour. It was already eight o'clock. Lester Tyrick was due to visit James Hedden at half past eight.

WHEN the group came from the dining room, The Shadow was gone. James Hedden gruffly excused himself. Smoking one of the fresh perfectos, he went through the hallway to his den. The others entered the living room. There they chatted until Leed suddenly remembered that he had bought two tickets for a play.

"I purchased them yesterday," he told Daphne. "You wanted to see that play. It's quarter past eight. We'll have to start before half past."

"You are forgetting Mr. Vincent," reminded Daphne. "Wouldn't it be best for him to come with us?"

"Vincent has to see your father," explained Leed. "That was the real reason why I brought him here. He will excuse us. Hurry, Daphne. We must start very soon."

While Daphne was getting her evening wrap, Leed talked with Harry.

"Wait right here, Vincent," suggested Leed, smoothly. "You've gotten acquainted with Mr. Hedden. Tell him that you want the job; and say that it has my full approval. Don't talk to him, though, until after that chap Tyrick has gone."

"Once he's chatted with Tyrick, Hedden will be easy to approach. He's got Tyrick on the brain, right now; but I can't guess why. I never heard of Tyrick before today. Anyway, Hedden said he had to talk to Tyrick; and I've seen him act that way before."

"As soon as the matter is off his chest, you can breeze right in on him and he'll be glad to see you. I know the way the old man acts."

Daphne arrived; she and Leed said good-night to Harry. They went out to the coupe, leaving Harry alone in the living room. In the minutes that followed, Harry sized his own situation.

It was logical for him to stay here and talk to Hedden later. Logical, too, that he should wait until after Tyrick's visit. If Harry had known nothing about Gary Leed's real character, he would have suspected nothing. Knowing Leed, things were different.

Something was due to happen after Tyrick arrived, and Leed had stationed Harry to be the fall guy. That was why Leed, in his telephone call, had specified that it would be best to get a man; why he had listened so eagerly when Harry had asked him for a job. Harry had saved Leed the trouble of coaxing

someone else out to Hedden's, to be there when the fireworks hit.

Whatever the game, whether Hedden or Tyrick stood behind it, the meeting between those two would not have been so promptly arranged if Harry had not been acquired. A master murderer intended a new explosion in this very house. Harry, whether he survived or not, would be accused as the man who arranged the blast. The master crook could throw the blame on Harry and thus clear Leed. In turn, Leed would blame Harry, and would have Daphne's testimony that Harry was a stranger in the house.

WHILE these thoughts were gripping him, Harry heard a ring of the front doorbell. It was almost half past eight. Lester Tyrick had arrived.

A servant appeared from the dining room to admit the visitor. Harry saw Tyrick go through the hallway. He was being conducted through the passage to Hedden's den.

The servant returned and went away through the dining room. Tensely, Harry arose, planning to approach the door at the back of the living room, in hope that he might hear something of the conference between Hedden and Tyrick. He heard a faint swish beside him; turned suddenly, to feel the grip of The Shadow's hand upon his arm.

Harry's chief had stepped in suddenly from the hallway. In whispered tone, The Shadow ordered Harry to follow.

The Shadow led the way through the side door. Outside, he eased Harry toward the shelter of some shrubbery. Harry could see the windows of the den. Hedden had lowered the curtains. Harry also saw The Shadow deliver a succession of blinks with his flashlight.

As The Shadow joined Harry, two men came creeping from the darkness to enter the side door of the house. Harry glimpsed their faces against the faint light from the hallway. Despite himself, Harry gave a gulp of surprise that brought a silencing whisper from The Shadow. The men at the doorway did not hear it. They were too intent upon their stealthy entry.

The pair that The Shadow had summoned to listen in on the secret conference were Commissioner Ralph Weston and Inspector Joe Cardona!

Lester Tyrick and James Hedden had met as two old friends. The law was to learn the result of their get-together, thanks to The Shadow.

CHAPTER XX

CROOKS ACCUSE

JAMES HEDDEN and Lester Tyrick formed a contrast as they faced each other in the small corner room. Both were puffing furiously at cigars; for Tyrick had accepted one of the choice perfectos that Hedden proffered him. The den was becoming hazed with tobacco smoke; but neither seemed annoyed.

"We've had enough of this friendship talk," decided Tyrick, suddenly. "After six years, we can forget it. It's been that long since we've seen each other, Hedden."

"True," admitted Hedden, his tone smoother than Tyrick's rumble. "You forget, though, that we ended our friendship only because it seemed advisable."

"We never were friends!" Tyrick's sharp eyes challenged through his spectacles. "We were two men out of five, who worked together to grab a million dollars -"

"Why not call us six?" queried Hedden, his interruption quick. "Young Randolph Greville helped us."

"Why do you mention him?"

"Because of what happened to him."

Tyrick's gaze narrowed at Hedden's words. Harshly, he demanded:

"Do I take it that young Greville's suicide was the inspiration that produced the murders of Zanwood, Mook and Darrier? That because one man had died, it seemed wise to dispose of the others?"

"That is my inference," returned Hedden. "You have put the questions, Tyrick. You can also answer them."

Tyrick grated a laugh.

"I expected you to bluff it, Hedden," he said. "So let's settle it quite impersonally. There are only two of us left. One of us arranged the murders of Zanwood, Mook and Darrier. Does that statement suit you?"

"Partly," responded Hedden. "There is more, though."

"Of course. The one of us who is not a murderer naturally has cause to worry about his own safety. He wants to know what he can do to insure it."

"Of course. I don't think that either of us cares to die, Tyrick. Nor do I consider it necessary."

"But the other deaths were necessary, in the past -"

"They appeared to be. Zanwood and Mook were always sharpers. They might have gone in for blackmail, I suppose. Darrier was the man who contacted young Greville. But you and I, Tyrick, should have no cause for mutual distrust. Particularly, since either one of us could deny the charges that the other might make."

TYRICK'S lips showed their first smile of approval. The frail importer glanced at his watch; put it away, to reach into his inside pocket.

"Here are all the papers that I have," he told Hedden. "They are nothing but figures referring to the amounts of money that young Greville gave Darrier, and the dates of such payments. There are no comments listed with them. However, if you regard them as important, I am willing to seal our bargain by destroying them."

Tyrick reached to draw the screen away from the fireplace. He was ready to throw the sheets into the blaze. Hedden stopped him.

"One moment, Tyrick," declared the mine-owner. "Your gesture is one that I should duplicate. I, too, have similar records. If you will wait here a few minutes" - Hedden glanced at his own watch - "say about five or six, I shall rejoin you. My papers are upstairs."

Hedden turned toward the passage door. It was slightly ajar; it began to close instantly. Hedden did not notice it, for he stopped at the table.

"While I am gone," he remarked, "you can listen to the radio. Make yourself at home, Tyrick. I shall be with you, shortly -"

"One moment, Hedden!"

Tyrick uttered the call fiercely. Hedden turned, to see the importer on his feet, a revolver in his hand. Though Hedden's pudgy face showed instant concern, he did not lose his command of motion. There was an ashstand beside him. With one sweep, the mine-owner grabbed it from the floor and made a leap toward Tyrick.

The importer side-stepped; lost his chance to fire. He locked with Hedden when the heavy man grabbed his wrist. Floundering toward the side door of the room, the two pulled up suddenly. Both subsided, Tyrick cowering with his lowered revolver, Hedden sinking the hand that gripped the ashstand.

THE door had opened. The Shadow stood with leveled automatics, a separate weapon for each of the two men. As the struggle halted, the staring crooks saw the cloaked figure fade. The door closed upon The Shadow; simultaneously, the door from the living room ripped open.

Swinging about, Hedden and Tyrick were confronted by revolvers gripped by Weston and Cardona.

"Your discussion has been recorded," informed Weston. "All that you said was overheard by dictograph. We arrest you, James Hedden, and you, Lester Tyrick, for complicity in defrauding the Scarborough National Bank."

Tyrick made a move to fling his papers toward the fire. Cardona's gun muzzle stopped him with its threat. Meekly, Tyrick handed Joe the papers; then a frantic gleam came to his eyes. Tyrick had dropped his revolver. His arms were up, but he managed a shaky gesture over his shoulder.

"Look in the radio!" he panted. "I think - I think you'll find a bomb there! Hedden wanted to kill me -"

Leaving both men to Weston, Cardona stepped over to the radio and found the bomb inside it. Not knowing what the position of the switch indicated, Joe simply disconnected the wire that joined the small time clock to the bomb. He compared his own watch with the time on the dial; saw that the explosion had been scheduled for within the next two minutes.

"That's why Hedden tried to run out!" expressed Tyrick. "He had a bomb set

here for me. He would have played innocent, afterward. He would have claimed that I brought a bomb myself; that I intended it for him -"

"Which you did!" roared Hedden, his bellow drowning Tyrick's maddened tone. "I never saw that bomb before! You had it planted here! That's why you were getting ready to leave."

"The bomb was in your radio, Hedden. In your house -"

"And you told the police it was there, Tyrick. They will be witnesses to that fact -"

Weston intervened with the dry statement:

"We can settle this matter, later. At present, we require those records of yours, Hedden."

"They're upstairs," growled Hedden. "In the bottom drawer of my old desk. They'll prove that I had a reason to leave this room."

CARDONA procured the papers. They were similar to Tyrick's; merely a collection of figures and dates. When he returned to the den, Cardona found Hedden and Tyrick still shifting the blame of murder. Joe gave the papers to Weston.

"These will suffice to implicate both of you in the bank failure," decided

the commissioner, as he eyed the prisoners. "We shall learn later which one of you was guilty of murder."

Tyrick and Hedden exchanged sour glances. Suddenly, Tyrick spoke to Weston.

"I deny all charges," announced the importer. "You can prove nothing by those figures. They do not refer to the Scarborough National Bank."

"Of course they don't," snorted Hedden, suddenly teaming with his old pal.

"They refer to business transacted between Mr. Tyrick and myself."

Commissioner Weston smiled serenely, as he motioned for Cardona to handcuff the prisoners. As the bracelets clicked, the commissioner made a statement that froze both Hedden and Tyrick. Until they heard it, both had been

cool enough to be a murderer; after it reached their ears, each looked

hopeless

enough to be a hunted victim.

"We came here," announced Weston, "on information from a source that we regarded as reliable. A telephone call was made to headquarters; though it was anonymous, Inspector Cardona recognized the voice of the speaker."

Weston had reference to The Shadow. The prisoners knew it. They remembered

the cloaked visitor who had so suddenly halted their fray. They realized that it

was The Shadow who had placed the dictograph; then opened the way for the law.

"That informant told us," continued Weston, "that it would be wise to take

you to the home of Conrad Greville, that he might see the men responsible for his son's crime and suicide. Conrad Greville has authentic documents that pertain to the Scarborough National Bank. Among them are lists of figures compiled by Randolph Greville.

"We shall compare those lists with yours. If the dates, and the amounts correspond, there can be no doubt regarding your guilt. I feel confident that we shall incriminate you completely. As for the murderer" - Weston's tone hardened - "he may find it impossible to cover his game. Something will undoubtedly occur at Greville's, to cause him to admit his crimes."

Weston's eyes were impartial as they shifted from Tyrick to Hedden.

Weston's confidence was genuine. He knew that the pair were allied only because

of their last hope that they might gain immunity by mutual denial of the bank crime.

That chance would be squashed at Greville's. After that, Tyrick and Hedden

would break. Whichever was innocent would fight so hard for life that the guilty

one would find himself at complete loss. To Weston, the task of picking the murderer had become a process of simple elimination.

THE prisoners were marched outside, down the driveway, to where Weston's car awaited them out front. They were placed in it. Weston and Cardona joined them. The commissioner ordered the chauffeur to drive into Manhattan.

As the big car moved slowly away, there was motion from a side lane that led off from the main road. A whispered laugh came from the interior of a parked coupe. The small car started; rolled swiftly toward a short cut to the main highway.

The Shadow had watched the enforced departure of James Hedden and Lester Tyrick. He knew the destination to which the prisoners would be taken. The Shadow had chosen the same goal.

When Hedden and Tyrick arrived at Greville's, The Shadow would be there to

hear the quiz that would reveal the identity of the master murderer.

CHAPTER XXI

MURDER DECREED

THOUGH it was only half past nine when Weston and the others reached Greville's, they found that Conrad Greville had retired. Foster was still on duty; he stated that he would announce that the police commissioner had arrived. The servant went upstairs.

It was not long before Conrad Greville appeared. The elderly man came down

the front stairs, fully attired. He had been reading in his room; and was just

planning to go to bed when Foster summoned him. Greville recognized Cardona, along with Weston; but he looked puzzled when he saw Tyrick and Hedden, particularly when Weston did not introduce them.

The commissioner left that until they reached Greville's study. There, Weston pointed to Tyrick and Hedden, calling each by name. For the first time, Greville observed that the pair were wearing handcuffs.

"These are the crooks we were after," explained Weston. "We thought that one of them might have died last night; but we have now proven that the man who brought the bomb here was a subordinate. We found another bomb, tonight. One of these chaps intended to dispose of the other."

Greville seemed interested to learn the details. Weston gave an account of all that had happened at Hedden's, omitting only the brief appearance of The Shadow, which Weston had not witnessed. The commissioner added that the bomb had been left at Hedden's house, with officers in charge. Both Tyrick and Hedden had been searched, so neither could make further trouble.

"From the conversation that we overheard," concluded Weston, "we know that these two men duped your son and were responsible for his dishonesty. We have brought them here to prove their part in that crime."

Solemnly, slowly, Greville shook his head. His eyes were wearied, listless, as they surveyed Tyrick and Hedden.

"My son did evil," pronounced Greville. "The wickedness of his ways was visited upon him."

"But these men are guilty," insisted Weston. "They were the ones who made the greatest gain."

"Let them restore the goods that they have stolen. That was what I sought to do, when I so diligently searched to learn where the funds had gone. All that you have done, commissioner, has been to remove the burden from my shoulders."

James Hedden's pudgy face had taken on a smile. Lester Tyrick's frail features showed eagerness. Both were hoping to profit by Greville's leniency. Weston, however, would not have it that way.

"It's the law's job to put these fellows behind bars," he told Greville. "I understand how you have suffered, Mr. Greville. You have tried to forget your son and all that concerned him. I'm not asking you to make charges of your

own against these prisoners. We can handle that. All I want is another look through those files that you showed us last night."

GREVILLE arose from his desk, opened the filing cabinet and produced the old investigation papers. Thumbing through them, Weston came to the figures that he wanted. He compared the sheets with those that belonged to Tyrick and Hedden. They tallied.

"Attested figures," announced Weston. "These couldn't be a coincidence. Neither of you" - he looked toward Tyrick and Hedden - "will be able to explain these away. We don't need the originals; nevertheless" - Weston turned to Greville - "we'd like to have them. It states here that they were among Randolph's own papers."

"You will find my son's papers in the drawer beneath the bookcase," returned Greville. "You are welcome to look through them, commissioner."

Weston opened the drawer; he rummaged through the papers and found the ones he wanted. He added them to the sheets from the filing cabinet.

"We have our evidence," announced Weston. "Enough to put these rogues where they belong. Think that over, Tyrick; and you, too, Hedden. Ten years, maybe twenty, in the penitentiary, for each of you. Only, one of you won't

serve that long. He will go to the chair for murder!"

"Murder," spoke Greville, solemnly, from behind his desk. "Is it not possible, commissioner, that both of these men are responsible for such crime?"

"We have no evidence of collusion between them," returned Weston. "On the contrary, we have evidence - Darrier's testimony - that indicates that one of them was intended as a victim. If you have any suggestion, Mr. Greville, that will enable us to pick the guilty one, we would appreciate it."

CONRAD GREVILLE rose sternly from behind his desk. His manner had changed.

His dignified face showed unrepressed anger. His eyes blazed as they stared toward the prisoners.

"Both are guilty!" accused Greville. "Both are murderers! They are the slayers of my son!"

Weston tried to calm the old man. He could not understand Greville's flare

of vindictiveness. Previously, in fact up to this moment, Greville had disclaimed all regret for Randolph's death.

"Your son was a suicide," declared Weston. "The law could not punish the men who forced him to his final step."

"The law is inadequate!" stormed Greville. "I can produce the evidence that will doom both of these men! Go to that same drawer, commissioner" - Greville's strong tone lessened as he pointed - "and reach behind it. You will find another paper there."

Puzzled, Weston followed Greville's suggestion. He brought out the crumpled paper; spread it in the light. Greville, watching him all the while, opened a desk drawer as if to produce added documents. Cardona and the prisoners saw a strained look come upon Weston's face. They wondered at the commissioner's expression. It was not explained until Weston spoke.

Looking up from the paper, the commissioner faced Greville and spluttered:

"You - you knew of this suicide note? Left here - by your son - the very day he died?"

"I did," replied Greville, solemnly. "I read the names of the five men who brought Randolph to his ruin."

"Then you should have informed the law -"

"That the law might do nothing?" Greville's tone was a sneer. "I did better than that, commissioner. I waited until those five proved their own guilt, by their prosperity. That sort of proof would not have satisfied the law. To me, it was sufficient. I waited seven years.

"I could have destroyed that paper; but I did not. I let it slide back behind the drawer, the day that I found it. I wanted it to be there, as though lost by accident, in case there should be reason for it to be discovered later.

That, however, will be unnecessary. The paper is no longer needed.

"Three of five men have died. The remaining two stand before me, awaiting their fate. I am greater than the law! My decisions shall abide; there is no appeal from them!"

WESTON was standing too amazed to move. His hands clutched the paper with a grip that almost tore it. Cardona was the man who saw need for action. Joe was coming to his feet, his hand shifting for a gun. The open move was too late.

Greville's hand whipped from the desk drawer. It carried a revolver. Steadily, the old man took aim on a line that covered both Weston and Cardona. His free hand gestured for their arms to come upward. Weston let the paper

flutter and lifted his hands. Glumly, Cardona made a similar reach.

Tyrick and Hedden cowered side by side, huddled in their chairs. Both were free of the murder charge; to them, it was small comfort. The master murderer had gained them; he intended that both should be his victims. Too late, they had discovered that their mutual mistrust had blinded them to the fact that Conrad Greville was the killer who sought their lives as fiendishly as he had taken others.

Greville stepped from behind his desk, keeping his gun steadied on Weston and Cardona. He moved toward the door at the far side of the room. His free hand reached for the knob. In harsh tone, Greville issued his final decree.

"In this elevator," he told the staring men who listened, "I have three hidden buttons. One locks the door of this room. The second starts a time fuse, set for seven minutes. The third offers me a sure route to safety.

"Long have I anticipated that if other measures failed, I could assemble my enemies in this room and hurl them to doom amid the shattered walls of this old mansion. I preferred to deal with my enemies separately. Tonight, I found it convenient to eliminate two together. My measure failed. I shall rectify the error here."

In his statement, Greville had solved the riddle of the bomb at Hedden's. Actually, James Hedden and Lester Tyrick had each suspected the other of planting it. Each had wanted a meeting with the other to insure his own protection. When the bomb was uncovered, both were alarmed.

Conrad Greville had foreseen that the two would meet. He had heard Darrier's statement to the law, as related by Cardona. Darrier had suspected either Tyrick or Hedden. With only those two left, it was natural that they would jump to Darrier's conclusion; and that each would suppose that the other must be the perpetrator of insidious crime.

With harsh, relentless tone, Greville completed his verdict: a sentence of death to others beside the men he hated.

"Innocent persons have died with guilty," declaimed Greville. "That was their misfortune. They chanced to stand too close to my path of vengeance. Tonight, two more will perish." His eyes gleamed upon Weston and Cardona. "This time, however, their deaths are necessary. Those who meddle with my schemes make themselves my enemies. They deserve the doom that I can decree!"

OLD Greville whipped open the door behind him; made a jabby gesture with his revolver as he reached for the switchboard within. His clawish fingers were feeling for the plate that concealed the special control board. His harsh voice uttered new words of triumph:

"Vengeance is mine!"

Half in the elevator, Greville stopped with an abrupt jolt. He snarled, maddened, as he wheeled out into the room. He swung straight toward the opened elevator. Cardona, no longer covered, yanked a gun but did not pull the trigger. Joe had no need to fire.

Greville's gun hand had sagged. The vengeful murderer was facing a muzzle that loomed from the darkness of the tiny elevator. Behind it came a living form of blackness - a cloaked being whose burning gaze was focused upon the snarling murderer.

The Shadow had arrived before the law. Waiting until the final moment, he had trapped Conrad Greville in the murderer's own stronghold!

CHAPTER XXII

THE SEVENTH MINUTE

"YOUR crimes were known."

Solemnly, The Shadow spoke those words to Greville. The killer knew their import. The Shadow's own presence was proof that he had penetrated deeply into Greville's schemes.

"Only vengeance could have inspired the deaths you ordained," declared The Shadow. "Had one crook sought to silence others, he would not have waited six years."

Greville glared. He had dropped his revolver; with it, he had discarded the last semblance of his dignified mask. His face was vicious, purplish. His raised hands slowly clawed the air with tigerish urge to be at The Shadow's throat.

"No sane murderer would have made a thrust at you last night," spoke The Shadow to Greville. "If he had feared your testimony, he would have disposed of you long ago. If he believed you ignorant, he would have let you live."

Coldly, The Shadow was coming to the event that had completely misled the law: the delivery of the bomb that had exploded in the hands of Stanley Chabron. Commissioner Weston could not quite grasp the answer; nor could Joe Cardona, until The Shadow added:

"You knew that, Greville. You pretended ignorance. You knew that the law would search the house, to make sure that you were safe. That was why you called Chabron here to take away the bomb that he would later need. The bomb intended for Lester Tyrick."

Greville's snarl told that The Shadow had revealed the truth. The Shadow's words ripped away the mystery. The facts came home to Weston and Cardona.

Greville had used two agents. Both were scheduled to act tonight. Chabron had a bomb waiting at Greville's; it would be his job to deliver it to Tyrick, while Leed planted one with Hedden. Last night, Darrier's unfinished statement had brought the law to Greville's house.

Chabron had come there also, to take away the bomb. Cardona had heard the doorbell. Joe had been quick enough to spot Chabron at the front door, receiving the bomb-laden package from Lawrence. It had appeared that Chabron was giving the package to Lawrence; not taking it.

The servant, like Chabron, was in the game. Discovered, they had both shown headwork. Chabron had snatched the bomb and taken it on the run, with Lawrence in pursuit. Lawrence had never intended to overtake Chabron. His chase

was a bluff; but it doomed him with Chabron when the blast went off.

What puzzled Weston and Cardona was how The Shadow had recognized the actual transfer of the bomb. It struck them that The Shadow must have been outside, watching the house; that he had seen Chabron enter without a package in his possession. They never guessed that there had been proof within the house - proof that they had overlooked.

The clues were Greville's overshoes and umbrella, which had been on the hat rack when The Shadow entered with Weston and Cardona. Afterward, those objects were on the floor beside the hat rack. They were proof that Lawrence had removed them, to lift the hat rack bench and take something from its interior. That "something" was the package with the bomb. Lawrence had not lived to replace the articles that he had moved. The Shadow had watched Foster pick them up, afterward.

CONRAD GREVILLE guessed the truth; recognized that The Shadow had been

here as Cranston. He realized, too, that The Shadow had returned to find the well-hidden suicide note.

"You could spare one bomb," announced The Shadow to Greville, "but the loss of one worker - Chabron - was serious. It left a double task to your other agent, Leed. He was forced to bring Tyrick and Hedden together, to finish them with a single stroke."

Tyrick, listening, had already been amazed at mention of Chabron's name. It was Hedden's turn to be astonished. It dawned upon him that Leed, with free run of his house and a third-floor room as testing laboratory, had been the actual maker of the bombs that had caused such great destruction.

Retreated to his desk, Conrad Greville spoke with sudden challenge. All the vindictiveness that he had held for years came forth in one outburst. In a tone that expressed both venom and pride, he took full credit for his crimes.

"I was sworn to vengeance," snarled Greville. "Five men were to die; I cared not who perished with them. I needed workers. I found one, a year ago. He

was Stanley Chabron. I told him that he would need a partner; a man who understood explosives. I suggested that he find one at the Mexicana Mines.

"Chabron went there. He chose Leed, because Leed knew Hedden's daughter.

I promised Chabron and Leed each a fortune; that was agreed, to aid me in my vengeance. Zanwood, Mook and Darrier were easy victims. Chabron and Leed conquered all complications. We knew, though, that Tyrick and Hedden would be more difficult; for they would suspect danger.

"That was why Chabron kept close to Tyrick. He had an appointment with him

tonight, to deliver that ill-fated package. A bomb that would explode if set down with the slightest jolt. Chabron intended to leave it with Tyrick. As for Leed, he was close enough to Hedden to arrange anything."

Wheeling as he spoke, old Greville faced Weston. Contemptuously, he railed at the commissioner.

"You represent the law," jeered Greville. "Arrest me, as a murderer! I shall go to the electric chair, carrying the satisfaction that my vengeance was

three-fifths complete. I hate the law; it has always tried to block me!

"Tonight, I sought freedom for Tyrick and Hedden, that I might plot again to murder them. You interfered for the law, promising to put them in prison where I could not reach them. But it was not the law that defeated me. It was The Shadow!"

Greville turned to shake a fist at the master sleuth who had exposed him. At that instant, the old man caught the sound of a sharp click behind him. He bobbed about, looking toward the main door of the room. It burst inward, to reveal Gary Leed, wild-eyed, a revolver in his fist.

NEITHER Weston nor Cardona recognized Leed; they had never seen him before. Tyrick and Hedden knew him; they were helpless. It was The Shadow, alone, who both recognized Leed and was in a position to deal with him.

Once it had been Chabron who was quick at gunfire, while Leed had preferred flight. Last night, Chabron had been the man to flee; another reason why The Shadow had suspected his false position. Desperation had forced Chabron

to reverse himself. That same condition governed Leed tonight.

Leed had probably made a telephone call to Hedden's, to learn that the police were in charge there. Learning that Weston had come to Greville's, Leed had headed here. He was ready to deliver slaughter the moment that he crossed the threshold. Seeing The Shadow first, he aimed past Greville, straight for the figure in black.

The Shadow did a quick, sideward fade, past Greville. Leed's bullet, an instant late, whistled by Greville's left shoulder and missed The Shadow also.

His hand jerking to new aim as it recoiled, Leed showed himself a remarkable marksman in the pinch. He jabbed a second shot past Greville's right

shoulder; and pumped a third one after it, expecting The Shadow to come squarely

in line with his fire. That was where Leed miscalculated.

The Shadow's sidestep had become a twist, hidden beyond the tall form of Greville. The Shadow never appeared at the old man's right side. Instead, he whirled back to his original position on Greville's left. While Leed was delivering his third, maddened shot, The Shadow fired his first.

The bullet clipped Leed's right shoulder; a broad target that The Shadow found with speed. Leed stiffened. As his face winced, his gun hand lowered. Overcoming the pain, he staggered forward, using every ounce of effort for new aim.

A revolver sputtered before The Shadow could fire. Joe Cardona was in action. He took no chances with Leed. Joe's bullets found the bomb-maker's heart.

AT that instant, Conrad Greville drove into action. A superman of murder, Greville proved himself a superman of strength. Leed's interruption had given Greville his chance to attack The Shadow. The old man used his opportunity; his

stored-up years of vengeful hatred seemed transformed into physical power.

Catching The Shadow's gun wrist with one fist, clawing his throat with the

other, Greville hurled the cloaked fighter off balance and flung him through the

door of the elevator. Rolling The Shadow to the floor of the little car, Greville drove his knee against The Shadow's neck, to replace the clutching hand. Stabbing that claw upward, the old man ripped away the false plate that was wedged in place over the special elevator buttons.

Over his shoulder, Greville saw Foster just inside the study door. The old

servant was bewildered; he was no tool of crime. He was loyal, though, to Greville. He heard his master's shout to close the outer door. Not realizing, that he would trap himself along with others, Foster scrambled to obey.

Cardona was aiming for Greville, shooting high. Either Joe was overanxious, or Greville bore a charm against bullets, for the hot lead spattered the walls of the tiny car, but never touched the berserk murderer.

Weston was shooting along with Cardona, His bullets were hastier, wider than Joe's. All that they did were to spur Greville to his final action. The vengeful murderer flattened his hand against three buttons in a row; sweeping his claw outward, he seized the elevator door and yanked it shut.

In one move, Greville started the seven-minute time fuse; put the automatic lock on the outer door; and started the elevator in upward motion. With him, sprawled on the floor of the elevator, was The Shadow; almost helpless beneath Greville's clutch.

All that The Shadow managed as the door swung shut was one shot from his automatic. His wrist clutched in a grip as tight as steel, The Shadow could barely raise his hand for that single gun stab. His bullet was low, along the floor, out through the elevator door. Greville cackled in glee at the seemingly feeble effort.

Greville would have lost his joy, had he seen the result of that one bullet.

Those who witnessed it were in the study. Thwarted in their effort to halt

Greville's moves, Weston and Cardona remembered Foster. They turned toward the outer door, realizing that the moment it shut, they would be sealed in a room of doom. They saw Foster with one hand upon the knob. The door was still half open.

Foster had sagged one step short. He was on one knee, unable to move farther. The Shadow's bullet had clipped him in the leg. It was scarcely more than a flesh wound; but it had halted Foster at the vital moment.

CARDONA pounced upon the servant and dragged him from the door. Weston was yanking at the door of the elevator, only to find it locked. Tyrick and Hedden were bawling in terrified tones that only seven minutes remained. Up from their chairs, they were waving their manacled hands as they crowded toward Cardona at the door.

Weston shook his head hopelessly. Nothing could be done to save The Shadow. Joining Cardona, the commissioner ordered a quick departure. The prisoners scurried out through the door, with Weston following. Cardona felt the knob of the door; noted that it would no longer budge. He left the door open, in the scant hope that The Shadow might find a chance to return. Half carrying Foster with him, Cardona followed Weston to the front door.

There were police outside. Weston was already shouting orders to clear the street. The brownstone mansion was doomed. There was just sufficient time to hurry every one from the neighborhood.

Anxious to complete that duty, Weston stood on the brownstone steps, posed like a field marshal, until Cardona dragged him away. Reminded that he was not immune to explosions, Weston legged it with Cardona for the corner.

MEANWHILE, the little elevator was going upward. Greville was still crouched upon The Shadow, using both hands to clutch the throat beneath the black cloak collar.

The Shadow had dropped his gun. He was gripping Greville's fingers, fighting off their strangling pressure. Jammed in a corner of the elevator, The Shadow was in a bad position. He still had strength; but he was reserving it. He knew that he could accomplish nothing until the elevator stopped.

Oddly, the elevator kept upward after it reached the third floor. The car jolted suddenly; there was a dull, ripping sound above it. The elevator still quivered upward; then stopped in mid-air, its floor on a level with the roof.

The elevator was of the plunger type. Greville had equipped it to rise four stories, instead of three. The top of the shaft was an open square, except for the tin sheeting of the roof. The powerful elevator had punctured the thin metal as easily as cardboard.

Greville's tall form rose. With titanic effort, the powerful old man hoisted The Shadow from the elevator, tried to fling him to the surface of the roof. The Shadow's hands shot for Greville's throat. Forgetting the increased pressure on his own windpipe, The Shadow gave Greville a taste of the choking treatment.

Greville yanked one hand away; clawed at The Shadow's face. The Shadow gripped Greville's wrist; their other hands shot free. The choking tactics ended. The two fighters locked in solid grapple and staggered across the roof.

His fury unabated, Greville was giving The Shadow a tremendous battle in the few minutes that remained. The murderer believed that he had completed his

final stroke of doom; that Lester Tyrick and James Hedden were trapped in the study below. He was glad that Weston and Cardona had been with them. All that he wanted, to complete his vengeful thirst, was The Shadow's doom as well.

That, and his own security. Greville hoped for years of life to come, that he might live, unrecognized, in some foreign port, to gloat upon the murderous vengeance that he had wrought.

It was Greville's double desire that brought the next result. While The Shadow grappled for a chance to gain a sudden advantage over his wiry foe, Greville guided the staggered route that they followed. They came to where the house roof met the skyscraper. Their shoulders jogged the iron ladder that led to the parapet, ten feet above.

Greville locked an arm about The Shadow's elbow; used one gripping claw to grasp the ladder. Straining to stupendous effort, the old man started a climb despite The Shadow's restraining weight.

The Shadow relaxed his struggle. He used the same climbing tactics. Swaying, grappling as they ascended, the two fighters reached the ladder top and stumbled over the parapet to the shelter of a space beneath it.

THE final minute had arrived. Greville knew it. The sudden surge that he gave made his previous feats seem mediocre. Lunging, Greville gained a fresh hold; with a strength double the greatest that The Shadow had expected, Greville drove for the parapet. He rolled The Shadow halfway over it; so far, that his own body followed.

Flattened on the very ledge, The Shadow could see Greville's demonish face glaring down at him, tinged to a satanic crimson by the reflected glow of the Manhattan sky.

Again, Greville's hands were at The Shadow's throat. This time, their pressure was doubly determined. Seconds more of such ferocious effort and Greville could roll The Shadow, limp and feeble, over the parapet, on a plunge to the roof top below. The Shadow's hands were no longer fighting off the grip.

One hand, though, was busy in the folds, of The Shadow's cloak. It had gained the second automatic. The Shadow had the muzzle jabbing upward, pointed to Greville's pumping heart. Eyes closed, his head roaring, The Shadow pressed his finger to the trigger. His ears heard Greville's furious, triumphant cry:

"Vengeance is mine!"

The Shadow's finger moved upon the trigger. One instant more, it would have completed the needed pressure. Victory would be gone from Greville. At that moment, when The Shadow had gained his chance to act, the need for his gunshot ended.

Greville's body gave a terrific quiver. The pounding of his heartbeats ended like a crash. His deep-digging claws relaxed. A snarled sigh came spontaneously from his distorted lips. His superhuman strength was gone; with it, his life.

His heart had snapped under the forced exertion that Greville had given it. That heart no longer needed a bullet from The Shadow.

SLIDING sidewise, Greville's body tumbled from the parapet. The Shadow clutched the stone ledge with his gunless hand. As Greville's form sprawled outward, The Shadow sank inward to safety. His head was disappearing behind the low wall as he saw Greville's body go headlong to the roof below.

The old mansion came up to meet its diving owner. It came up literally, with a thunderous roar that shook the towering skyscrapers to their foundations. With one volcanic blast, flame spurted high. Brownstone walls and

tin-sheeted roof mingled amid the tremendous repercussion.

The seventh minute was ended. Mined throughout its foundations, up into its higher walls, the ancient building was demolished into fragments that settled, crashing into the huge excavation that the explosion itself had made. Into that pit of fire and smoke went the shattered, broken frame of the master murderer, Conrad Greville.

From the parapet, The Shadow peered downward upon the ruin. A complete gap yawned where the mansion had been. In front was the deserted street, where traffic had been diverted and all persons moved away to safety. Greville's last and most devastating explosion had completely failed.

The pit below was a permanent tomb for that man of crime who had taken vengeance as a mission and made of it an evil career.

Instead of justice, Conrad Greville had sought to establish his own power.

Deeming himself higher than any law, he had lost the human quality of mercy. He

had let the innocent perish through his madness to inflict horrible death upon the guilty. His cause of vengeance had become a reign of crime. His fate was one that he had brought upon himself.

From the parapet that edged the skyscraper came the voice of The Shadow, speaking words that Greville had uttered - words taken from the Bible; but adding the phrase that Greville had forgotten, when he took unto himself a cause that was not his.

"'Vengeance is mine; I shall repay!'"

Solemn were those words The Shadow spoke; a fitting epitaph above the tomb of Conrad Greville; a warning that all others of the murderer's ilk should hear and heed.

But like all criminals, "Foxhound," whom The Shadow would meet in the near future, laid his plans of loot, unheeding of the grim warning. He would strike with a series of bloody murders, and escape with the speed of his namesake: "Foxhound."

The Shadow against "Foxhound" the chase would be!

THE END