



# THE DEAD WHO LIVED

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## CHAPTER I. CRIME SERVES ITSELF

A FRAIL, droopy-faced man was seated near the window of his hotel room writing a letter. At moments he paused, a sly smile on his small lips, a gleam in his birdlike eyes. During those intervals, he stroked his fingers through his thin, gray-streaked hair.

He finished the letter, applying his signature with a self-important flourish. The name that he wrote was George Thurnig; and from his manner, he seemed to think that many persons knew that name.

Thurnig was wrong. He was almost unknown, here in New York. Even in Cincinnati, where he hailed from, he was regarded as important only by persons who purchased automobile accessories at his small chain of retail stores.

By tomorrow, though, the name of George Thurnig would be heralded throughout the country in a manner which its owner neither expected nor desired.

At present, Thurnig was complimenting himself upon the letter that he had written. It was to a friend in Cincinnati, and though cordial in style, it concealed much more than it told. For one thing, it revealed

nothing of Thurnig's present purpose in New York.

That was a matter that Thurnig was keeping strictly to himself and a few other persons, who were also closemouthed.

The letter that Thurnig had written was limited to brief statements. It mentioned the fact that Thurnig had been taken ill shortly after his arrival at the New York hotel. Just another case of indigestion, the sort that frequently troubled him. The house physician had put him on a restricted diet for a few days.

That was ended. Tonight, the doctor had told Thurnig that he could go out, provided that he did not overeat or over-drink. So Thurnig intended to visit the bright spots, but keep within conservative bounds.

Sealing the letter, Thurnig addressed it and applied an air-mail stamp. He stepped toward the door and stopped. He had forgotten something; enough to make him worry for the moment.

Hurrying to an open suitcase, Thurnig pulled a wallet from a deep compartment. The wallet was stuffed with crisp currency, all in bills of high denominations. Thousand-dollar notes; next five hundreds; finally, a batch of one-hundred-dollar bills. They totaled twenty thousand dollars, and the full sum was in the wallet.

Thurnig's smile showed his relief.

The droopy-faced man carried the wallet in his hip pocket when he went out into the corridor to post his letter. All the way to the mail chute, he kept up quick side-glances with his birdlike eyes. Carrying twenty thousand dollars in cash was enough to make any man cautious, thought Thurnig.

Even though his better judgment told him that he was safe, Thurnig almost expected to see silent doors pop open, to find himself covered by dangerous New York mobsters. Nothing of the sort happened. Apparently, anyone who was after big dough had not been informed that George Thurnig carried it.

THE telephone bell was jangling merrily when Thurnig returned along the corridor. He hurried into his room, locked the door and bolted it. When he answered the call, Thurnig recognized the voice across the wire.

"Hello..." Thurnig's eyes showed pleasure, but his lips, close-set, told that he was too canny to mention names. "I had hoped to hear from you... Yes, I am quite well again. I shall be able to keep the appointment tomorrow night..."

"My illness? Merely indigestion... What? You thought it might be my heart? No, no!" Proudly, Thurnig thwacked his chest. "Hear that? It's the way the doctor tapped me... Yes, he said my heart was in excellent condition..."

"Yes, fit as a fiddle - that describes me. So I am going out tonight... Yes, sir, as soon as my tuxedo comes up from the valet... Of course, I shall be careful of myself. Thanks a lot, for giving me a call."

Thurnig hung up the receiver; he paced to the window. Propping his elbows there, he studied the glow of Times Square, with its flicker of big electric signs. That distant glare meant life, excitement, the sort that Thurnig wanted. He was fit to enjoy it; to have a real fling in Manhattan.

Thurnig's lips pursed to form a smile of anticipation, that was not to be realized.

He must have been staring from the window for a full ten minutes, when a short rap sounded outside his door. For an instant, Thurnig was startled; he waited for the knock to be repeated. When silence

persisted, he decided that it was the valet.

He went to the door, opened it cautiously. He saw no one when he peered into the corridor. It was then that he remembered the Servidor. Stepping back into the room, he locked the door again.

The Servidor was a simple and useful device that Thurnig had found in many hotels. The door, with its big bulge, had two panels, with a space between. The outside panel could be unlocked by hotel employees, to pick up or leave laundry or clothes. The inner panel was controlled by the guest within the room.

Thanks to these doors within doors, the employees stayed out of the rooms, and that pleased Thurnig. He was a bit absent-minded; apt to forget important matters, even the twenty thousand dollars that was so important to him. Remembering the money at this moment, Thurnig pulled the wallet from his hip, to lay it in the suitcase.

Returning to the door, he opened his side of the Servidor, expecting to find his pressed tuxedo.

Instead of the suit, Thurnig saw an upright box made of metal. It was wedged in the Servidor; from its top came a wire that was hooked to the panel that Thurnig had just opened. The wire actuated a shutter device in the top of the metal box.

Thurnig saw the shutter slide open. He heard its click; heard the hiss that followed it. From the box came a smoky, yellow vapor that licked lazily toward the man who viewed it. Before Thurnig recovered from his astoundment, he was choking, coughing, from the effects of a nauseous gas.

The vapor's immediate effect was to stagger him. He wavered, rooted to the spot where he stood. Then came the instinctive impulse to fight off the gaseous foe, to suppress it as a hideous monster. With a wild fling of one arm, Thurnig slammed the flapping panel of the Servidor.

But the remedy came too late. The gas tank had delivered its full quota. Enveloped by the yellow cloud, Thurnig was seized by a frantic desire for air. Clawing as if clutched by a living creature, the man stumbled toward the window.

Behind him, the gas was dissolving into the air; but that offered no relief. The stuff had done its work; deep in his lungs, Thurnig could feel its grip. He managed to pry the window upward, to stare downward into the darkness of the hotel courtyard. Then, his elbows tightened on the sill; slowly, they relaxed. Thurnig rolled prone upon the floor.

Sounds told that the outer panel of the Servidor was being opened cautiously. There was a muffled scrape as the gas box was removed; next, a slight thump from the closing outer panel. The evidence was gone.

SOME minutes later, a valet arrived outside Thurnig's door carrying the expected tuxedo. He inserted the suit in the Servidor, and knocked. Thurnig did not answer; the valet remained, however, a trifle puzzled.

He expected to hear Thurnig take the tuxedo at once, for the guest had specified that he would be in his room to receive it by half past eight. The valet knocked again; finally, he opened the outer panel, to note that the suit was still there. Closing the Servidor, the valet went to the corridor telephone and called the desk.

He learned that Mr. Thurnig had not been seen in the lobby. He was told to wait where he was. Soon, two men arrived; one was the hotel detective, the other the house physician.

"Better unlock the door," the doctor told the dick. "Acute indigestion is serious, and Thurnig may have had an attack."

They found Thurnig by the open window, sprawled in the very position where he had fallen. The doctor stooped above him anxiously, listened to his heart.

Thurnig was alive.

"He withstood the attack," declared the physician. "Help me place him on the bed. We should have no trouble reviving him."

Thurnig did not revive. He lay motionless as ever, after his coat, vest and collar had been removed; no restorative had the slightest effect upon him. His face was grayish; his breathing came slowly, painfully, in a ceaseless monotone.

"What is it, doc?" asked the house dick, his own face strained.

"It looks like sleeping sickness," returned the physician. "All the symptoms of trypanosomiasis. And yet" - the doctor looked around the room suspiciously - "it is strange that it should have come so suddenly. This case is unusual. This patient must be taken to the hospital at once!"

The physician was still shaking his head when Thurnig was removed to be put in an ambulance. It was the house detective, standing alone in the room, who had the next suspicion. He even sniffed the air as he prowled about, but the odor of the yellow gas had departed long ago.

Then came the discovery that ended all suspicion. The dick found Thurnig's wallet, lying in plain view; he gawked when he saw the bundle of currency. After he had counted the money he called a bellboy, watched the fellow's eyes bulge.

"From the way the doc was puzzled," said the detective, "I thought maybe something had been done to Thurnig. But this shows nobody was in it. No crooks would have taken a whack at a guy and left all this dough loose!"

Crime had served itself, with George Thurnig as the victim. Crime that lay as deeply hidden as the purpose that inspired it. For that crime had seemingly ignored the very end for which crooks strive: that of quick, easy profit.

Thurnig's twenty thousand dollars, left untouched, was a smoke screen as effective as the mysterious yellow vapor that had faded into nothingness.

There was an added element to the mystery of George Thurnig; one that concerned the victim's own condition. It was summed up by the physician, who was driving alone to the hospital.

"For a moment," muttered the doctor, "I might have pronounced him dead. Yet he is alive - a dead man who lives."

## **CHAPTER II. THE SECOND THRUST**

THE name of George Thurnig was headlined the next morning. His case closely resembled that baffling ailment known as sleeping sickness, which always becomes news.

Though physicians refused to make definite statements, the newspapers played up the possibility of an epidemic. Plenty of New Yorkers failed to enjoy their breakfasts; took cabs to their offices to avoid the subways, where germs might lurk.

The news wasn't the sort to please the average reader, but there was one man upon whom it had a remarkable effect.

He was a portly, heavy-jowled individual, who was riding in a cab only because he detested subway crowds and the exertion of climbing stairs. He was in a taxi when he saw Thurnig's name in the newspaper.

Instant interest registered on the portly man's flabby face. His eyes, ordinarily small, opened so wide that they became large. When the cab stopped at an office building, he slapped a bill into the driver's hand without waiting for change. Showing a surprising burst of speed, the portly man reached the elevator and wedged through just as the operator was closing the door.

The building was a small one; the elevator slow. The portly man chafed until he reached the fifth floor. Once off the car, he bounded for the door that bore his own name and business:

MARTIN BRELLICK

Homecraft Correspondence Courses

Brellick's suite of offices was not so elaborate as its title implied. The rooms were tiny, and consisted merely of an outer office and an inner one marked "PRIVATE". Stacked on shelves in the outer office were sheaves of flimsy pamphlets, each group labeled as a different type of homecraft.

There was one stenographer in the outer office; she was staring, unconcerned, from the window when Brellick entered. She looked about blankly, for sight of Brellick in a hurry was something unusual.

Brellick didn't stop to say good morning. He pounded into the private office, snatched up a telephone and clicked at the receiver. When he finally slammed down the instrument in disgust, he saw the stenographer standing in the doorway, fluffing her peroxide-dyed hair, while her jaw worked at chewing gum.

"What's the matter with this telephone?" demanded Brellick.

"Out of order," replied the stenographer, in a weary tone. "I've sent for the repair men."

"Take a letter," snapped Brellick. "No - make it a telegram."

The girl shrugged her shoulders, went back to her desk to obtain a telegraph blank. The correspondence course man followed.

"To the Apex Loan Company," began Brellick. "Will need ten thousand dollars -"

Brellick paused, suddenly opened the telephone book, to look up other names. The stenographer looked at him as though she thought him crazy.

"You got that loan, Mr. Brellick," she began. "Don't you remember? The bank said you could have it, last week."

"I need ten thousand more."

"But you already have it! You said you had ten thousand to begin with -"

Brellick glowered an interruption.

"My finances are my business," he declared, testily. "But since you seem to think they are yours as well, I might as well make it plain. I wanted twenty thousand dollars. I had ten thousand to begin with, so I arranged to borrow ten thousand. Is that clear?"

The girl nodded.

"And now I want to borrow ten thousand more," continued Brellick. "What does that mean?"

The stenographer's jaw slackened.

"You want thirty thousand!" she exclaimed.

"Bright girl!" rejoined Brellick. "Yes, I want thirty thousand dollars. The deal I'm going into may be larger than I expected. A friend of mine" - Brellick chuckled deeply - "may be dropping out of it!"

THE telephone repair man arrived in the outer office. Brellick decided to let the telegram go, hoping that the phone would soon be available. The repair man started testing the wire in the outer office. Brellick retired to his inner office; he was there when the stenographer ushered in a dry-faced man who carried a doctor's satchel. Brellick recognized him.

"Hello, doctor!" said the portly man. "You're the medical examiner from the Southeastern Mutual, aren't you?"

The physician nodded; he began to unpack a stethoscope.

"Some mistake," remarked Brellick. "I haven't applied for any more life insurance."

The doctor, himself, looked puzzled. Then:

"This must be a special examination," he declared. "Possibly to learn if you are entitled to preferred class rates. I received word to come here."

"Go ahead with it, then," grumbled Brellick. "I'm handcuffed, anyway, until they get the telephone fixed."

The doctor completed the examination. Brellick walked out through the outer office, chatting with him. Tapping his heart, the portly man remarked:

"So the old ticker's all right, eh, doc?"

"Excellent!" returned the physician. "Particularly for a man of your weight."

In the hallway was a listener - a man in overalls. Brellick took him to be the repair man's assistant. It was after Brellick had returned to his inner office that the fellow entered, to speak to the stenographer.

"There's a phone call for Mr. Brellick," he said. "In the pay booth back of the drug store downstairs. Whoever is calling says it's important."

The man in overalls was gone when Brellick came pouncing out of the inner office, after the stenographer had relayed the message. He hurried to the elevator and went to the street floor. He had to go into the next building to reach the passage that led beyond the drug store. There, in a dingy corner, Brellick found the telephone booth.

The door of the booth was open; the telephone receiver was hanging loose. Brellick gathered it up, gave a quick "Hello" into the mouthpiece. He heard a voice that he recognized, and promptly pulled the door shut. The automatic light did not work. Brellick was in darkness, as he talked.

"I know," Brellick spoke rapidly. "I saw the news only a short while ago... Yes, I figure I can take half of Thurnig's share... By tonight, of course..."

Cloudiness was creeping down toward Brellick's head. He couldn't hear the hiss that caused it until he hung the receiver on its hook. Even then, the sizzle sounded feeble, for Brellick was conscious of something far more horrible.

A yellow cloud was all about him, choking, forcing him to gasps that he tried to resist. He was sickened by an odor that he could not identify. He saw the door of the booth so hazily that all outside was dim.

Wildly, Brellick found the handle of the door; he tugged, with no result. It wasn't until the hissing ceased that the door suddenly yielded to his yank. By that time, it was too late. Brellick reeled drunkenly from the telephone booth.

BEHIND the portly man, the yellow gas issued like a ghostly figure from the confines of the booth. It wavered; its coils looked like fantastic clutching arms. That was only momentary. As Brellick staggered away, the air of the passage absorbed the weird vapor. The cloudiness faded; the odor vanished with it.

Brellick was staggering for the open exit to the street. He was puffing clear air as he went, but it served only to increase his stumbles. He was having the same after effect that Thurnig had experienced. Like the previous victim, Brellick was fighting to reach the open.

He was on the sidewalk when he caved. Passers saw the long, hopeless sprawl that he took. A crowd gathered; by the time an officer arrived, they were lugging Brellick into the drug store.

First-aid measures didn't seem to help. Stretched on an improvised bench of soda fountain chairs, Brellick lay in a fixed stupor, his breathing heavy, slow, as though each effort would be his last.

Those who stood near were riveted. Those long gasps were like the slow ticks of a clock, coming in endless procession, until their very monotony made them seem a certainty.

An ambulance arrived; Brellick was started for the hospital. Druggist and policeman scarcely heard the whine of the ambulance's departing siren.

They were still counting those long, deep sighs that had come from the throat of Martin Brellick.

Within another hour, the big presses of the evening newspapers were grinding out early editions of another sensational story. The dread malady of sleeping sickness had struck again, as suddenly as before. The second victim was not an out-of-towner, like George Thurnig. He was a New Yorker, Martin Brellick, who had been in Manhattan constantly for the past month.

It happened that photographs of both victims were available. Those pictures were rushed to press, and for a caption, a quick-witted editor coined a phrase that aptly described the state of the men concerned. The caption read: "Dead Men Who Live."

Both cases, however, were classed as the result of a growing epidemic. The possibility of crime was too remote to be considered. The cases were outside the ordinary realm of police investigation, precisely as a master criminal had intended that they should be.

Perhaps that master mind had overlooked the fact that in New York, there dwelt a being who could scent crime where others believed that it did not exist.

That personage was one whose power was feared throughout the underworld, though crooks had never learned his identity. Crimeland knew that being only as The Shadow.

And The Shadow, alone, could solve the riddle of the Dead Who Lived!

### CHAPTER III. LINKS TO CRIME

THAT afternoon, a visitor stood in the hotel room where George Thurnig had collapsed the night before. The stranger was tall; leisurely of manner. His calm face was masklike, and the contours of his features gave him a hawkish air.

As he smoked a thin cigar, the visitor strolled idly about the room. He paused at the window, to stare indifferently toward the sky line of Manhattan. He stopped at a table to flick cigar ashes into a tray.

Choosing an easy-chair, he sat there smoking in the patient manner of a person who is bored; but too polite to show it.

All the while, however, that visitor had been busy. His eyes, seemingly idle, had taken in every feature of the room. He had noted the writing desk where Thurnig had last been seated. He had checked on the position of the telephone. He had even examined the window sill, near which the victim had been found.

A serious-faced young man stepped into the room. He had a brisk, professional manner. Methodically, he remarked:

"I shall be ready very soon, Mr. Cranston. If you can wait a few minutes longer -"

"Quite all right, Doctor Sayre," Cranston spoke from his chair. "I am in no hurry to leave."

Sayre left. Cranston arose; he stopped to relight his cigar close beside the door of a clothes closet. That door was partly open. Cranston reached through, tugged a light cord. His eyes showed a keen glint as they studied the interior of the closet.

Thurnig's tuxedo was hanging there. Cranston's hand probed the pockets, then extinguished the light.

His survey of the room was complete. Nowhere had this visitor uncovered a clue that indicated crime. Cranston's eyes, though, were fixed upon a final spot that could scarcely be called a portion of the room. That spot was the Servidor in the door to the corridor.

The door was ajar. Stepping to it, Cranston was half visible from the hall, as his inside hand opened the Servidor. He shifted the door slightly; light from the window disclosed the Servidor's interior.

Keen eyes made an instant discovery.

The latch inside the inner door had a tiny plunger that could be pressed downward to set a signal, indicating when clothes were in the Servidor. That plunger was circled by a small metal clamp; an object that had no regular purpose.

Cranston tried the plunger. Because of the girding clamp, the plunger did not push to its full depth. Examining the clamp closely, Cranston noted the glint of a broken wire. To ordinary observers, the tiny clamp would have passed notice, for it might have belonged on the plunger.

Cranston was no ordinary observer.

He had found a clue, from which he reconstructed the past. That clue meant the possibility of a mechanism once set inside the Servidor; a device which, prior to its removal, could have brought ill fortune to George Thurnig.

SOON, Cranston and Sayre were riding away from the hotel. Presumably, Lamont Cranston, wealthy New York clubman and world adventurer and traveler, had merely accompanied Doctor Rupert Sayre



on a visit wherein the physician was investigating Thurnig's malady. Sayre was a specialist in the treatment of rare diseases. It was logical that he should have gone to see the hotel physician.

"Thurnig's case," declared Sayre, "shows marked symptoms of encephalitis lethargica, an affliction to which the term 'sleeping sickness' has been popularly applied. Quite different from trypanosomiasis, the African malady carried by the tsetse fly.

"I prefer, however, to reserve a positive diagnosis until we learn if other cases occur. Encephalitis strikes as an epidemic, although it attacks only a very small portion of the population."

Sayre was thinking deeply, and with good reason. He had met with other strange ailments in the past; cases in which Cranston had shown interest. Invariably, they had turned out to be of human making: criminal thrusts covered by the appearance of a disease.

Those cases had been investigated by a mysterious being known as The Shadow. Through them, Sayre had met Cranston. The physician was sometimes inclined to believe that Lamont Cranston and The Shadow were identical; at other times, that supposition seemed doubtful.

Certainly, on this occasion, Sayre could visualize The Shadow as the governing force behind the investigation.

That was to be proven much sooner than Sayre realized.

When the physician had left Cranston's limousine, the big car proceeded to the exclusive Cobalt Club. There, as Cranston alighted, he heard the shrill cry of a newsboy. Purchasing an evening newspaper, Cranston read the report of Brellick's collapse.

Had Sayre known of that case, he would have probably pronounced Thurnig to be a sleeping sickness victim; for here was apparent proof of an epidemic disease. Cranston, however, was armed with other facts, small though they were.

Behind the case of Martin Brellick, he saw the opposite sort of evidence. To Cranston, it still meant crime - more subtle, more deadly, than before. A master plotter had foreseen that medical men like Sayre would be reserving opinion until new victims were reported.

That scheming brain had clinched the matter, by spreading what appeared to be an epidemic. But in lulling medical investigators, the master crook had provided a new trail for The Shadow.

JUST before five o'clock, Lamont Cranston strolled into the office of Martin Brellick. He placed a brief case upon a chair, introduced himself as a friend of Brellick's. Soon, he was talking with the gum-chewing stenographer.

The girl remembered many facts, as she chatted. Somehow, Cranston's even-toned questions brought a wealth of answers, even though the stenographer did not realize that she was being quizzed. Cranston merely expressed sympathy for Brellick; expressed hopes that his business would not suffer by his absence. Those remarks brought results.

"He needed a rest," insisted the stenographer. "He's tucked away ten thousand dollars, Mr. Brellick has. He owns property, too; that's the security he used to borrow another ten thousand."

"I remember the loan" - Cranston spoke idly, as he gazed from the window into a courtyard - "because Brellick mentioned it. I wasn't sure, though, that he had managed to raise it."

"Maybe that was the new loan," said the stenographer. "The one he was going after today. Another ten

thousand. Then he was struck - so sudden - just after that doctor from the Southeastern Mutual had said he was in such fine shape. He must have overexerted himself, that's what."

"Overexerted himself? How?"

"Racing downstairs to answer that telephone call. The phone here was out of order. It was the repair man's helper who made Mr. Brellick rush there. I'd have told that helper plenty, afterward, but he was gone."

"Then the telephone was fixed by that time?"

"No. You know what the repair man found? A cut wire. Looked like rats had gnawed it. Took him a long time to find it, too - working here alone, after the helper left."

Cranston decided to let the girl close the office. He went downstairs in the same elevator with her; but outside, he turned back, as though he had forgotten something. Dusk was settling; the tiny offices were dark when Cranston entered with the aid of a skeleton key.

A flashlight glimmered along the baseboard, settled on the spot where the repair man had fixed the broken wire.

Then, in the gloom, Cranston made some telephone calls. His voice was a brisk, but guarded, tone, quite unlike his own. He introduced himself under another name; stated that he was calling for Martin Brellick.

From the office of the Southeastern Mutual Company, Cranston learned that there must have been a mistake, sending the physician to examine Brellick. The doctor was a regular company examiner; but someone in the office must have given him Brellick's name through error.

When Cranston located the repair man who worked for the telephone company, he learned that the fellow had not brought a helper. The repair man remembered that a chap in overalls had been hanging around the hallway, but he had supposed he was the building janitor.

LEAVING Brellick's office, Cranston went to the street. He entered the passage of the adjacent building, noted that it had a big door, to close it from the street. He had hardly reached the obscure telephone booth before a man appeared at the outer entrance and began to close the door.

That fellow looked like an actual janitor. Before he locked the door, he came through the passage to make sure that no one was in it. He did not see Cranston, who had stepped to a corner past the booth.

The janitor extinguished the dim lights. He went out through the street door and locked it behind him. In the thick darkness, Cranston entered the telephone booth and pulled its door almost shut.

The booth's automatic light did not glow. Using a flashlight, Cranston inspected the top of the booth. He observed that there was no bulb in the socket; and his keen eyes made other discoveries.

There was a thin, green-taped wire that ran from the door to the top of the booth. Another strand, difficult to see against the booth's green paint, extended to the side where the door closed. Fastened there, behind a molding, was a small latch. When Cranston's fingers worked it, the latch slithered noiselessly toward the door.

If fully closed, that door would have been locked by the mechanism.

Looking upward again, Cranston probed the light socket with the glow of his tiny torch. He saw a disk of black-painted metal studded with tiny holes. Gripping the socket, he drew it downward. The ceiling of

the booth came with it!

The whole mechanism was as simple as it was effective. This false ceiling had been fitted into the booth, just above the level of the door, with a foot of space above it. When set, the device worked automatically.

Cranston drew the door tight shut. The false ceiling moved upward, like a bellows; the hiss of air came through the holes in the dummy light socket. Testing the door, Cranston found it tight shut, until the fake ceiling had finished its bellows motion, to rest flush with the actual top of the booth. At that instant, the trick latch released the door.

Pulling the door open in his test, Cranston became suddenly motionless. A distant sound reached his ears: the scrape of wood against metal. Some one was jimmying a way into this building, through a rear door!

In darkness, Cranston's hand opened the brief case that rested on the floor beside him. There was a swish of cloth, a dull clink as heavy automatics were plucked from the brief case. The flashlight shone guardedly upon the dial of the telephone.

That glow showed cloaked shoulders; above them, a slouch hat that hid the features of Lamont Cranston. A low whisper pervaded the booth; it was a tone of sinister mockery, confined to the limits of that cramped space.

Men of crime were on their way here, not knowing that Cranston had come ahead of them. But they would not find the leisurely clubman. A greater surprise was in store.

Lamont Cranston had become The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER IV. DEATH BRINGS A TRAIL**

THE closed door of the telephone booth muffled the clink of a coin that The Shadow dropped into the pay box. A hand, thin-gloved in black, was busy at the dial. The Shadow's finger produced the number that he wanted. A methodical voice was prompt:

"Burbank speaking."

In reply to that word across the wire, The Shadow toned instructions in a sibilant whisper. He was ordering Burbank, his contact man, to dispatch certain agents to outside duty.

Easing from the telephone booth, The Shadow moved to a remote corner that would serve as a strategic spot. The muffled prying of the jimmy had ceased; evidently, crooks had finished with door bolts and were picking locks.

The purpose of their forcible entry was quite obvious to The Shadow. While he waited, he reconstructed the past.

It was plain that both Thurnig and Brelick had been gassed, by a powerful vapor that had induced a state of sleeping sickness resembling the little-known encephalitis lethargica. The gas, whatever its composition, must be a sort that would produce instant death if the victim had a weak heart.

Such death would make the police suspect murder. Therefore, a master crook had made certain that Thurnig and Brelick could stand the shock.

In Thurnig's case, everything had been made to order. Ill in a hotel room, he had been under the care of a physician, who had pronounced him well. Thurnig, The Shadow had learned from Sayre, had been

capable enough to answer a telephone call a short while before his collapse.

Unquestionably, the man who phoned had learned that Thurnig was strong enough for the gas treatment. The planting of the device in the Servidor, and its removal later, were prearranged tasks that some henchman had performed.

Brellick's case was different.

He could only be reached in his office, necessitating a sequence of moves: a telephone wire cut in the office; a device planted in the downstairs phone booth; a hoax, whereby an insurance medical examiner had been brought to Brellick's office.

Finally a crook, close at hand, had learned the result of the examination and had promptly lured Brellick to the booth, where the line was open. Brellick had been gassed, but there had been no immediate chance to remove the hidden apparatus.

The present invaders were here for that purpose. By cornering them, The Shadow might solve the riddle of the Dead Who Lived; for these crooks, in all certainty, could yield a lead to the master mind who ruled them!

FOOTSTEPS were creeping through an inner hallway. The Shadow heard a clank at a barring gate. There was a sharp sound: the shattering of a padlock. A flashlight cut a swath from a deep angle of the passage. The beam swept past The Shadow's corner.

Growled voices announced a cluster of approaching men. They reached the telephone booth. Against the light, The Shadow could count the heads and shoulders of three men.

To The Shadow's right was the closed doorway of a barber shop. He edged into that space, boxing the men at the booth so they could not retreat by their passage. Then came the blink of The Shadow's own torch; with it, the low, weird mockery of his challenging laugh.

Intruders wheeled; from their grasp dropped the box-like apparatus that they had taken from the booth. In the glare, The Shadow saw faces that registered fear, despite their hardness.

The Shadow recognized only one of the trapped trio; a crook named "Cobber" Lokum. He was a small-fry hoodlum, who belonged to no special mob. The others were either less important than Cobber, or they were imported thugs who had been brought to New York recently.

Any of the three could state who had sent them there. The Shadow intended to make all talk.

The trio recognized The Shadow.

In fact, The Shadow had not only declared himself by that low-toned mirth; he was holding his flashlight so that it gave a view of his head and shoulders. The glow also showed the automatic that wagged slowly from his other hand, covering every member of the threefold group.

No words were needed from The Shadow's lips.

Except for Cobber, the trapped thugs were yellow. Cobber's two pals began to stammer their guilt, hoping to pass the buck to someone higher up.

"We ain't pulled nothin'!" began one, in whimpering tone. "We was sent here, that's all! Yeah, we was sent here -"

"An' we ain't holdin' out," blabbed the other. "The guy that sent us - we'll tell who he is!"

From Cobber, the middle man of the trio, came an interruption.

"Nobody's squawkin'!" put in Cobber. "Hear that, Shadow? That's what I'm here for - to see that these mugs keep their traps shut!"

The looming automatic centered itself upon Cobber. Ratty eyes lost their defiant squint; Cobber's thick lips began a twitch. He recognized the threat; The Shadow's very silence made it more impressive.

Cobber could picture one bullet, straight for his own heart. When that slug found its mark, Cobber would no longer be on hand to argue in favor of silence. His pals would squawk as fast as they knew how.

The Shadow, himself, knew that the shot would be unnecessary. Alone, Cobber would be a different problem. Under present circumstances, the fellow was seeing what real consequences could develop. He was tough enough to take death with his own lips sealed; but Cobber would see no use in it, with those yellow cronies ready to talk in his stead.

Cobber tried to bluff, but did it weakly.

"We ain't - well, we ain't squawkers!" Cobber's ratty eyes were blinking as he spoke. "Only, we gotta be sure what's comin' next, see? If you're lettin' us off easy, that's got somethin' to do with it. We know it ain't no use to buck The Shadow!"

Cobber's voice had reached a high pitch, but his words were badly slurred. His raised arms were shaky, as he saw The Shadow's gun hand thrust forward. Cobber quailed backward toward the booth, yelled excitedly:

"I'll squawk! Lemme squawk!"

The Shadow became instantly rigid.

COBBER'S screech had drowned a low sound behind The Shadow's back: the opening of the barber-shop door. The prodding muzzle of a revolver had followed. The mouth of the gun was planted in the middle of The Shadow's back.

Other invaders had come through from the barber shop. Their leader, the man with the gun, held The Shadow helpless. Only the slender margin of a hair trigger separated The Shadow from death. Nevertheless, one factor remained in The Shadow's favor.

The newcomer did not know that he had trapped so important a foe as The Shadow.

Had he guessed it, the fellow would not have restrained his trigger finger. "Death to The Shadow," was the watchword of the underworld. In the darkness of the doorway, the crook knew only that he had thwarted someone who threatened Cobber and the others near the telephone booth.

"Stick 'em up, mug!" The growl from the doorway was the sort that a marauder would use to threaten a night watchman. "And reach fast!"

The Shadow let his automatic thud the floor; as his arms came up, he released the flashlight. Its clatter brought darkness so complete that the man with the gun could observe no further motion. He felt the slight lift of The Shadow's shoulders; it indicated reaching arms. But he did not sense the bulge of The Shadow's shoulder blade close beside the revolver muzzle.

The threatening thug wanted quiet; he hadn't regarded gunfire as necessary. It was Cobber who changed the state of things. He, like the others at the booth, knew what The Shadow could accomplish under cover of darkness.

"Get him!" bawled Cobber. "It's The Shadow!"

The shout was too late to benefit the crooks. As Cobber howled the news, The Shadow wheeled full about. His twist was to the left; his left shoulder blade hooked the gun muzzle, sped it away at a useless angle.

The crook's forefinger pulled the hair trigger at almost the same instant, but the merest fraction of a second was all that The Shadow needed for safety. The spurt of flame that knifed the blackened air was proof that the shot was wide.

The Shadow's right fist drove toward the doorway. The gunman took the punch, lost his revolver as he floundered. But there were others on the draw; they had flashlights, as well as guns. They were springing through the doorway, to be greeted by a strident laugh that promised their defeat.

The Shadow, too, had hauled a gun into action. As he wheeled across the passage, his left hand opened fire with that second automatic brought from the folds of his cloak. In the midst of wild revolver barks came the tonguing stabs that crooks had learned to fear.

Only the close quarters of the fray saved the invaders, despite their heavy odds. Cobber sprang in to grapple with The Shadow. Locking with that over-bold attacker, The Shadow hurled himself into the surge from the doorway, slashing hard blows with his automatic. Crooks broke, taking two exits. The pair from the telephone booth scurried with them, carrying the apparatus that they had previously detached.

A few stopped to fire from the side passage. They saw Cobber being propelled in their direction. They blasted shots at the man who served The Shadow as a living shield, then fled as they heard an automatic thunder. The flight was complete; with them, the invaders were dragging men who had been clipped by The Shadow's bullets.

ONLY Cobber was abandoned. Stumbling ahead, he unwittingly blocked the pursuit that The Shadow made. Out through an alley, past the rear exit of a small store - there, The Shadow raced ahead of the stumbler who slowed him. Cars were wheeling around a corner when The Shadow reached the side street.

A taxi sped in from the opposite direction. Figures bobbed in sight; they were The Shadow's agents, arriving on the scene. Further pursuit was useless; but The Shadow's trail was not ended. He signaled the cab to wait. It stopped, for it was his own taxi. The agents took to cover.

Half a minute later Cobber, sagging, came from the alley. His rattish eyes were glazed, but they saw the waiting cab with open door. Thinking it manned by his pals, Cobber stumbled aboard, muttered for the cab to get started.

The door slammed, the taxi rolled away. Slumped to the floor, Cobber was chilled by a whispered laugh that sounded close beside his ear. The crook looked up; his dying eyes met the burning gaze of The Shadow.

"They double-crossed you, Cobber!" The Shadow's tone was a harsh, emphatic rasp. "They made you the fall guy; then tried to croak you so you wouldn't talk!"

Through the film of Cobber's eyes, there showed a glint. This was the sort of speech that the fellow understood, and believed. He knew where those last shots had come from. Close to death, he was willing to depend upon The Shadow to deliver vengeance.

"Get him!" coughed Cobber. "The guy - that fixed the double cross! He's at - at Mandor's -"

A spasm racked Cobber. He twisted into a huddling mass on the taxi floor. His head tilted back, jounced the door, then settled, face upward, against The Shadow's forearm.

"Apartment" - Cobber spoke each word with a rattling gulp - "James - Mandor -"

Came a dying gurgle; then silence. As the cab rolled onward, The Shadow spoke; his tone was a solemn whisper: an order to the driver. The cab wheeled around the next corner. A block farther on, it reversed direction.

The Shadow was taking the trail that Cobber's death had brought.

He needed no address. The name of James Mandor was a prominent one; the man's residence was one that The Shadow had visited as Cranston. No need of wasting precious minutes to make a telephone call there; nor would a call to Burbank help.

The Shadow, himself, was closer to the goal than any of his agents; and, in this emergency, the chances were that he could accomplish most by making the trip alone. The mission, itself, was one of utmost consequence.

Search for a master crook could be postponed. The Shadow's immediate urge was to prevent a new addition to the ranks of the Dead Who Lived!

## **CHAPTER V. THE TRAP THAT TURNED**

AT the very moment when The Shadow changed the direction of his taxi journey, a dignified gray-haired man entered the lobby of an old-fashioned apartment house. He stopped at the desk, received a stack of letters and glanced over them. All the letters were addressed to James Mandor.

"How was the plane trip, Mr. Mandor?" questioned the clerk.

"Monotonous!" returned Mandor. "Like all cross-country flights. By the way" - he glanced at the clock above the desk - "I am expecting some visitors at eight-thirty. Send them up without delay."

Mandor was on the elevator when he remembered that he wanted a New York newspaper. The operator offered to obtain one, but Mandor stopped him.

"Never mind," he said. "I want both morning and evening editions. There may be some trouble obtaining them. I shall send Adolph out for them."

The elevator reached the top floor. Mandor unlocked the door of an apartment. He entered, went through a living room and came to a square room that served him as a study. That room formed a curious medley of business and pleasure.

There was a desk in one corner; in the wall beside it, a large shiny safe of latest pattern. Few persons in New York owned such a finely fitted strongbox. There was a filing cabinet in another corner and it was the last item that pertained to business.

All around the room were sporting trophies; with them, the implements that Mandor had used to acquire

them. Golf bags were racked along the wall; tennis racquets occupied a special corner. There were fencing foils, shotguns, polo sticks. As athlete and sportsman, James Mandor was remarkably versatile.

In business, too, he had a varied career. Mandor was a promoter who acquired small fortunes through his ventures. A huge spender, with his time heavily occupied by sports, he concentrated upon business only when he foresaw a shortage of funds.

Mandor was chuckling to himself when he took a niblick from its bag and began to practice swings that chopped deep into the tuft of an expensive Oriental rug.

"Back to business, Jim," he said, half aloud. "Don't worry about that Frisco deal. It can wait. This other proposition is sure fire! Only, I wonder -"

He paused, weighing the golf club; then shook his head.

"Not a chance!" he muttered. "They wouldn't think of selling out their shares. They know how good it is."

A few more swings of the golf club, and Mandor thrust it back into the bag. He looked toward the doorway of the study. He had remembered Adolph. Angrily, Mandor shouted for the servant.

There was no reply. Mandor fancied that he heard a stir in the gloomy living room. He stepped through the doorway, looked toward a window where an outside balcony extended along to the next apartment. The window was closed, but Mandor thought the sound had come from its direction. He eyed a big chair suspiciously; craned his neck, suspecting that a figure crouched beyond it.

His attention was suddenly diverted by a grating sound behind him. He swung toward the closet door just as it opened. Before he could recover from his startlement, he was staring into the muzzle of a gun held by a masked owner.

Mandor's hands came up. The masked man motioned him into the study. As Mandor turned, he saw other figures rise. There were three others in the room - one behind the big chair that he had first observed.

THE gray-haired sportsman took the invasion almost with contempt. The leader of the masked group observed it; pulled his handkerchief mask down around his neck. Mandor saw a face that was hard-eyed, blunt-nosed, long-jawed. But the fellow had a wise look that showed him intelligent as well as tough.

"Maybe we'll get places quicker," rasped the invader, "if I introduce myself. My name is Quill Baxton. Ever hear of me?"

"I have," replied Mandor, dryly. "You were mixed pretty deep in that Florida race-track scandal."

"Mixed in it?" scoffed Quill. "I was the guy who made the wheels go around, until they queered the racket!"

"So you went into this one," returned Mandor. "Well, burglary has its merits, I suppose. A quick way of getting money."

"Yeah. Easy, too - when the guy that owns a safe opens it for you. Like you're going to do with that one, Mandor."

Quill nudged his revolver toward the big safe. Mandor eyed him coolly.



"Suppose I don't open it?" he questioned.

"Then you'll hear this gat talk!" retorted Quill, shoving his revolver against Mandor's ribs. Then, his rasp turning to a coarse chuckle: "You wouldn't want that, would you, Mandor?"

Mandor considered. He shook his head.

"No," he decided, "I wouldn't. They'd have a hard time bagging you, Baxton, because this type of crime is unusual for you. So I'll open the safe. You're welcome to the few thousand dollars that I have there."

Calmly, Mandor went to the safe and worked the combination. The door came open, disclosing another inside it. As he thumbed the second combination, Mandor spoke.

"I'll make a deal with you, Baxton," he proposed. "I'll forget that you and your crowd were here, if you'll leave my personal papers alone. There's nothing among them of any value to you. I don't care about the money. I have ways of making more."

As he talked, Mandor delayed his turning of the dial. At his shoulder, Quill rasped agreement:

"It's a go! If you hurry it, Mandor."

The inner door swung open. Quill motioned Mandor away from in front of the safe.

"This couple of grand you talked about," reminded Quill. "That sounds like hokum, Mandor."

"What makes you think that?"

"I thought you were in on a deal, where you had to put up twenty grand, tonight."

"That money is in a bank," laughed Mandor. "My checks are usually accepted -"

Mandor paused suddenly, then looked sharply at Quill. The sportsman's expression changed as he demanded:

"Who told you I was promoting something new?"

"Never mind," grunted Quill. "Forget it! Only, I'm going to look through these papers of yours, just so's to make sure you're on the level."

IGNORING bundles of currency, Quill searched through other packets while Mandor watched. Suddenly, Quill pulled out a small packet with a rubber band around it. His tone took a sudden change.

"This is what I want," he snarled. He twisted his face past his shoulder. "All right, boys. Give it!"

There was a frenzied gasp from Mandor. Wild-eyed, the sportsman grabbed for the packet in Quill's hand. His lips phrased the words:

"Not those papers! Not those -"

Two huskies were springing forward. They grabbed Mandor, clamped hands over his mouth. As they twisted him toward the center of the room, Mandor saw the last member of the group.

The fellow was shoving forward a device that looked like an oxygen tank. It had a hose attached to it that resembled an ether inhalator. Before Mandor could break free, the last man was shoving the inhalator over his face.

There was a hand spread before Mandor's eyes; oddly, he observed its details. That hand lacked a second finger. Across the back of the hand, zigzagging toward the wrist, was a long, livid scar.

Lack of one finger didn't cramp the man who applied the inhalator. He held it tightly above Mandor's nose and mouth. There was a hiss of gas, as Quill stepped over and turned the nozzle of the tank. With it came Quill's voice.

"We don't have to worry about you, Mandor," chuckled Quill. "You're in good physical shape. We read about that polo match you entered, out in Frisco. Too bad you don't read the newspapers yourself.

"I mean the New York papers. The ones that came out today. And maybe you ought to have asked about Adolph, before you came up here. You'd have found out he didn't get the telegram you sent him. That's why he isn't back from his vacation."

Mandor heard only part of what Quill said. The gas had done its work. When the hissing ceased, Mandor was curled on the floor. His breath came heavily when the inhalator was removed. It had the steady, monotonous effort that had characterized the breathing of Thurnig and Brellick.

Carefully, Quill closed the doors of the safe, using a handkerchief to avoid leaving fingerprints. All that he had removed was that one packet with the rubber band. He now made a search of Mandor's desk.

There were a few papers there that interested Quill. He took them, then went through the filing cabinet. His last search, though, was swift enough to show he had hunted there before. Quill gave a nod. His masked followers went out to the living room, taking the gas apparatus with them.

WHETHER it was through foresight, or merely habit, Quill drew his mask upward so that it covered his eyes. He stepped into the living room. There, he noted that the three-fingered man was crouched at the outer door in listening attitude.

Another crook had opened a front window, to let in fresh air. Quill nodded approval, although the precaution was scarcely necessary, for Mandor had absorbed most of the gas that had come through the hose. The final thug was at the side window, ready to open it. Quill gave another nod.

The window slid upward. Quill scarcely heard it, for he was looking into the study, to note Mandor's sprawled form. Quill gave a grin, beneath his mask, at sight of the helpless sportsman. This job was the sort that Quill liked. It had gone smoothly, without delay.

Quill's grin faded as suddenly as it had begun.

He heard a gurgle from the window of the living room. He swung in that direction, in time to see his own man coil upon the floor. Blackness blocked the side window, cutting off the view of the outer balcony. From that shapeless darkness came the quiver of a low, sinister laugh.

Quill's eyes bulged through the slits of the mask that covered them. His gaze made out the shoulders of a cloaked form. The dim lights of the living room caught the glint of burning eyes. Those same lights revealed the muzzle of an automatic.

What Quill saw, others saw. Those others were his two followers: the man who crouched at the outer door; the one who had just closed the front window. Like Quill, they were goggle-eyed. Their guns were pocketed. They let their empty hands come upward.

The trap had turned. These mobsters who had so neatly disposed of James Mandor, were themselves at the mercy of a formidable foe. They recognized the being who held them helpless.

The Shadow!

Strange and sinister was The Shadow's laugh; a prophecy of disaster. Once again, The Shadow had swung the situation to the side of justice. His mockery was well-timed.

There were occasions, though, when the pendulum could take a double swing. Such an event was due, but The Shadow had not yet foreseen it.

That foreboding mirth was the forerunner of trouble; not for those The Shadow held at bay, but for himself!

## **CHAPTER VI. DEATH DEFERRED**

THE ways of The Shadow bewildered men of crime. In their bewilderment, they could find no answer to his methods. Such was the case with Quill Baxton and the two who stood with him.

They grasped the answer to The Shadow's arrival. The outside balcony extended to the next apartment - an empty one. That was the route that The Shadow had chosen to reach Mandor's premises. But with his arrival, he had made a prompt thrust.

With strangling grip, The Shadow had stifled one of the crew, reducing the number to three, Quill included. Hard upon that first conquest, The Shadow had covered the rest. Though scattered, none dared make a break.

By the time their minds were gathering the possibility of separate moves, The Shadow had a new surprise. His cloaked form moved outward to the balcony. Blended with darkness, The Shadow held a new advantage.

Each of the three crooks knew where he was; all realized that they were within The Shadow's range of fire. But none knew which was covered. Each thought himself to be the first man that The Shadow would choose for doom, in case of trouble.

A sinister voice spoke from that darkness:

"Step forward!" toned The Shadow. "All of you! Remember - one false step" - the utterance was a sibilant whisper - "will be the last!"

They were moving forward, clustering together but not closely. Like prisoners approaching a judgment throne, Quill and his two pals showed quivers. Nervy enough when they held the upper hand, they were yellow in the pinch. The nerve that Mandor had shown was far superior to theirs.

A taunting laugh came from the darkness. Chills crept along the spines of the three offenders. So far, their masks had preserved their identities; but that couldn't last long. They could picture what might happen when they neared The Shadow. He could lash in from darkness, whip those masks away.

They didn't plead, like Cobber had. It was useless. Their crime lay where The Shadow could find it, once he investigated. Knowing the power of The Shadow, Quill Baxton felt that he had signed his own death warrant, through his attack on James Mandor.

Neither Quill nor either of his pals knew what would happen when they reached the window.

Nor did The Shadow.

The moment came. The mobsters lined up, helpless and shaky, their only hope the fact that they were still

unidentified. They had given up counting on the unexpected, when it came.

Something swashed downward from above the balcony. The Shadow's low-throbbled laugh took a sudden finish. In through the window tumbled a black-cloaked figure that sprawled senseless upon the floor beside the thug who lay there.

WHILE Quill and the men beside him still stared, a man dropped to the balcony and thrust his masked face through the window. Quill didn't have to see the face behind that mask.

"It's Ludy!" he gulped. Then, regaining his hard tone: "Good work, Ludy! You konked The Shadow!"

"What!" Ludy was amazed at his own deed. "Was that th' mug that give th' ha-ha?"

Ludy was more astounded than the trio who had stood before The Shadow's gun. There was an ugly grunt as the three-fingered man from the doorway shoved past Quill. Handling a gun with ease, despite his missing finger, the thug aimed for The Shadow's prostrate form.

"Hold it!" snapped Quill. "Not yet, Bosco!" Then, to Ludy: "What did you crown him with?"

Ludy fished along the balcony, found a big monkey wrench and exhibited it.

"This t'ing," he declared proudly. "Wot we used to fix th' clamps for th' rope ladder."

"It fixed The Shadow, too," stated Quill. He was stooping forward, looking at the face beneath the slouch hat. "Say - this guy looks ritzy! He's The Shadow, all right!"

"What does that matter?" put in Bosco. "Croak The Shadow! That's what I say."

"Sure thing!" rasped Quill. "But we'll do it the way I figure is best. Listen!"

He drew his pals aside. The man on the floor had come to his senses, was rising groggily to join the others. They explained what had happened. Quill proceeded.

"If I'm doping it right," declared Quill, "The Shadow must have made trouble for that outfit that went along with Cobber. That won't matter much, if the bulls don't hook it up with other things that have happened.

"I mean, what's happened to Thurnig and to Brelick. The same thing that we just handed to Mandor. They ain't croaked; they're sick - get it? It makes it sweet for us. What's more, if the same thing happens to other guys, it's all the better. It makes this sleepy sickness look like the McCoy.

"So we'll give The Shadow the same dose. Then we'll park him somewhere. Nobody knows who The Shadow is, and they won't guess, because we'll take that black crepe he's got hanging on him. When they find him, he'll be just another boob that's asleep." Quill chuckled. "And just another that'll never snap out of it."

Quill's plan found ready approval from his mates. Bosco was the only one who offered a temporary objection. The three-fingered man clanked the gas tank with his gun.

"This thing's empty," he told Quill. "How're you going to gas The Shadow?"

"We'll take him to the hide-out," ruled Quill. "We got plenty of the gas there."

"Suppose he makes trouble on the way?"

"Knocked cold like he is? Not a chance! Anyway, we'll have a couple of gats poked against his slats. Listen: if we're going to hand it to him the hard way, we ain't croaking him here. That would queer the setup we fixed already. Don't forget Mandor."

QUILL'S decision stood; not only because of its logic, but through the fact that he was leader of the crew. If it had come to a vote, Bosco would have been the only dissenter; so the three-fingered man offered no further argument.

They rolled The Shadow out through the window. While Bosco was closing it, Ludy pointed proudly to a rope ladder that dangled from the cornice, only one story above. He had done more than slug The Shadow with a monkey wrench; he had been smart enough to fling down the rope ladder before he dropped to the balcony.

Five in all - the thug The Shadow had put away had come to - the crooks had comparatively little difficulty in hoisting The Shadow's inert form up to the roof above. There were precarious moments, when they grunted that it would be easier to let him take a drop into the courtyard, a dozen stories below. That, however, was not in keeping with Quill's plan.

The crew carried The Shadow across the roof. Again, the rope ladder came into use, to provide a two-story descent to an adjoining building. The Shadow came downward, handled by bearers who were none too gentle; Quill, at the bottom, broke the senseless prisoner's fall.

"Why queer it, you saps?" rasped Quill, in an undertone. "You don't want 'em to find this bird asleep with a broken leg, do you? That ain't the idea. Handle him easy!"

"What about the sock I handed him?" asked Ludy. "That's goin' to show, ain't it?"

"Not bad," returned Quill. "He ain't gashed, on account of the hat. A bump on the konk won't much matter."

Crossing the next roof, the crooks reached a warehouse. They went through a trapdoor, barred it neatly behind them. They carried their black-clad burden down long flights of narrow steps, finally arriving at an alleyway, where they loaded The Shadow in the back seat of a sedan.

Other mobsters were on watch, with a second car. They were eight in all, four to a car, when they pulled away. Quill was at the wheel of the first car, another man beside him.

In the rear seat, The Shadow was hunched low, his head tilted forward toward his knees. He was squeezed between Ludy and another thug. Bosco, still the only objector to Quill's present process, had been assigned to the other automobile.

THE two cars zigzagged along cross-streets and avenues, working their way eastward until they reached an avenue that ran beneath an elevated. When they stopped at a traffic light, Quill turned to the rear seat.

"How's he riding?" sneered the leader. "Still groggy, like he was?"

"Out like a light!" returned Ludy.

"Keep those gats tight on him," advised Quill, "but hold 'em out of sight. Remember - we ain't still up in Mandor's joint; and we ain't wearing masks no longer."

The light turned green. Quill shoved the car in gear.

"We're turning off at that next light," he told his pals. "After that, no trouble. If we have to hand him the

works quick, we can do it, once we're off the avenue."

Then, as he yanked the gear into high, Quill added: "What about the other buggy? See it in back of us?"

"A couple of blocks back," answered Ludy.

"That's jake," decided Quill. "It means nobody's tagging us. No patrol cars either, or the bunch would put us wise."

Quill's comment ended with a chuckle that pleased the accompanying thugs. Quill could foresee the prompt completion of his present plan. Though he had deferred The Shadow's death, the time for doom was very close. The gas treatment was to be the method and a dose of that vapor meant death, although its victims lingered.

"We got Mandor," gloated Quill, "and next it'll be The Shadow. We'll read about it tomorrow - two more guys joined up with the dead who live."

The others chortled their agreement. This was the beginning of The Shadow's finish, in the opinion of his captors. They could foresee nothing that might bring him aid. Quill had sized it to perfection.

The Shadow was soon to be another of the Dead Who Lived!

## **CHAPTER VII. CROOKS TAKE COVER**

THE next traffic light turned red as the sedan approached it, but it wasn't the full cause of Quill's jolting stop. A taxicab happened to swing out to the center of the avenue, coming from beyond an "el" pillar. That chance cab took the very space where Quill had planned to halt.

There were growls from the rear seat, oaths directed at the taxi driver. Quill silenced them with a sharp word. There was a traffic cop on duty at the corner. Quill didn't want an argument with him.

The jolt had pitched The Shadow forward against the front seat. Ludy and the other rear-seat thug were prompt to haul their black-clad prisoner back into position. They felt The Shadow stir; but when his arms dropped limply, they decided that it was merely the motion of the car that had caused his movement.

They were wrong.

A few blocks back, The Shadow had come to a state of semi-consciousness. The shake-up that he had just received was sufficient to rouse him more.

Those motions had been The Shadow's own. Then, sensing voices close beside him, he went limp again. The Shadow could feel the gun muzzles that pressed his ribs. His head ached badly. Thoughts thrummed through his brain mechanically. They were quick flashes, those thoughts, even though they came monotonously, over and over.

Mandor's apartment - the balcony to it - masked men, trapped before The Shadow's gun - then blackness. Not the sort of blackness that The Shadow chose to cover his shifts, but an engulfing surge that had swept him into temporary oblivion.

Something had happened along the balcony. This was the result. How he had arrived in this car was no puzzle; obviously, mobsters had brought him here. The mystery was why he still remained alive.

A roar filled The Shadow's ears; for a moment, he could not identify it. Then it became the rumble of an elevated train, passing above. The Shadow had some idea of his whereabouts. A voice told him more. It

was Ludy's voice, whispering to the thug on the other side.

"No chance of anybody tailin' us after we swing off here," spoke Ludy. "An' this is goin' to be th' last of them gas jobs - finishin' this mug."

Ludy nudged The Shadow. The thug on the other side felt the shift of the cloaked shoulders and gave an approving grunt. A shrill whistle cleaved from the corner; somewhere ahead and to the left. It was the cop's signal for traffic to move.

The sedan started forward; its wheels veered slightly to the left. Ludy was on The Shadow's right; as the car swung more sharply, The Shadow's weight shifted in that direction.

NEW thoughts were flashing through The Shadow's brain. The car was cutting across in front of the traffic cop. Once away, it would reach a region where gunfire would not matter. From the ease with which he swayed, The Shadow knew that he was no longer weighted with automatics. His weapons had been taken from him.

If there would be any chance for a break, this was it. Ludy was shoving The Shadow downward in the seat; that gun on the right side had drifted. The muzzle was just clear of The Shadow's ribs; but it would be pressing them within another second.

The Shadow took advantage of that time interval.

With the car still wheeling left, he let himself roll toward Ludy; then, with both hands, The Shadow made a blind grab for the thug's gun hand. His clutch landed, just as the revolver again poked toward his chest.

Ludy wasn't quick enough with the trigger. Chucking monkey wrenches was about the limit of his real ability. The Shadow had shoved the gun muzzle away before Ludy could fire; without relinquishing his grip, the cloaked fighter made another move. Bracing both feet on the floor, he hauled Ludy upward and sideways with one long yank.

Before the sedan had completed its left turn, Ludy was floundering across The Shadow, to sprawl heavily on the thug who guarded from the other side.

Quill heard the commotion; with it, Ludy's snarl and a rasp from the thug on the left. Quill jammed the brakes; at the same instant, The Shadow grabbed the handle of the rear right door.

The Shadow had wriggled from the muzzle of the second gun, and he didn't wait an instant. The door flapped open, The Shadow's weight behind it. In a long, reckless dive, The Shadow hit the street, close beside an "el" pillar.

A gun blasted while The Shadow plunged; it was a shot from the thug on the left. But Ludy's flop ruined the gunner's aim. The bullet buried itself in the arm cushions of the rear seat.

The Shadow took a bad jolt when he hit the cobbles. Half groggy, he had made a blundering dive. He rolled over, trying dizzily to reach the shelter of the steel pillar only a few yards distant. Out of that whirl, he sighted the halted sedan.

Ludy had recovered. Turning about, the fellow was on the running board, aiming for The Shadow. Ludy had the target that he wanted; he was ready to riddle The Shadow's out-sprawled form. Defenseless, The Shadow could provide no counter-thrust.

There was intervention, though, upon which The Shadow had depended. It came at that needed instant.

NOT only had the traffic cop seen the sedan's sudden stop; he had also heard the shot from its interior. He had pulled a revolver of his own, by the time that Ludy poked from the car door.

The officer didn't see The Shadow; he hadn't looked soon enough to spot the whirl of black that had dived from the open door. But he saw Ludy, and caught the gleam of the gun that the savage thug aimed.

The policeman fired. Framed in the car door, Ludy was a perfect target. The slug found its mark; Ludy pitched to the street. His own gun sailed from his fingers, clattering ahead of him.

From hands and knees, The Shadow scooped the weapon on the bounce, then managed a turnabout toward the elevated pillar.

Other guns began to talk; their bullets were useless. Crooks had a fleeting target, gone before they could take accurate aim. After that, their shots pinged the steel pillar. The Shadow was beyond it.

The traffic cop joined fire, but he couldn't clip the low-crouched crooks. Profiting by Ludy's fate, they were staying inside the sedan.

Quill gave the car a sudden start, intending to round the pillar and get a new shot at The Shadow. He couldn't make the turn he wanted, for it would bring him broadside to the traffic officer's fire. Instead, he wheeled the car for the side street, halted it beside a fire-plug.

As the mobsters looked back from their car, they saw a new crisis strike. Roaring down the avenue, the second sedan was bearing squarely for the traffic cop. He heard the advance fire of guns, swung about too late.

In the very middle of the crossing, the officer was flat-footed in the new car's path. He was due to take a crushing impact before he could budge.

A gun stabbed from an angle; its quick-fire reports were as timely as the shot that the policeman had given to save The Shadow. This time, The Shadow was returning the favor that the cop had unwittingly bestowed.

From beside the big pillar, The Shadow had the very bead he wanted. The angle gave him a human target: the driver of that oncoming car. He handled Ludy's .38 with a precision that would have amazed the gun's former owner, had Ludy been in a condition to appreciate it.

Literally, The Shadow's bullets picked the driver from the wheel, tilted him askew. The fellow caved sideways through the window, his arms flopping with him. His hands lost the grip with which he had started to veer the car toward the trapped policeman.

Even then, the cop had no time to shift; but he didn't need it. The sedan swerved, uncontrolled; missed the officer by a one-foot margin. Its far wheels crunched across Ludy's body, crushing the life from the wounded thug.

Then, jounced by the human obstruction, the sedan made another veer. Sideswiping the pillar where The Shadow stood, the roaring car ricocheted to another post, to halt there with a head-on crash.

THE driver was dead; but the other three were lucky. With the accelerator no longer pressed, the car had lost some of its momentum when it hit the final pillar. Three men leaped from the wreck; headed by Bosco, they dashed for Quill's car.

When the sedan glanced the pillar beside him, The Shadow had flung himself clear. He was coming to his feet, but he had no time to harry Bosco and the fleeing men. Quill and his pals in the first car were



opening fire in The Shadow's direction.

This time, to use the pillar as shelter, The Shadow had to leap to the middle of the avenue. As he took that spring, crooks gave a gleeful shout. They saw The Shadow's figure suddenly outlined in the glow of big headlights.

A truck was pounding along the avenue; its driver had heard the shooting and wanted to get past the corner. He gave the air brakes when he saw The Shadow in his path. It was too late for a short-notice stop.

Crooks saw The Shadow flatten, as though pitched forward by the truck's bumper. The huge vehicle lumbered a dozen feet farther obscuring the black-cloaked figure from view. It was Quill who spoke the thought that flashed to every man with him.

"The Shadow got it!" rasped Quill. "Just like Ludy did. This is where we scam!"

Bosco and the others were now in the car. Quill gave the sedan the gas. The traffic cop, rounding the front of the big truck, was too late to spot anything except the twinkle of tail-lights.

"You gummed it swell!" the officer told the shaky truck driver. "What'd you stop here for? I'd just gotten another bead on that mob."

"There was a guy in front of me," gulped the truck driver. "I didn't want to run him down."

"You mean him?" The officer pointed to Ludy's body. "He was bit already."

"No, it wasn't him." The trucker shook his head. "It was a guy that just looked like something black. He took a dive, just as I hit him. He's under the wheels, right now!"

The officer didn't dispute the story. He remembered that someone had been shooting in his behalf. But when he had taken a look under the truck, the officer changed his opinion.

"You were seeing things," he told the truck driver. "Nobody's under the wheels."

"If he dropped quick enough," expressed the truck driver, hopefully, "he could've flattened in the center. Maybe he crawled out in back."

"There's nobody in back. Nor anywhere around here, either. Except those guys that got what was coming to them."

"Maybe we ought to take more of a look -"

"I'll attend to that. Get along with you!"

The truck rumbled along the avenue. The puzzled driver heard nothing further, for the roar of the truck's motor drowned other sounds. It was the traffic officer, still at the corner, who caught the strange tone that followed.

It was the strain of a weird laugh; a trailing mockery that carried triumph as it dwindled into uncanny echoes. It was unreal, ghostly. The cop couldn't understand it. He stared about, but saw no one. He was puzzled by the way the mirth had faded into the distance.

There was a simple explanation, but the officer didn't guess it. The departing laugh had come from the interior of the truck. Entering through the open back, The Shadow had chosen that vehicle to carry him from the scene of battle.

Mobsters had taken cover; The Shadow had found no reason to remain. He was traveling elsewhere, in the hope that he might find another trail to men of crime.

## CHAPTER VIII. CRIME'S PURPOSE

LATER that same evening, a group of men were gathered in the apartment recently tenanted by James Mandor. One man, brusque of manner, with short-clipped mustache, was seated at Mandor's desk. He was well-known in New York, for he was the city's police commissioner, Ralph Weston.

Another man, stocky of build, swarthy of complexion, was making a careful survey of the premises. He, too, had a reputation as an active worker against crime. He was Joe Cardona, ace of police inspectors.

A detective entered to announce that Mr. Lamont Cranston had arrived. Soon, Commissioner Weston was shaking hands with the tall, hawk-faced personage who had so recently been garbed in black. Weston, however, had no inkling that this being who posed as Cranston was actually The Shadow.

There was a real Cranston, but he was seldom in New York. When Cranston was away, The Shadow frequently adopted his personality. It served him well, especially in meeting with the police commissioner.

"Hello, Cranston!" greeted Weston. "Glad you received my message at the Cobalt Club. I wanted to see you, to learn if you know anything about James Mandor."

"I have met him a few times," returned Cranston, casually, "but I know very little concerning him. What has happened to Mandor?"

"Another case of this sleeping sickness. A servant of Mandor's found him here, a short while ago. The third victim in two days."

"How does that come under your jurisdiction, commissioner? I should consider it a matter that concerned the health authorities."

Weston grumbled that it did. He said that Mandor had already been removed to a hospital. After that, he added:

"It was Inspector Cardona who thought we ought to come here."

Cardona nodded wisely.

"There was some shooting early this evening," the inspector told Cranston. "It took place near a building where Brellick had his offices."

"Brellick?" Cranston queried the name in puzzled tone.

"Yes. Martin Brellick," returned Cardona. "One of the sleeping sickness victims. I figured there might be a link. So when I learned that Mandor had succumbed to the same ailment, I suggested that we come here."

Turning, Cardona nudged toward Mandor's safe.

"We want to see the inside of that box," he declared. "If it's been rifled, we'll know that crooks are in back of it. We're getting the combination, through Mandor's lawyer. We just learned that he has it tucked in a safe-deposit box, in case of emergency."

WHILE they waited, Cardona went through papers that he had taken from the desk and the filing

cabinet. He shook his head; so far, there had been no evidence pointing to crime.

Mandor's attorney arrived. He had the combination of the safe. He opened it and Cardona took a look inside. Disappointment registered on the inspector's face when he saw that the interior was shipshape. Sight of big bundles of currency convinced him that his guess was wrong.

"I guess that settles it, commissioner," Cardona told Weston. "I'll forget this sleeping sickness business. Only I had sort of a hunch -"

"You have too many hunches!" snapped Weston. "I've told you that often, Cardona. Put things back where you found them."

While Weston was apologizing to the lawyer, Cardona closed the safe and locked it. He came to the desk, found Cranston there. The commissioner's friend seemed sympathetic. He handed Cardona items that the inspector promptly sorted and put where they belonged.

At one corner of the desk lay a pile of objects: paperweights, match boxes, pencils, tubes of paste. Cardona had rummaged them from a top drawer on the left. As Cranston passed them to the inspector, he came upon a square of black substance that looked like a chunky eraser.

There was something in the feel of that substance that caused Cranston to hold it. Handing Cardona other items, Cranston reached into his pocket, brought out a pack of cigarettes. With that action, he left the rubbery square in his pocket.

From then on, there was a meditative glint in Cranston's usually complacent eyes. At times, his hand slipped into his pocket, to finger the prize that he had acquired.

When they left Mandor's, Cranston made a telephone call from a booth in the lobby. After that, he rode to the Cobalt Club in the commissioner's official car. They had a light supper in the grillroom.

Weston was the first to leave; Lamont Cranston sat alone. Three names linked themselves in The Shadow's thoughts: Thurnig, Brellick, Mandor.

In tracing them, The Shadow had cut closer to the center of crime. In Thurnig's case, he had gained a mere clue. Checking on Brellick, The Shadow had found more, and with it, had battled crooks who had come to cover the trail.

As regards to Mandor, brief minutes were all that had prevented The Shadow from effecting a rescue; he had arrived on the scene during the completion of crime itself.

Unfortunately, The Shadow had lost the trail of the crooks concerned. He had recognized Cobber; but the thug was dead. So was another - Ludy - who probably could have talked plenty.

Ludy, at least, had provided The Shadow with some information. The Shadow had not forgotten that speech at the traffic light. Ludy had stated that finishing The Shadow was to be the last of the gas jobs, and it fitted with The Shadow's theory regarding crime.

Thurnig, Brellick and Mandor all had something in common that had made it necessary to dispose of them. But Mandor, the final victim, must have possessed some document that pertained to their common interest.

THERE had been burglary at Mandor's; that was why crooks found it necessary to be there when he returned. The Shadow could picture them forcing Mandor to open the safe. There, they had ignored money, to acquire something far more valuable.

Whatever it was, Thurnig and Brelick could answer; but they, along with Mandor, were the Dead Who Lived. If crooks had their way, none of the three would ever arouse, for they would talk if they did.

Proof that those three were slated for final death was obvious to The Shadow, because mobsters had intended to give him the same dose. They wouldn't risk any doubtful method on The Shadow.

Still, hope remained for the Dead Who Lived.

The one chance was to find out who had caused their present plight, and why. That much gotten, there might be a solution to the riddle of their malady. Other forms of sleeping sickness had been cured; this strange stupor, deathlike though it was, might be banished once it was fully understood. Perhaps its creator knew the antidote!

Considering all that, The Shadow began to list the names of big-shots who might be managing the game. Quill Baxton, however, did not appear on the list. James Mandor had spoken correctly, in stating that Quill was not likely to be suspected.

The Shadow put the list away. His fingers felt the rubber block. It was an item that crooks had overlooked, but it might prove a cross-clue more important than the shreds of evidence that they had carried away.

A chubby-faced man entered the grillroom. He saw Cranston and approached the table. The arrival was Rutledge Mann, an insurance broker; also an agent of The Shadow. Mann also had a good knowledge of finance.

Mann knew Cranston. He had received a telephone call from the millionaire, asking him to come here. But Mann, himself, was not sure that Cranston was The Shadow. There were times when Mann considered Cranston to be another agent, like himself.

Briefly, Cranston spoke of the Dead Who Lived, as though repeating news that had been given to him. Mann had read of the first two cases; he was surprised to hear of Mandor's plight.

"Thurnig had twenty thousand dollars," remarked Cranston. "The money was in cash. It will interest you, Mann, to learn that Brelick also had twenty thousand available. He had negotiated a loan to complete that amount."

Mann's eyes opened.

"After learning of Thurnig's illness," resumed Cranston, "Brelick proceeded to raise ten thousand more. At least, that was his intention when he was stricken. What is your opinion, Mann?"

Mann considered. He was sure that Cranston already had an answer, but merely wanted to see if another viewpoint coincided.

"Each intended to put twenty thousand into some enterprise," decided Mann. "When Brelick learned that Thurnig was out of it, he was greedy enough to guess that he could take over Thurnig's share."

"Not all of it," reminded Cranston. "Only half."

"Only half," repeated Mann. "Which means that there must have been three partners concerned. Three men putting up twenty thousand each. Reduced to two, would mean thirty thousand each."

"And from the facts that you have related" - Mann's eyes were owl-like as he spoke - "I would say that the third man was Mandor. Moreover, from Mandor's reputation as a promoter, he would be the one who

was pushing the scheme."

CRANSTON'S nod showed that Mann's opinion fitted with his own. He asked Mann if there had been recent talk of transactions in which James Mandor was involved. Mann knew of none, and explained his ignorance.

Mandor, it seemed, kept all his schemes under cover until they were ripe. When he took in partners, he held them to the same secrecy. Sometimes he made money, other times he lost. Always, though, he shared with the others; that was why he never had trouble getting partners.

Mandor liked quick clean-ups; things that offered rapid return. He never cared to acquire controlling interests in new companies, because he always sold out his own share after the first big profit.

Unquestionably, Mandor could raise twenty or thirty thousand dollars, although it was known that he was getting short on funds. Those facts made a deal with Thurnig and Brellick seem quite plausible; but Mann couldn't guess what scheme was under way.

Cranston's hand came from his pocket. It dropped the chunky square of blackish substance. Picking the block from the table, Mann examined it. He heard Cranston say:

"That came from Mandor's desk."

"Rubber!" exclaimed Mann. "But Mandor isn't big enough to crash the rubber market!"

"Examine it more closely, Mann."

Mann did. He noted that the substance had a peculiar sponginess. It was made of a zigzagged meshwork that formed connected layers.

"You never saw rubber like that," remarked Cranston. "This substance is synthetic."

Mann's eyes showed a reminiscent gleam.

"Synthetic rubber," he mused. "I remember a stock that was offered on the market, then withdrawn -"

"Such a product," inserted Cranston, "would require an inventor."

"There was one. His name was mentioned in the prospectus. Professor Uriah Lawsham; he lives here in New York."

Cranston arose, rested his hand on Mann's shoulder.

"Locate Lawsham," he ordered. "Make an appointment. Say that you will bring an investor who is interested in his invention."

Mann was still nodding when he realized that Cranston's hand had left his shoulder. Looking about, Mann blinked. His friend had gone from the grillroom. That was not all that kept Mann agape.

From somewhere, he fancied that he heard the quiver of a whispered tone; the echo of a mysterious mirth. It reminded him of an eerie sound that he remembered from the past.

The laugh of The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER IX. THE SHADOW'S VISIT**

IT wasn't Cranston who met Mann early the next evening, to keep an appointment that the insurance broker had made with Professor Lawsham. Instead, Mann was joined by a person that he had met only a few times in the past; an individual named Kent Allard.

Tall, with long, thin features, Allard's face had a hawkish appearance; but it differed from Cranston's countenance. Mann could never have guessed that the two persons were the same. He felt that though Cranston might possibly be The Shadow, Allard could never be.

Kent Allard was an aviator who had been stranded in Guatemala during many of the years when The Shadow had been active in New York. But Mann - like everyone else - was totally deceived by that story. Kent Allard had actually spent very little time in Central America. He had created the story to cover the all-important fact that he - Kent Allard - was none other than The Shadow.

For once, Mann was traveling with The Shadow when his chief was undisguised. But Mann had no idea that such a case existed.

On the way to Lawsham's, Mann thought he had learned the reason why Allard had been selected for this duty. Allard talked methodically of the Castilla tree of Central America - a species of rubber tree less valuable than the Hevea of South America, but one with which Allard was specially familiar.

Allard, it seemed, was well-versed on the subject of rubber; hence a good man for The Shadow to appoint for the present mission.

Riding by taxi, they reached an old house on a side street, a brownstone-fronted building that looked in better repair than others in that block. As they alighted, Mann observed that the front windows of the basement and first floor were barred. Allard observed the same; and he saw that the side windows were similarly equipped.

There was another fact that Allard discerned. There was a bay window at the side of the house; just past it, deeper in a narrow passage, a one-story wall joined this house with the next. Allard saw a door in the blocking wall; it evidently opened into a rear courtyard.

A stocky-built servant ushered the visitors into a first-floor parlor. Soon, they heard the sound of slow, jerky footsteps. A stoop-shouldered, white-haired man entered; he kept his hands folded in front of him, as he stared over the tops of his spectacles.

Professor Lawsham had wrinkled features, with lips that were thin and tight-pressed. His narrow nose gave him a pinched expression, but his clear eyes showed keen intellect. Those eyes, gray in color, were suspicious at first but they gradually became friendly.

LAWSHAM liked the looks of these visitors: Mann, chubby-faced and serious; Allard, his tanned face almost gaunt, with its immobile expression. Seating himself, the professor gave a shrewd smile, then shook his head.

"You are too late, gentlemen," he said. "I have decided not to sell the rights to my invention."

Allard looked inquiringly at Mann; in turn, the insurance broker asked Lawsham to explain his decision.

"Only a few months ago," reminded Mann, "a company was started to put your synthetic rubber on the market."

"That was halted," declared Lawsham. "People argued that synthetic rubber had already been produced."

It was Allard who took up the argument.

"Correct, professor," he remarked. "Synthetic rubber is a fact, but not at a price to compete with the crude product. At present, it stands as a barrier that prevents raw rubber from selling for more than thirty-five cents a pound."

"Because synthetic rubber could be produced for less than fifty," agreed Lawsham. "But the rubber market has been slowly fidgeting upward, to test that very situation."

"Suppose I told you that I can manufacture a synthetic product for twenty-five cents a pound. Where" - the professor leaned forward to ask a confidential question - "where would the rubber market be then?"

Allard gave no immediate reply.

"I shall tell you!" chuckled Lawsham, rubbing his thin hands. "When the rubber market tries to climb, I can undercut it. When it drops, I can dominate the synthetic field. As you may know, there are purposes for artificial rubber that the natural product cannot fulfill."

The argument was a sound one. Lawsham stressed it. He showed a copy of the prospectus that Mann had mentioned the night before.

"When this was issued," explained Lawsham, "we could only hope that my process would mean cheap synthetic rubber. Since then, I have found that I can produce it cheaply. The constituent needed in the manufacture of synthetic rubber is acetylene. That gas is wrested from coal or limestone. But there are cheaper, better sources."

"Petroleum is regarded as one," put in Allard.

Lawsham smiled shrewdly, as though he knew a better source of supply. Then, abruptly, he asked:

"Would you care to see my laboratories?"

He led the visitors downstairs, passing through a door that a servant locked behind them. The basement was divided into several rooms; two of them were well-fitted as laboratories. Judging by the array of bottles and beakers, with benches of elaborate apparatus, Lawsham had experimented far in his quest for acetylene compounds.

They entered a small room that was boxed off like a special laboratory, although it had little equipment.

"The test room," explained Lawsham. "Most of my final experiments are conducted here."

"Because of their danger?" queried Allard.

"Partly," acknowledged Lawsham. "I see that you know the hazards that accompany this work. Certain compounds harden, and may explode when handled."

"And other acetylene reactions emit poison gases -"

AS Allard made that comment, he was looking toward Lawsham. The professor responded with a solemn nod, then pointed to ventilators set in the walls.

"I have allowed for that," he declared. "This apparatus can clear the air quite rapidly. Fortunately, we know enough about acetylene reactions to be prepared for any such trouble. Only bunglers would come to grief through poison gas."

He led the visitors through to another room, where stacks of synthetic rubber were piled on a table. Examining them, Allard noted that the substances varied in quality and composition, although some specimens closely resembled the one that he had found on Mandor's desk.

"Seldom do I show visitors through the laboratories," confided Lawsham. "However, a brief trip gives no one any real idea as to my processes. I had trouble, in the past, when I allowed persons to visit too long.

"I was badly disappointed when the stock company failed to develop. So I allowed persons to come here, in hope that I could interest them. Soon afterward, some of my assistants left me, one by one."

Allard's gaze was quizzical.

"Not because I could not pay them!" expressed Lawsham, emphatically. "I still have funds of my own. They merely claimed excuses; but I knew why. They had been approached!"

There was a hunted look in Lawsham's eyes, as he leaned forward to clutch Allard's coat lapel.

"Fake investors wanted my process," croaked Lawsham. "They believed that my assistants could reveal it. So they could" - Lawsham chuckled, as he leaned back - "but only in part. By this time, perhaps, they have found it out.

"That is why I have this place well guarded. Enemies - thieves - may try to come here, to learn facts that they lack. If they do, they will find themselves in trouble!"

The professor's statement seemed well grounded. When the visitors went up-stairs, they observed that there were half a dozen men at work, in one place or another. All looked husky, like the servant who had first admitted them.

Allard also noted the interiors of the barred windows. They were heavily constructed, as was a big door at the rear of the lower floor. That door was triple bolted.

Up in the parlor, Lawsham reverted to his first subject. When he spoke, his smile was canny.

"You wonder why I invited you here," he said, "since I have constantly refused to let persons take over my process. The reason is simple enough. No one can predict the future. I may be forced, eventually, to ask financial aid.

"Should that occur, I hope to have available persons upon whom I can depend. Let me assure you, gentlemen, that if I change my decision, I shall call upon you first of all. Or, in case a new company should develop, I shall inform you immediately, so that you can purchase original stock."

WHEN they left the house, Allard and Mann walked to the nearest corner. On the way, Mann asked:

"What do you make of it, Mr. Allard?"

"I am not quite sure," was Allard's reply. "It is all reasonable. Particularly what Lawsham said about his assistants."

"You mean the fact that some left him?"

"Yes. None of his present staff appear to be competent chemists. Yet Lawsham would not have started his extensive experiments without qualified assistants."

While Mann walked along pondering over that remark, Allard's eyes were directed toward the darkness on the other side of the street. He heard Mann muse, half aloud:



"I wonder if the synthetic rubber in Mandor's desk could have come from Lawsham's laboratory."

The Shadow had already considered that possibility. Unquestionably Mandor, Thurnig and Brelick together had intended to stake sixty thousand dollars on the success of Lawsham's synthetic rubber. As a result, those three had become the Dead Who Lived.

Lawsham had mentioned intended investors, but intimated that he had made no deal with them. That could all be shrewd pretense, to cover the fact that the professor knew everything about those Dead Who Lived.

On the contrary, it was possible that Mandor and his associates had negotiated with someone in Lawsham's employ, hoping to buy the process secretly. Such moves were the sort that could bring crooks into the picture, while Lawsham, ignorant of outside intrigue, concerned himself only with his own protection.

The solution to the problem depended upon the very factor that The Shadow had mentioned to Mann. Some person must be found who had once been in the employ of Professor Lawsham, but who, for some reason as yet unlearned, had left the protecting walls of the house that served as Lawsham's fortress.

The search for such a person could best begin at Lawsham's, since - as The Shadow reasoned - the man in question must once have lived there. There was another reason why Lawsham's house could be considered a focal spot; a reason highly important at this moment, for it depended upon observations that The Shadow had just made.

As Allard, The Shadow shook hands with Mann, when they reached the corner. They were going in different directions, so they took separate cabs. Mann left first; had he remained, he would have become singularly enlightened by Allard's actions.

Ignoring a taxi at the corner, Allard walked to the next street. He slipped aboard a cab that was parked there, gave a low-toned order in The Shadow's whisper. The cab started instantly. While it wheeled around the block, its passenger was busy donning garments of black.

As they turned into Lawsham's street, The Shadow's hidden lips gave a whispered laugh.

Another cab was pulling away. It was a cab that The Shadow had seen, parked in darkness across the way, while he walked with Mann. As The Shadow suspected, his visit to Lawsham's had been observed. No spy, however, could have known that Kent Allard was The Shadow. But those spying tactics promised an unusual sequel.

Professor Lawsham, it seemed, was receiving another visitor - one whose arrival might carry a clue to the very matter that so deeply concerned The Shadow: that of some person who had once been closely associated with Lawsham's scientific experiments.

The Shadow's cab stopped in darkness. A cloaked form emerged, blending with the blackness of the sidewalk. The Shadow, in his turn, was paying another visit to the old professor's home.

This time, The Shadow's arrival would be secret.

## **CHAPTER X. THE CROSSED TRAIL**

THE SHADOW'S route of entry was one that he had picked when he first came to Lawsham's house. Moving through the passage beside the bay window, The Shadow reached the wall that connected with

the adjoining house.

Opening the old door, he reached to the top of it. Using the knob as a step, he easily scaled the wall. Once he had swung the door shut, The Shadow stretched for the bay window. The reach was a short one; a ledge beside the window offered a foothold.

The window was shuttered; its barrier was iron. This upstairs blockade, however, had none of the strength that went with the barred windows below. Prying with a portable jimmy, The Shadow wedged a narrow space between the halves of the metal shutter. With an upward prod, he loosened an inner clamp.

Once inside the room, he made a quick examination of the shutter. It hadn't been inspected for months, as corner cobwebs testified. Using his tiny flashlight, The Shadow fixed the shutter to his satisfaction.

To all appearances, it looked untampered with; but the loosened clamp had weakened. It could be set to drop in place at the mere closing of the shutter. That fact meant that this window would be a good way for quick exit, as well as for future entry.

The room, itself, was an old sitting room, filled with furniture that had been draped with sheets. Edging his way through, The Shadow discerned light that trickled from the cracks of a closed door. Reaching the door, he inched it open. He looked into a deserted second floor hall.

Like a materialized ghost, The Shadow glided toward the front stairs. All was silent, empty, in the hall below.

Only the lights of the parlor were visible, indicating that a visitor was there. The absence of the servant meant that the fellow had gone below to summon Professor Lawsham from the laboratory.

The stairs were old, but they gave no creaks as The Shadow descended, for his weight was half against the banister. At the bottom, The Shadow paused, then made a quick shift to a curtain that hung beside the wide doorway of the parlor. His keen ears had caught the approach of footsteps.

Professor Lawsham came from the basement stairway. His pace was spry, his eyes eager. His face wore an expression that he had carefully veiled from Allard and Mann: one of inherent craftiness, accentuated by the sly way in which he rubbed his hands together. As Allard, The Shadow had noted traces of that underlying nature, although Mann had failed to suspect it.

When Lawsham neared the parlor, his manner changed. His face became sympathetic; he slowed his steps to a half-labored gait. He was too intent upon his coming interview to note the black-clad figure so close to the dark curtain. It was through that very curtain that The Shadow peered, when Lawsham entered the parlor.

THE caller was a girl, no more than twenty years of age. Though plainly dressed, she made a charming appearance. She was a slim brunette; she had large brown eyes that were as lovely as the face that formed their setting. Perhaps it was their misty look that gave them a sparkle, for, obviously, the girl was troubled.

She had risen from a chair to meet Lawsham. The old professor spoke words of kindly recognition.

"Miss Delton!" he exclaimed, mildly. He reached out to receive the girl's gloved hand. "What brings you here?"

"It's - it's about Dick." There was a quaver to the girl's tone. "I had to see you, professor. If - if Dick -"

For a moment she choked; bowed her head to repress a sob. Lawsham's touch was fatherly, as he laid his hand gently on her shoulder.

"Have no worry, Arlene," he soothed. "Whatever has happened, I shall try to help you. Tell me - what have you heard from Dick?"

Arlene's choke ended. She looked up, her eyes brilliant from the teardrops that her gloved fingers were brushing from her cheeks.

"I haven't heard from him," she said. "That's just the trouble, professor. We must find out what has become of him!"

"Yes," agreed Lawsham, slowly. "We must."

There was a certain grimness to the professor's tone. Arlene sensed it. Her eyes showed alarm.

"What is it, professor?" she asked, anxiously. "Do you mean that Dick had some hidden purpose in leaving so suddenly?"

"Possibly."

"But you wouldn't tell me before," insisted Arlene. "Was it because you didn't want to frighten me?"

Gently, Lawsham urged the girl to a chair. He stood with folded arms; solemn, yet mild of expression.

"Richard Remingwood was my most trusted assistant," affirmed Lawsham, soberly. "You knew, Arlene, how much I trusted him. When he came to me, one day, and asked for a vacation, he told me that you and he were to be married."

"We were to be." Arlene tried to smile. "Dick had postponed it because of his work here. But he had promised, so often, that some day he would surprise me. We'd be married that very day, he said, then start on our honeymoon."

"I know," acknowledged Lawsham. "I thought the day had come. I told Dick he could leave; and for the next two weeks, I often wondered where you and he had gone. I smiled to myself, because both of you had forgotten to write me. And then -"

Lawsham bowed his head; sadly, he eyed Arlene above his spectacles.

"That was when I came here," declared the girl, "to find Dick - only to learn that he had gone, without a word to me. I've hoped, so often, that I would hear from him. I know that you have received no word, but I had to come here again, tonight!"

"Tell me, professor, what you suspect? You said that you were sure no harm had come to Dick. Is it - is it because you have proof that he - that Dick became dishonest? It would be hard for me to believe it!"

"Hard for me to believe, as well," assured Lawsham. "If Dick had simply disappeared, I would not believe it. But he left of his own freewill, Arlene - as I told you."

"I know." Arlene arose, to grasp the professor's hand. "Perhaps the temptation was too great. Dick often said that people would pay large sums for your formulas. But I hate to believe that he sold them. Why" - the girl had suddenly remembered something - "he even said that you were depending upon him to develop new processes; that you promised him rewards -"

"That is all true," interposed Lawsham. "That is why we must give Dick the benefit of the doubt. We must

find him, wherever he is. If he betrayed my trust" - Lawsham was shaking his head - "he may have done so under threat."

A new expression came over Arlene's face. It was hope mingled with alarm. Her tone was as anxious as it was eager.

"How can we find him?"

"By hiring a competent investigator," decided Lawsham. "You loved Richard Remingwood, I trusted him. We have no proof that he has done wrong. Come here again tomorrow, Arlene. Meanwhile, I shall inquire regarding private detective agencies."

MOVING from the curtain, The Shadow reached the stairs by the time Arlene and Lawsham appeared in the hallway. He saw the girl turning toward the front door; behind her, Lawsham was showing another of those shrewd gazes that The Shadow had recently glimpsed.

Some scheme was hatching in the professor's giant brain. What it promised; how it linked with the past - The Shadow had no time to analyze. He sped silently for the room with the covered furniture. Once outside the window, he swung the shutter tight and heard the clamp fall in place.

The Shadow was dropping from the connecting wall when he saw Arlene signal a cab that did not stop. She started for the corner. When The Shadow reached the sidewalk, he saw the same cab arrive again. It was his own private taxi, driven by one of his secret agents; it had gone around the block. The Shadow's low hiss halted the cab. He jumped in.

They picked up Arlene's trail at the corner, followed in the wake of another cab. For once, The Shadow indulged in a whispered laugh at his own expense. That lurking cab that he had thought contained a spying crook, had held no one but Arlene Delton. The girl had merely been waiting until Lawsham's callers had left.

Arlene's cab reached a street of modest, neat-appearing houses. From his stopped cab, The Shadow saw her enter an old residence that had been changed to a tiny apartment house. Stepping from the cab, he reached the gloomy lobby, saw Arlene Delton's name listed under the number "2B."

Pressing another button, The Shadow waited until the door latch began to buzz. He opened the door, entered the apartment house. He could hear footsteps on the third floor, where some apartment dweller thought he was about to receive a late caller. Stealthily, The Shadow ascended the stairs, stopping at the second floor.

A door slammed from the floor above. The Shadow stopped at 2B. From within the apartment, he could hear Arlene's sobs. Placing his hand upon the doorknob, The Shadow felt it give. Arlene hadn't waited to lock the door after she had entered. Long weeks of worry had been too much, even for her bravery.

The Shadow entered a darkened living room. To his right lay a doorway that led to a little kitchenette; to his left a light revealed Arlene's bedroom. He couldn't see the girl, for she was past the corner. Her sobs had ended with surprising suddenness. All that The Shadow could hear was the sound of a bureau drawer sliding open.

The Shadow decided to meet Arlene; to talk with her. He, too, was interested in matters that concerned Dick Remingwood. Arlene might be startled when she met The Shadow, but her surprise would soon turn to confidence.

Silently, The Shadow moved toward the open doorway, to stop just short of it. The door was partly

closed; The Shadow heard Arlene approach, so he remained where darkness sheltered him. An instant afterward, the door whipped open. The girl, herself, was in the doorway.

No longer were Arlene's eyes moist. They were firm; cold in their stare. Her chin was thrust out in hard determination. Below that chin was an upraised fist that gripped a .22 automatic.

The muzzle of that weapon was pointed into the living room, trained straight toward the darkness where The Shadow stood!

## **CHAPTER XI. THRUSTS THROUGH THE DARK**

THE same sheer instinct that spurred The Shadow to amazing action could serve him otherwise. It did on this occasion. Despite the surprise that Arlene had provided, The Shadow remained motionless, still covered by the aimed pistol.

The Shadow was in darkness, so he clung to it. He had a chameleon ability at concealing himself in gloom. That blackened living room was a veritable shroud that blanketed the cloaked figure who had entered.

Arlene did not budge. Her face kept its determination. One telltale sound, the girl would fire. Recognizing that fact, The Shadow avoided any clue to his whereabouts. Then, as reason replaced instinct, he coolly sought the cause for his dilemma.

Certainly, Arlene could not have heard him enter. There hadn't been the slightest click from the doorknob when he opened it. She could not have spied light from the hallway. The Shadow had not only blocked it when he edged through the door; Arlene, at that moment, had been in the lighted bedroom.

Had Arlene noted that her cab was followed? Had she expected an intruder?

Those questions produced a negative answer. Had Arlene been keyed to action, she would not have indulged in those sobs. They had been genuine. Though Arlene showed complete determination, her face was streaked with tears.

Then, as he nullified those possibilities, The Shadow caught the true answer in one quick flash.

Arlene had heard something, just as The Shadow had begun to open the door. But it had not been a sound from his direction. He was covered, at present, by the girl's gun; but his own position explained it.

Behind The Shadow lay the kitchenette. Arlene had caught some warning from that quarter.

TENSELY, The Shadow listened. He heard a stir, so slight that Arlene failed to sense it. It was a creeping motion behind The Shadow's back. He knew that sort of sound - as deadly as the rattle of a snake.

Whoever was there did not see The Shadow. The lurker was slightly away from the angle of Arlene's aim. Close to the wall of the kitchenette, the hidden man could certainly observe the girl. Framed in the lighted doorway, she was a perfect target for a killer.

The Shadow could sense a gunner aiming from darkness. He could pick the fellow's exact position, for there was only one angle from which the would-be killer could see Arlene, without spotting The Shadow. That murderous lurker was taking his time because he had the girl covered.

Quickly, The Shadow's tactics changed. From immobility, he switched to speed. His action came as silent as it was swift. Thrusting one hand beneath his cloak, he whipped out an automatic; with the swing

of his arm, he made a quick half-whirl, fading to the floor.

Three guns spoke; their shots formed a quick procession, spaced half-seconds apart. The Shadow's .45 knifed first, straight toward the corner of the kitchenette. A revolver tongued from that very spot, but its spurt went upward, half-toward the ceiling. The third burst, puny in comparison, was from Arlene's .22, as the girl delivered a spontaneous shot into the darkness where The Shadow had been.

There was a thud from the kitchenette. Jolted by the impact of The Shadow's bullet, the hidden gunner had missed Arlene. That enemy was finished; The Shadow's next problem was to halt Arlene before she fired other shots at random.

Arlene, herself, solved that problem, and with it, produced another. Realizing that the lighted doorway was a bad place to be, she sprang into the bedroom, slamming the door behind her. Almost instantly, there was a muffled crash from the bedroom window.

The Shadow reached the door, swung it inward. Arlene had turned, to meet a masked thug who was springing in to grab her. She was belated in her aim; so was the man who sought to slay her, for he had landed on hands and knees inside the sill.

Coming up, the new foeman made a grab for Arlene's gun hand and caught it. As he wrested her .22 away, he started a slugging blow for the girl's head. The long arm of The Shadow thrust in between, halted the murderous slash. As Arlene broke away, she stared in amazement at the quick grapple that followed.

She saw a cloaked being in black who had come seemingly from nowhere, to pick that quarrel with a sweated thug. Cloaked arms were locked with those of the thwarted killer. The thug's face was venomous as he pulled his gun hand high and clear, ready for a downward blow.

Arlene shrieked an unneeded warning. Before the slugging fist could descend, a muffled gunshot sounded. Arlene saw the thug sag from The Shadow's grasp. She spied a gloved fist that gripped a smoking automatic.

Then, as Arlene sprang to join her rescuer, The Shadow met her with an arm sweep that sent her staggering through the doorway to the living room. With a twist, he dropped to the floor inside the bedroom window, just as the rattle of a machine gun spoke from the low roof of a garage.

RAKING bullets whined above The Shadow's head, to spatter the wall of the bedroom. Those slugs ripped away the single floor lamp that illuminated the room. Darkness came; the machine gunners no longer had hope of picking a target. They halted their useless fire.

They were to regret their move. A gibing laugh came from the window; with it, the quick flashes of an automatic. Uncannily, The Shadow was picking out human targets against the dim background of the garage roof.

Huddled figures sprawled; others dragged them away, beneath the shelter of a low parapet. That gun crew was clearing out; the luckier crooks were hauling the machine gun along with their wounded pals.

Arlene hadn't realized how the fight had gone. It was the first time that she had witnessed The Shadow in battle. Fearing for her rescuer, Arlene dashed to the apartment door, yanked it open, to call for aid. A man from the hallway blocked her. She whipped back at sight of a pointed revolver.

Springing into the room, the fellow grabbed her, pulled her out into the hallway, toward a flight of stairs at the back.

Before the crook could do murder, he heard the laugh of The Shadow. It came from the door of the apartment. Looking across Arlene's shoulder, that last invading thug spied the cloaked avenger.

The Shadow could not see the glowering face beyond Arlene, but he spied the hand that clutched the girl's neck. It was a hand he recognized, for it lacked a second finger. Moreover, it had a jagged scar that ran almost to the wrist.

That hand belonged to a crook named Bosco Treff. Oddly, it was to save its owner's life.

The Shadow wanted a living thug, who could tell the name of the leader who controlled the ill-assorted band that showed up everywhere. Cobber Lokum had died too soon. Bosco Treff was going to live a while.

Bosco did what The Shadow expected. He responded to The Shadow's challenge by flinging Arlene aside. With the same move, Bosco whipped back into the darkness of the stairway, to take aim. The Shadow saw the glimmer of the revolver in Bosco's one good fist.

Already aiming, The Shadow squeezed the trigger of his automatic. The bullet clanged Bosco's gun; it should have ricocheted to crack the thug's wrist. Bosco's hand chanced to be twisting when the slug arrived. His gun jounced from his numbed fingers, but he received no wound.

Madly, Bosco dived for the stairway. Again, he was fortunate. The Shadow aimed for his shoulder, not his head. Stumbling, Bosco pitched far enough ahead. The bullet barely grazed his coat. The Shadow followed, sweeping Arlene along with him.

There was safety in that closed stairway; much more than in the lighted hall, where some forgotten hoodlum might pop into sight.

THE stairs turned too sharply for The Shadow to get another shot at Bosco. Outside the house, the lucky thug made a corner of the building before The Shadow could spot him in the darkness. A clatter of footsteps marked Bosco's mad departure.

From all about, Arlene could hear the shriek of sirens. She knew that police were on the way here. She feared for The Shadow, wondering if his part would be understood. Arlene wanted her rescuer to be away; and she was anxious to go with him.

She had feared the attack that had come tonight. It fitted with her qualms concerning Dick. Though she hadn't expressed the thought to Lawsham, she had felt that she would find trouble if she made efforts to locate Dick Remingwood.

At the present moment, Arlene's chief worry was The Shadow's dilemma. She gasped for him to go ahead, saying that she would try to follow. If she failed to get clear she could talk to the police. She would tell them about the crooks, but would not mention The Shadow.

Arlene's protests were ignored. The Shadow drew her along as he picked a course through passageways and courtyards. They reached a rear street and crossed it, to enter another maze. It was bewildering, the way The Shadow picked his course with the glow of that tiny flashlight.

Then they were in a taxicab that arrived from a darkened parking spot, the instant that The Shadow wanted it. A speedy driver was wheeling them from one street to another, carrying them from the zone where the police cars had converged.

Arlene was listening to a whispered voice - a tone that carried a weird chill, yet to her ears was inspiring with the confidence it gave. The Shadow was telling her of a place where she could stay in safety; there

to await word from him.

The girl spoke her agreement. In faltering but expressive words, she thanked her rescuer. The cab had slowed as it approached a traffic light; Arlene's eyes were lowered, as she spoke to the unseen personage in the thick darkness beside her.

When the cab jerked forward into the lights of the avenue, Arlene raised her head, hoping to meet The Shadow's gaze. Her eyes showed their beauty as they widened; but no one was present to admire them.

Arlene was alone, in the back seat of the cab. In the same mysterious way that he had come from blackness, The Shadow had departed!

## **CHAPTER XII. THE PAST LINK**

LATE the next afternoon, Professor Lawsham had another caller - a young man who alighted from a cab and promptly ascended the steps of the old house. As he stood there in the dusk, the young chap took a sidelong glance toward the street.

No prowlers were visible; nor did parked cars look suspicious. Nevertheless, the street was a gloomy one; the sort that could hold lurkers. Despite that, the young man showed no tenseness. He was quite calm when a servant opened the door to admit him.

The visitor tendered a card. He was ushered into a parlor. Soon, Lawsham arrived from the laboratory; the professor was still studying the card that had been brought to him.

That card bore the name: "Star Detective Agency", with street address and telephone number. In a lower corner were the small-printed words: "Harry Vincent, Representative."

Looking up from the card, the professor eyed Vincent. He saw a clean-cut young man, well-dressed and earnest of countenance. Lawsham was a trifle surprised. He had expected to meet a hard-boiled visitor. Harry Vincent was much more presentable than Lawsham expected a private detective to be.

Politely, Lawsham asked: "May I inquire the reason for this call, Mr. Vincent?"

"Certainly," replied Harry. "That is why I came here - to tell you the details. It concerns Miss Delton."

Professor Lawsham showed self-annoyance.

"How stupid of me!" he exclaimed. "I promised Arlene that I would arrange for an investigator. I entirely forgot the matter. I must telephone her at once, to apologize."

Harry stopped the professor before he reached the hallway.

"Haven't you heard about Miss Delton?" inquired the visitor. "It was on the front page of the newspapers."

Lawsham displayed alarm. Then:

"I never read the newspapers. I am too busy. But, tell me" - his tone showed a tremor - "has something happened to Arlene?"

"She disappeared last night," replied Harry, "after a mob of raiders shot up her apartment. The police are baffled; they can find no reason for the attack."

Harry leaned forward, added confidentially:



"The police know nothing of Arlene's connection with Dick Remingwood."

Lawsham was impressed. He began to regard Harry Vincent as a very keen young chap. That was not surprising, for Harry played a much more important part than that of representative for a detective agency. Actually, Harry Vincent was an agent of The Shadow.

"Don't credit me with anything clever, professor," warned Harry, with a smile. "This afternoon, I was the last person in the office, when a telephone call came there. The girl who talked to me said that she was Arlene Delton."

"Ah!" Lawsham sighed relief. "Then Arlene is safe!"

"Very safe, apparently," declared Harry. "She even refused to tell me where she was, until after I talked with you. She said that I should wait here, for another telephone call."

"Wise of her," agreed Lawsham. "I suppose she wants you to find Dick Remingwood."

"Yes. As soon as possible. She thought that you might aid me in the search."

PROFESSOR LAWSHAM paced the floor. He paused, at last, to give his detailed version of the case, much as The Shadow had heard him tell it to Arlene, the night before.

"Frankly, Mr. Vincent," concluded Lawsham, "I am still at loss. Remingwood is certainly involved with crooks; but whether they are working with him, or against him, is a question."

Harry nodded solemn agreement.

"You are wondering," stated Lawsham, seriously, "if I told Miss Delton all the facts that I know. I did so, Mr. Vincent; and yet -"

He stopped, stroked his chin; then, abruptly:

"Wait here a few minutes, Mr. Vincent."

Harry heard the professor go out through the hallway, down the stairs to the basement. It was very still, oppressive, in that little parlor. The curtains seemed like a shroud, that might rip aside at any moment, to bring danger.

For, as Harry reasoned it, crooks would be quite as interested in the affairs of Professor Lawsham as they were in those of Dick Remingwood and Arlene Delton.

As he waited, Harry sensed a sound. It was like a low, sibilant hiss carrying from the dim hall beyond the curtains. He pictured it as coming from the stairs to the second floor. Harry smiled. He felt the watchful presence of The Shadow.

Professor Lawsham returned bringing a small clutter of papers. They were letters, memo slips, and other items, that the professor had found in a desk downstairs. But as he and Harry searched through them, they found nothing that pertained to Dick Remingwood.

As he gathered up the papers, Lawsham found a yellow slip; he stared at it, then fished around and produced another that resembled it.

"These are odd," he remarked. "Memos that my assistants left for me. Regarding long-distance calls from Hadley, New Jersey."

Vincent took the slips. They had been written in different hands, but both held the same notation.

"I remember those calls," nodded Lawsham. "They came on successive nights. Someone calling from Hadley; but both times, they were cut off. Where is the town of Hadley, Mr. Vincent?"

Harry wasn't sure. He had heard of the place; that was all. But the matter interested him.

"Those calls might have been from Remingwood," Harry suggested. "Do you agree, professor?"

"I do," replied Lawsham. "Why not go there, Mr. Vincent?"

Harry considered. He said that he ought to tell his chief about the matter, but the office was closed. As Harry put it, he should ordinarily postpone the investigation until the next day.

"But this is an extraordinary case," reminded Lawsham. "No time should be lost. Do not worry about expenses, Mr. Vincent. I shall guarantee payment for your services."

"All right," agreed Harry. "But if I do find Remingwood, what then?"

"I understand," returned Lawsham. "You do not know him; therefore, you would not recognize him."

That wasn't the thought that Harry had in mind, but it was certainly an obstacle in itself. Harry stressed that point. The professor had a solution.

"Take Arlene with you," advised Lawsham. "I know she will be glad to go. She will know Dick, if you find him."

THE plan had logic. Harry agreed to it, provided that Arlene wanted it. Professor Lawsham said that he would talk to the girl, when she telephoned. He called a servant, sent the batch of papers downstairs. Hardly had Lawsham and Harry resumed their conversation, before a telephone bell jangled.

The telephone was in the hall. Lawsham answered the call; it was Arlene's. Harry overheard the professor suggesting the trip to Hadley. Finally, Lawsham arrived, smiling, in the doorway.

"Arlene agrees," he declared. "She wants to talk to you, Mr. Vincent; to tell you where to meet her. She wouldn't tell me where she was" - Lawsham's expression had sobered - "and I consider that quite wise.

"Arlene fears that men might even attack here, to make me tell where she can be found. Therefore, she does not want to burden me with dangerous information. I have assured her, however, that I am quite safe. My servants are good guards."

So confident was Lawsham, when he made the final statement, that his face showed a shrewd gloat. He was thinking of what might happen to anyone who tried to thwart his own endeavors. He seemed to look forward to such attempts with a satisfaction that bordered upon triumph. He revealed himself as one whose own schemes could offer real opposition to any one who opposed him.

His hands were twitching, their long fingers acting as though they were breaking something between them. Certainly, Professor Lawsham, once aroused to action, could become a most dangerous foe.

Harry, meanwhile, was finishing a short conversation with Arlene. Lawsham's manner had calmed when Harry turned about.

"We're going to Hadley," said Harry, on parting, "and we'll make the trip in a hurry. If mobsters do get wind of it, we'll be back here before they can move."

DARKNESS was thicker when Harry stepped from the old house. This time, he was positive that watchers were about. He felt confident, however, that he was also under the guarding eye of The Shadow. Harry was cool as he strolled to the corner.

Taking a cab, he rode to a garage three blocks away. Stepping into a sedan that was parked there, he consulted a road map, then drove to a small West Side apartment house. Arlene joined him there. They drove north along Broadway, toward the George Washington bridge.

Harry explained that the town of Hadley was some twenty miles northwest of Manhattan, in the New Jersey foothills. A good road led there, but traffic would probably be light.

"If anyone is trailing, us," declared Harry, soberly, "that highway will be the first place we'll know it."

They crossed the big bridge, traveled along the turnpike, then veered to the road that Harry had mentioned. Arlene had not forgotten the statement regarding possible followers. As they sped along a straight stretch, she looked back through the rear window.

Far behind them, Arlene saw dim lights round a turn. From their motion, she could guess that another car was picking up speed. Tensely, Arlene gripped Harry's arm, for she was positive that they were being trailed. Realizing that Harry would have to handle the car, Arlene felt suddenly helpless. She knew that she could not battle with an overtaking outfit of mobsters.

Then, from the blackness of the rear seat, came the token that responded to Arlene's very thoughts. It was a whisper, low, indefinable, but it carried a tone of sinister mirth.

Arlene's fears vanished in that instant. She and Harry were not alone in the speeding sedan. With them was a fighter whose prowess could vanquish any marauding crew.

The Shadow!

### **CHAPTER XIII. THE HOUSE IN THE HILLS**

THE trailing car made no effort to overtake the sedan, during that ride to Hadley. Harry was showing plenty of speed, and the sedan was powerful. Perhaps the followers were finding themselves lucky in merely keeping on the trail.

In fact, there were times when Arlene thought that they had shaken their pursuers; but always, that other car bobbed into sight again, somewhere far behind.

Harry was noting the speedometer. They were due at Hadley; but there was no sign of a town, until he slowed to cross a single-track railway line. Just past a deserted station, they took a turn and came upon a few dingy buildings spaced along a road.

One was an old post office, another a weather-beaten store, both closed for the night. There was a building that looked like a grange hall, its windows black and silent. Then one hanging light announced a filling station. Harry pulled up beside a building that was scarcely more than a shack.

A man in greasy overalls came out, nonchalantly picked up a gas hose. Harry leaned from the window and called to him.

"Sorry," he said, "but the tank's nearly full. We're looking for a place somewhere around here. A friend of ours is staying there."

The service-station man repressed a grin.

"He might be up at Doc Broyce's place," he said. "What kind of a fellow is this friend of yours? Sort of nervous?"

"In a way - yes. What is this place you mentioned - a sanitarium?"

"Doc never called it that," the man replied. "He said it was a rest home. Only, we've been wondering," he chuckled, "why doc always went away when he wanted a rest himself."

He pointed into the darkness, made motions to indicate a road that turned to the right.

"Up there, about a mile and a half," he said. "The place is in the hills. And if you see doc, ask him why none of us ain't heard from him, since he got back. He was purty sick, the last time he closed the place. Heart trouble, he said.

"He was supposed to be shutting the place for good, so he could go out to California and stay there. But the place is open again, only we ain't seen doc around."

Arlene started to ask a question; Harry gestured to stop her. He had gotten a sudden inkling from the service man's remarks concerning Doc Broyce's ailment. The less said, the better, at this moment.

The picture was clearing in Harry's mind. He was coming to conclusions which he believed must be identical with those The Shadow had already formed: a solution to the riddle of the Dead Who Lived. But the test of that theory, and its proof, depended upon a prompt visit to the sanitarium.

As they started along the road to the hills, Arlene looked back. She half wondered if The Shadow had remained in the sedan. Arlene was chiefly puzzled, though, because the other car had not come into sight. She asked Harry what he thought about it.

"There was a dirt road that cut right just past the grade crossing," recalled Harry. "They might have turned in there, to watch us from between the buildings."

"But where are they now?" queried Arlene.

Harry admitted that he did not know. He was less puzzled, though, when a dirt road came in from the right, to join their own route.

"They may have seen which way we headed," undertoned Harry. "If they did, they could have taken a short-cut, to get here before us."

Harry was driving slowly, but he didn't tell Arlene to keep a lookout. That didn't worry her; it made Arlene hopeful. She was convinced, from Harry's calmness, that The Shadow must still be with them.

The road veered; ended at an open gate. Driving through, Harry followed a rough driveway that was scarcely more than ruts. Ahead, barely distinguishable against the cloudy sky, he saw a sprawly building that looked like an old farmhouse.

When they reached it, the place proved larger than an ordinary farmhouse, for it had frame-built extensions, that had evidently been added at different times.

As Harry swung the car about, his lights showed walls that badly needed paint. The windows, too, looked dingy; the front door had a battered look. He wasn't surprised that the natives had thought the place closed permanently. The whole building was in need of repair.

No other cars were in sight, but there were plenty of tree clusters behind which one could be hidden. It

was certain, though, that by stopping close to the house, Harry and Arlene could reach the front door without trouble.

There was a good chance, too, that they would be admitted; for the sprawly house was occupied. Trickle of light filtered past the drawn shades of a few front windows, and Harry had seen others like them, at one side of the house.

Lights out, Harry and Arlene stole cautiously from the sedan and reached the front door. Harry felt for a push-button, found it. He rang; they could hear no bell inside. Harry rang again; as he did, he heard footsteps.

A bolt grated; the door opened. From a dim hallway, a blocky man craned at the visitors. Noting that one was a girl, he asked no questions but simply beckoned them to enter. Once they were inside, he closed the door and bolted it.

HARRY was sizing up the fellow; one single word described him. That word was "thug". It made the place look bad, finding such a man on duty; yet Harry wasn't sure that things were wrong. Perhaps there were residents here who sometimes proved troublesome. If so, strong-arm servants would be needed.

The blocky fellow swung around, spoke in a tone that was gruff, although he tried to smooth it.

"You won't be able to see Doctor Broyce," he informed. "The doc's away. Thought I'd better tell you that, to save you trouble."

"Thanks," returned Harry, coolly. "We haven't come to see Doctor Broyce. We want to talk to one of his patients."

"There's no patients here," began the man. "We've got guests -"

"I mean a guest. His name is Remingwood."

Thuggish features hardened. The tough servant seemed to be controlling a smile. He asked the names of the visitors. Harry gave them.

"All right," said the fellow. "I'll take you to see Remingwood."

During that interval, Harry had been looking past the attendant, into a darkened front room. There, he had caught the soundless motion of a window shade, that faded as he watched. Harry's tenseness vanished. Such smooth entry could be accomplished only by The Shadow.

Harry was sure that his chief had joined them. He would have been doubly positive, had he been able to see what was going on outside at his parked car. There, slinking figures had moved from another car, beyond a clump of trees. With guarded flashlights, they were probing the interior of Harry's sedan, only to find it empty.

Conducted through a chain of gloomy, deserted hallways, Harry and Arlene arrived at a big door. The servant opened it, to take them into a wing of the house. Looking back along the last passage, Arlene was sure that she detected motion in the darkness.

That motion faded instantly, so surprisingly, that Arlene could scarcely believe that she had noted it. The incident, however, caused her to form the same impression that Harry had gotten; namely, that The Shadow had followed them.

Past the big door was a gloomy corridor, with closed deep-set doors along the right. There was a wide

doorway on the left; the servant stopped there, to look into a large lounge room. Harry and Arlene saw a pair of white-jacketed attendants, as hard-boiled as the man who guided them.

There were half a dozen others in the room, pitiful specimens of humanity. One was an old man, slumped deep in a chair, muttering to himself. Two younger men, weak-looking fellows, were seated at a table listlessly playing checkers.

Another was staring from a darkened window; of the last two, one sat brooding, with folded arms, while the final man, who looked like a dope addict, sat in a corner holding his pale face buried in his hands.

HARRY no longer doubted the necessity of the husky attendants. The term "guests" certainly did not suit this group of hopeless patients. Harry looked toward Arlene. Sight of the group troubled her; she was wondering about Dick's condition.

"Where's Mr. Remingwood?" gruffed the guide.

"In his room," replied one of the attendants. "Reading a book, the last I saw him."

The guide conducted them farther along the corridor. Dick's room was the last on the right; there was only one door beyond it; that final barrier was located in the very end of the corridor.

The man rapped, announcing that visitors had arrived. Abruptly, he opened the door of Dick's room and shoved it inward. Harry saw a young man rising from a table, laying a book aside. That first sight pleased him. Dick Remingwood was not like the rest of the patients that Harry had seen here.

Square-featured, Dick had keen eyes and firm lips that automatically formed a smile of greeting. His face was a trifle pale, but not haggard. His clothes looked well; his black hair was smoothly parted.

Dick gave an exclamation of genuine gladness when he saw Arlene. With a happy cry, the girl was across the threshold; a moment later, Dick was holding her in his arms. Harry looked at the attendant; the fellow gave a shrug and stepped out to the corridor, leaving the door ajar.

Harry Vincent remained as the lone witness to the reunion between Dick Remingwood and Arlene Delton. As he watched, Harry was convinced that this meeting was important.

There were facts, Harry was sure, that Dick alone could tell. Facts, perhaps, that Dick Remingwood regarded as unimportant, yet which would prove vital to The Shadow's quest.

## **CHAPTER XIV. FACTS BEHIND CRIME**

THE big door had opened at the front of the long corridor. A shape of blackness blocked the whiteness of that door, then faded. The Shadow blended with the gloom along the wall. He studied the doorways on the right.

From one, the last in line, came a thin shaft of light. The Shadow knew that it must indicate the room where Harry and Arlene had found Dick Remingwood.

Keeping close to the right wall, The Shadow advanced. As he neared the doorway on the left, he saw the big room where two attendants watched their half-dozen patients. A third attendant had joined the pair already there. The additional man was the servant who had brought Harry and Arlene here.

The Shadow spent no time studying the six patients. All looked eccentric; anyone of them might suddenly glance toward the corridor. Men in their apparent state had the faculty of seeing things that escaped ordinary observers. If one spied The Shadow, the fellow might imagine anything, and shout it.

With quick, gliding stride, The Shadow passed that danger spot, blended into gloom beyond. He reached the doorway just before Dick's. Its depth, the dullness of the painted door itself, showed that it could be a perfect hiding place.

That tested, The Shadow stepped forward and peered into the room where Harry watched Arlene and Dick.

Arlene had introduced the two men. All three were seated, ready for a conference. Arlene's eyes were troubled, though, as she stared toward the shaded window. She could see the outlines of bars through the blind.

"Why are you here, Dick?" she questioned. "You seem well - and quite normal -"

"I'm in fine shape," interposed Dick. "I'm here merely for observation, and because I needed a rest. I supposed that Professor Lawsham had explained all that to you."

Arlene stared, amazed. She looked at Harry; with a grim smile, The Shadow's agent stepped to the door. He saw that the corridor was empty. The Shadow had withdrawn to the next doorway, but he resumed his observation as soon as Harry returned into the room.

"I'm leaving the door ajar," Harry told Dick, in an undertone, "so we will know if any one approaches. Let's hear your story from the start, Remingwood. Never mind what the professor told us."

DICK settled back in his chair, rearranged a few books that lay on the table.

"It was my own stupidity," he said. "I was in the testing room working with an acetylene reagent, and I overlooked the professor's instructions. I knew there'd be a gas, but I hadn't counted on the quantity that came.

"Before I knew it, the stuff had me. In that tiny room, with the door closed, I didn't have a chance. Professor Lawsham thought I was dead, when he found me. Fortunately, he knew the whole formula that I had been using.

"How he managed it, I can't guess; but he's a wizard! He knew what was the matter. He didn't wait to send for a physician. He cooked up some kind of an antidote, and it worked."

Stark realization had come to Harry and Arlene. They knew exactly what had happened to three victims who were lying helpless, in New York hospitals.

"I was asleep, that's all," assured Dick. "Rather wobbly for a while, I'll admit; but the professor made me rest for a few days. Then he told me he'd tried the same test on guinea pigs. He said he was afraid there would be after effects.

"The antidote would work - any time within a week or so - but he said it took a strong heart to stand the gas in the first place. So he sent me here to get a real rest."

Arlene clutched Dick's shoulders.

"Don't you realize what's been happening?" she demanded. "Professor Lawsham lied to you - like he did to me!"

"The professor saved my life!" Dick was indignant. "Don't forget that!"

"There are other lives that he is not saving! Haven't you seen the newspapers?"

Dick shook his head. Harry unfolded a copy of an evening newspaper. Dick was horrified when he read about the shooting at Arlene's apartment. Harry turned to another page, pointed out a column that mentioned the Dead Who Lived.

None of the sleeping sickness victims had shown any improvement. Dick scanned that news; he looked up, startled.

"The gas!" he blurted. "It could have caused it!"

"These Dead Who Lived" - Harry was pointing to their names - "did you ever hear of them?"

Dick couldn't recall the names, but he remembered something that linked with them.

"Persons came to see Professor Lawsham," he declared. "I remember, one night, that he told me he intended to give them an option."

"What could have changed his mind?"

"The new tests, perhaps. It was always the same problem: finding some way to cut the production cost. But it wasn't until I tried my new formula that -"

"Your formula?"

"Yes. The one I told you about. We needed acetone, and it can be obtained by fermenting potatoes, but that never worked out well, until I developed my formula. With the way we have it now" - in this enthusiasm, Dick was forgetting the charges made against Professor Lawsham - "we can turn the whole surplus potato crop into synthetic rubber.

"Bad potatoes, small ones, rotten ones - they don't matter. We can use them. We'd looked into prices, and potatoes are as cheap a source material as anyone could want. And there are thousands of acres of cheap potato land! And Lawsham promised me -"

Dick stopped. His eyes had taken on a horrified stare. His voice was hollowed to a whisper, as he added:

"Lawsham promised to credit me with the process; to buy it from me. But he lied! He saw a way to crowd me out!"

"As he did with the investors," inserted Harry. "They were all right, while the proposition looked doubtful. But with everything in the bag, Lawsham wanted it all, your share included, Remingwood.

"Your accident showed him how to get it. He saw what happened to you; he figured out an antidote, because you were still useful. He railroaded you here, so he could cut loose with the gas. He got rid of the men that he didn't want, by making them the Dead Who Lived!"

THE whole insidious scheme drilled home to Dick. He was listening, while Arlene recounted her visits to Lawsham, repeating how the professor had lied about Dick's whereabouts. Dick saw clearly how Lawsham had tried to get rid of Arlene, because she was the one person who might bring up the question of the professor's absent assistant.

"So he got back those options," gritted Dick. "He's probably keeping them for souvenirs, along with the record that credited me with the discovery of the new formula. But why" - Dick's face showed bafflement - "am I still alive?"



"Because," said Harry, "Lawsham didn't want to be troubled with explaining the death of someone who worked for him, until he had settled with the others. He's holding you in reserve, to become another of the Dead Who Lived."

Dick was staring for the door, ready to yank it open. He seemed to think that a clear path lay ahead.

"We've got to get out of here!"

"Easy!" advised Harry, blocking the way. "Who do you think is in charge here?"

"Doctor Broyce," returned Dick. "I know him. He used to drop in and see the professor."

"Have you seen Broyce since you came here?"

Dick shook his head. Harry gave a grim nod.

"Broyce must have made one trip too many," declared Harry. "Suppose he took one of those gas doses, on his last visit to Lawsham. What then?"

"He'd have become another of the Dead Who Lived!"

"Not Broyce." This time, Harry's head was shaking. "He had a weak heart. Around here, the natives think Doc Broyce is back from California, but they haven't seen him. Soon, they'll think he's gone away again.

"They don't know that Broyce is dead. They'll think he's gone away again, when this place closes. Nobody will ever find Broyce's body. Those crooks who work for Lawsham are smart enough to have stowed it where it won't bob up again."

Harry's words seemed echoed by a whisper from the corridor; The Shadow's approval of his agent's claim. Along with his evil deeds against the Dead Who Lived, Professor Lawsham had gone the full route, with actual murder, in the case of Doctor Broyce.

This trip to the New Jersey hill country had produced all that The Shadow hoped. It had laid bare the full machinations contrived by Professor Lawsham. Dick Remingwood stood as a man more greatly duped than those three Dead Who Lived. Completed crime - the murder of Broyce - was proof of Lawsham's final intent toward all other victims.

The spot where The Shadow stood was an important vantage point. He had heard all that passed within the room, and he was guarding against trouble from outside. Trouble was due, for Harry and Arlene had overstayed their time with Dick.

There was a slight sound from the door at the inner end of the corridor. The Shadow drew away from Dick's door and took to the darkness of another doorway. Outsiders were invading, by a back route. The Shadow intended to let them show their hand.

The end door opened. In stole a band of masked men. No longer was their real part unknown. They were tools of Lawsham, under the command of some lieutenant. They were here for swift action, like the lot who had been at Mandor's apartment. The leader reached Dick's door, yanked it open.

ON the threshold, the masked leader was flanked by a pair of henchmen. All held revolvers. The leader snarled a challenge, that brought a quick turnabout from Harry. Up went Harry's arms; Dick and Arlene copied the motion.

"Talking it over, eh?" The masked man's voice was a sarcastic rasp. "That's fine! We'll give you plenty of time to keep up the conference. You're coming with us, see?"

"Don't try to be tough. It won't be good for you. We're going to hand you the gas treatment, if you behave. You won't mind it much. Remingwood can tell you it don't hurt. That'll be for two of you."

The masked man's eyes looked first to Harry, then to Arlene.

"We've got something else for you, Remingwood," he added. "The prof wants to talk to you. Maybe he'll let you off easy, if you don't act foolish."

The Shadow no longer had doubt as to the identity of the leading invader. He could see the man's profile, below the mask; he recalled the raspy voice, from episodes of a few years before.

The fellow was Quill Baxton, a racketeer who had always balked before stepping over the borderline into crimes that would mean combat with The Shadow. Quill was almost the last man that The Shadow would have picked as leader of a motley mob like this.

There was a stir within the room. Harry and Dick were shifting forward, urged by a mutual impulse to put up a fight. Quill saw it; he took a backward step, as he snarled to the men beside him:

"Grab 'em! Slug 'em, if you have to, but lay off bullets! We want this bunch alive!"

The thugs did not spring forward, as Quill expected, and the masked leader, himself, was instantly acquainted with the reason. Like the crew that served him, Quill was rooted where he stood, chained there by a weird challenge that seemed to come from the wall beside him.

Through that corridor burst the laugh of The Shadow. As the crooks stared, they saw a cloaked form materialize - a shape with burning eyes that promised doom. Gun-weighted fists leveled their weapons straight for the massed crew.

Crooks were trapped; clustered, they were covered by muzzles of death. Once again, Quill Baxton and his henchmen had met The Shadow. This time, the odds were turned.

The Shadow held mastery over men of crime!

## **CHAPTER XV. BLAST OF DOOM**

TO Harry Vincent, The Shadow's intervention was not unexpected. There had been a moment, when crooks thrust themselves in sight, wherein Harry had wondered what had happened to his chief. But with the first tones of that strident laugh, Harry knew the answer.

He saw how completely The Shadow had tricked the invading throng: learning their purpose and bringing them to bay. As mobsters quailed, Harry was ready with cooperation. Thrusting his hands to his hips, he pulled two automatics. He planked one gun in Dick's hand, kept the other for himself.

Together, they sprang past Arlene, to cover the invaders. By threatening the crooks from the flank, they enabled The Shadow to handle another thrust. The Shadow had counted on Harry's cooperation. It was needed.

The Shadow's challenge was bringing other foemen.

With a quick wheel, the cloaked fighter faced toward the front of the corridor. He was turned about when the white-jacketed attendants appeared. It was their turn to be under The Shadow's guns, while

Quill and the outside crew were held by Harry and Dick.

From his pivot position, The Shadow held complete control. He had sized the total number of his foemen: had figured that it lay within the odds that he could readily handle.

There was a factor, however, upon which The Shadow had not counted.

The white-clad men dropped back; then, when they had almost acknowledged defeat, they started a sudden drive. Into that surge came more men, to back the few guards. The Shadow was faced by a squad of nine, all armed with guns.

These added attackers were the patients from the big room!

No longer was the doddering old man aged. His wig was cast aside. The mumbling checker players were in the drive; so were the rest, including the pasty-faced fellow who had looked like a dope addict.

This place had been stocked with more than a few hoodlums passing as attendants. Even the "guests" were fakes; members of a full-sized mob, ready to prevent the removal of Dick Remingwood!

ANY fighter but The Shadow would have been slated for instant death. His quick choice, his amazing speed, were all that saved him. Forgetting Quill and the latter's thugs, The Shadow flung himself squarely into the human deluge that came from the front half of the corridor.

Guns ripped; The Shadow's automatics thundered amid that rapid fire. He was the center of a milling mass, and men were sprawling from that whirl. Despite the odds against him, The Shadow was giving those crooks a battle from such close quarters that he held the edge.

The Shadow had left Quill's outfit to Harry and Dick. That was where the counter-thrust went wrong.

Realizing The Shadow's dilemma, Harry instinctively opened fire to clip the crowd from the big room; and Dick did the same. There were others, unfortunately, who reasoned that The Shadow was in too tough a spot to survive without aid. Those others were Quill and his gunners. They thought they were clear to carry out their original plan. Quill, quickest thinker of the lot, rasped an order to that effect. The others followed it.

En masse, they piled upon Harry and Dick, bowled them to the floor. Arlene had no chance of escape; leaping thugs trapped her in the little room. They hauled her, struggling, to the corridor, where they had disarmed their first two prisoners.

At another command from Quill, they started through the rear door, expecting that The Shadow could never follow.

They would have made a bad mistake, if Quill had not stopped to take a look along the corridor.

There, Quill saw a thinning of the fray. The inside crooks were groveling on the floor, except for a pair that still grappled with The Shadow. Even those two were due to be finished; they were fighting hopelessly, realizing that The Shadow had crippled so many of their pals.

Quill hesitated; he was caught between two desires: The first, to carry away the prisoners; the other, to make sure that The Shadow died. Quill chose a middle course.

Letting the rest go through the rear door, he grabbed two of his masked squad. Shoving them around, Quill ordered them to get The Shadow.

One of the pair was Bosco Treff. The other was a long-limbed thug, a new addition to the crew. He was Bosco's present teammate; that was apparent from the gloating shout that Bosco gave.

"Come on, Pike!" Bosco's bellow was louder than the last barks of gunfire. "The job's ours! Croak The Shadow!"

The two drove along the corridor, ready to fire the moment that the last strugglers slumped. They saw two men half-locked together; the pair tumbled. Bosco and his pal blazed shots. A taunting laugh answered them.

The Shadow wasn't where the pair had fallen!

He had left those two mixed in their grapple. Dealing hard strokes with an automatic, The Shadow had whisked away before the two could sag. He was out of the path of gunfire that Bosco and Pike delivered. The two halted alongside the big room. They sighted The Shadow finishing a fade. He was silhouetted at the front door of that long hallway.

"There he is, Pike!"

WITH that shout, Bosco sprang forward, aiming for the whitish door. His shots splintered the woodwork. The Shadow had twisted back along his route. Pike saw that reversal; he paused to fire. But he never managed to loose a shot.

A last tongue of flame came from an automatic; it was the only cartridge that remained to The Shadow. The bullet sprawled Pike to the center of the corridor. Bosco never saw what happened to his pal. For Bosco was at the front door, staring about bewildered.

Quill saw Pike fall. He spied the wounded crook coming to hands and knees. Pike was crawling for the big room, snarling viciously as he went. He wanted cover before he took new aim. Forgetting Pike, Quill tried to get a bead of his own.

Finding The Shadow was no cinch, in that semi-gloom. All that saved Quill was the emptiness of The Shadow's guns. While Quill stared, puzzled, The Shadow performed a surprising move. Driving up from darkness, he fell upon Bosco.

The scuffle caught Quill's gaze. He saw a sledging gun take a glancing stroke from Bosco's skull. As Bosco sidled to the floor, The Shadow plucked away the revolver that was loosening in the thug's grip. Wheeling about, ready with that weapon, The Shadow was prepared for a duel with Quill Baxton.

Those swift tactics should have meant Quill's doom.

Quill Baxton was the only fighter who remained intact. He was stunned by the suddenness with which the entire burden had been thrown upon him. His gun was lowered; even when he realized his predicament he was too late to beat The Shadow's turnabout.

Baxton was saved by the act of a forgotten battler: one of the white-jacketed attendants.

That fellow had crawled through the doorway of a darkened room. His white sleeve was visible as his hand reached upward to the wall. At the moment when The Shadow and Quill were aiming their guns, the wounded man pressed a panel and found a switch. He tugged it.

The roar that followed made gunfire sound puny.

That switch had touched off a hidden charge of dynamite. The whole center of the building lifted in a

titanic explosion. In the midst of a fiery, rocketing background, Quill saw The Shadow, a tiny form in contrast.

The blast had struck outside the corridor, but The Shadow was close enough to feel its heavy effect. The door beside him came bursting inward. The Shadow was flung headlong to the corridor. Quill staggered against the rear door; rallying, he fired shots from his revolver. They were useless.

The central floor was shattered. Blinking from the effects of the explosion's blast, Quill saw The Shadow plunge into an engulfing pit. Guns gone, The Shadow grabbed for any object that could hold him. All that he clutched was the sprawled form of Bosco Treff. Together, they took the drop into the lower darkness.

Walls and floors were buckling more. Flames were catching dried wood as it collapsed. More of the old building was crumpling; wounded men were being carried to an awful doom. Quill saw them struggling, crawling toward him. As he stared, he watched them take the slide into oblivion.

Even the man who had pulled the switch was doomed. Fire was bursting everywhere, as the fellow made a stagger in Quill's direction. Rising flames showed terror on a whitened face, made ruddy by the spurts of fire. The fellow made a frantic grimace, thrust his hands forward, hoping that Quill would grasp them.

Then, with a sagging of the floor below him, the attendant went sliding into the same inferno that had swallowed The Shadow.

THERE were men, perhaps, who could be saved; those like Pike, who had gained the big room. But Quill didn't care to help them. Sheets of flame were sweeping upward as a barrier. He'd risk his own life, if he went to help them. Maybe they'd crawl clear, if they weren't too badly wounded. Quill didn't care.

This inside crew wasn't his. Bosco was his man; but Bosco was dead, gone with The Shadow. Pike didn't matter much; he was a newcomer, introduced through Bosco. Things were getting too hot for Quill. The sheets of flame that were scorching toward him would soon engulf the outer walls. What did it matter if nearly a dozen crooks had gone to doom, since The Shadow had perished with them?

Quill yanked open the rear door. The wall was swaying beside him, as he dashed through. Whipping flame lashed after him, but Quill was clear. Skirting the crazy old house, giving it a wide margin, Quill saw two cars, plainly revealed by the rising blaze.

He reached the first one. It was filled. Three prisoners were lying upon the floor, with captors clustered over them. Quill gave the word to go. As that car started, he flagged the next one. Hopping into it, he told the driver to follow.

There were queries; mention of Bosco.

"He went with the rest," snapped Quill. "It was the chance we all took! He got The Shadow! So what?"

The words brought approval. Quill was pleased, because he had been smart enough to credit Bosco with being a hero. None of his mobbies asked about Pike. So Quill said nothing further.

The two cars sped along the lonely road between the hills. From the rear seat, Quill looked out through the window. A raspy chuckle came from his lips, as he saw the old house burning like a tinder box, a mighty pyre against the sky.

"We croaked The Shadow!" gloated Quill. "Get it? We croaked The Shadow - got him at last!"

No one could deny the statement. The evidence was visible - a huge glow in the night. Immune though

The Shadow seemed to bullets, it was understandable - because of his quick shifts. But when Quill recounted how The Shadow had been trapped in the midst of the flame-engulfed building, none of his listeners doubted that The Shadow was dead.

"The Shadow can do a lot," sneered Quill. "He can do anything that anybody ever heard of, whether it really happened or not. But nobody ever heard of anyone - or anything - who climbed out of a mess like that!"

Quill was wrong. In his haphazard school days, he had never studied mythology. He didn't know that men had once talked of a strange bird called the phoenix, that could arise, alive, from the midst of ashes.

What the fabled phoenix had accomplished in story, The Shadow might do in fact!

## **CHAPTER XVI. BOSCO'S MISTAKE**

CRACKLES, like the whirr of myriad insects, vaguely reached The Shadow's ears. The sound increased, took on a less regular tone. The Shadow was conscious of a dull throb at the back of his head; he felt a heat so stifling that he found it difficult to breathe.

His eyes were closed; they seemed tightly bandaged. His whirling thoughts went back to things that he remembered; not from this night, but from an earlier one. He recalled that ride from Mandor's, when he had been a prisoner. Everything that had happened since then was hazy.

The Shadow couldn't remember the escape that he had made. Groggily, he thought that this was the finish of the ride; that the stifling he felt was from the promised gas crooks had intended to give him.

That, too, could account for the multitude of crackles, and the blackness. Those were sensations that might come with the overwhelming gas. Besides, The Shadow could feel a dead weight pinning him where he lay. It had the semblance of massive clamps.

His instinct for struggle returned. Blindly, The Shadow thrust his arms upward. He met with human hands; one was half-clenched at his throat. He grabbed that hand, gave it a fling. Curiously, there was no resistance. Heaving one shoulder, The Shadow felt a wooden beam. His hands clutched stone beside him; he braced and gave a hard fling. The timber clattered free.

With one hand, The Shadow clawed for the bandage that covered his eyes. It came away; and with the end of the tight pressure, he was dazzled by the scene about him. In an instant, false recollections were forgotten. The Shadow recognized exactly where he was.

The Shadow lay below ground level, on dampish mud that formed an oasis in the center of an area of flame. He had fallen to the cellar of the old house, close to the spot where the explosion had occurred. The ruins, elsewhere, had become a furnace; this one place was refuge.

What The Shadow had taken for a bandage, when he had ripped it from his eyes, was his slouch hat, which had been driven down upon his head. The wooden clamp was the chunk of a beam, that must have struck him when he fell. That blow, partly warded by the hat, accounted for the time that The Shadow had lain senseless.

Also, the hand that had clutched his throat was real. The Shadow saw it, resting on his shoulder. It was ruddy, livid from the glow of those towering flames that formed a vast circle around this refuge.

The Shadow had seen that hand before. It lacked a second finger: the hand of Bosco Treff.

Plunging with The Shadow, the mobster had fared less fortunately. There was a burned piece of wood

near Bosco's sprawled body. That one hand, reaching to The Shadow, had probably been thrust instinctively. For Bosco's coat was smoldering where sparks had reached it.

The Shadow tamped the slow-burning cloth. He pulled away the scorched mask that had twisted askew. Bosco's ugly face was seared, his eyebrows singed away. One leg twisted under him. Dried blood caked his lips, proving internal injuries.

Yet Bosco was alive; one of very few who had survived within that flame-lashed house.

Hoisting Bosco's limp frame, The Shadow moved forward, dwarfed by the billows of flame that danced and wavered like mammoth waves. He had to find passage through that fiery sea.

THE explosion had hurled the center of the building upward and outward. The center had been free of debris; therefore, it did not blaze. Close to the blast, The Shadow and Bosco had been more fortunate than others who had dropped into fiery beds.

Flames, though, were sucking air from the vortex that had been The Shadow's refuge. Soon, the central pit would be devoid of oxygen, meaning suffocation if The Shadow remained.

Threading toward the flames, The Shadow found paths where the blaze had burned out. Sometimes he was forced back, but always he found new openings. The holocaust was an ever-changing maze. Ominously, it closed at times, when he had passed. The Shadow's route was one that offered no retreat.

At last, came the towering blaze that devoured the outer walls. That conflagration was still on the rise. Fire raged everywhere, forming a menacing circle through which there was no outlet. Worse, walls had begun to totter.

The Shadow was forced back by embers of blazing wood, that came with little warning. He still lugged Bosco; but the burden mattered little. The Shadow couldn't rush that ring of flame.

He heard clangings beyond the wall of fire and knew that many minutes must have passed, for a rural fire department had arrived from some neighboring town. There was a hiss; a hose was streaming water somewhere. The Shadow stumbled in the direction of the sound.

He sprawled, still clutching Bosco. Vivid light showed wooden steps, half-burned by the flames, that led from the cellar to the outside air. Sheets of fire swept across that outlet, then subsided, as a hose sprayed the stretch of wall.

Up steps that were cracking under the double weight, The Shadow carried Bosco's inert figure. He heard the shouts of the firemen. The steam from the water had formed a hazy cloud; from it, masses of timber were popping toward the fire-fighters.

Dragging the hose, the firemen broke away from the menace of the bursting walls. Only the steamy mist remained; from it, there staggered a grotesque sight - The Shadow, with a half-dead crook sprawling from his shoulders.

Had the firemen seen that staggery exit, they might have mistaken The Shadow for some flame dwelling demon, carrying off a victim. For the black-cloaked figure, maroon-hued by the ruddy light against his blackened garb, looked anything but human.

The firemen happened to be few in number, and they were busy, getting the hose clear. They did not see The Shadow. He did not halt within their view. He kept onward, toward clustering trees that blocked the fire's glare.

There was a coupe in the darkness, revealed by the flickers reflected through the tree boughs. It was a car belonging to some of the perished crooks; Quill's crew had neglected to take it. The Shadow rolled Bosco into it. He found the key in the ignition switch.

The motor's sound was inaudible, thanks to the hissing roar of the big blaze. It wasn't until The Shadow was away, driving hard along the outlet to the road, that the firemen saw his speeding car. They raised a shout. Volunteers leaped into cars to take up the chase. They were too late even to sight the car again.

HITTING the highway into New York, The Shadow calculated the time element. He realized that half an hour had been lost; perhaps an even longer period. Quill and the prisoners were back in Manhattan, or almost there. There was no chance to intercept them.

Bosco was breathing weakly, but steadily. Propped by the open window, the thug was reviving from the cool air that whistled into the coupe. Keeping the car at its top speed of seventy, The Shadow jugged Bosco with his elbow. The crook muttered something in a gargly voice.

"Snap out of it, Bosco!" The Shadow's tone was gruff. "This is Pike - hear me? We got The Shadow!"

Bosco's next mutter was almost coherent. He was lying back, his burned coat sleeve across his scorched eyes.

"Hear me, Bosco?" demanded The Shadow in the same hard tone. "Know who I am?"

"Yeah -" coughed Bosco. "You're Pike - Pike Fengel!"

The Shadow had learned one important point: Pike's last name. He needed it for future reference, if his present bluff worked.

"Lucky I was with you, Bosco," growled The Shadow. "I seen you drop, and got to where you was."

"The Shadow" - Bosco's cough brought blood - "did you see him?"

"Sure! He was layin' cold. I drilled him an' left him to burn. Quill's goin' to like that, ain't he?"

"Yeah. It's lucky - lucky I brought you along with the mob. I told Quill you'd come in handy. He knows you're good -"

Bosco coughed, pawed at his lips, then added:

"Quill knows you're good - even though he ain't never met you."

The Shadow gripped the steering wheel tightly, kept the car at full speed as he hit a long curve. He'd heard more news, of the sort he liked. Just one more thing was needed. He was preparing to put another question, when Bosco brought up the subject on his own.

"You gotta get there, Pike!" gulped Bosco. "Back to the main joint - Quill's hide-out."

"Sure!" gruffed The Shadow. Then, smoothly: "Gimme the dope on how to get there."

Bosco mouthed an address on the East Side. The place wasn't many blocks from the corner where The Shadow had staged a fight beneath the elevated.

"I got it," informed The Shadow, in the style that did for Pike. "What about the password - ain't there any?"



"Give the buzzer two pushes" - Bosco's words were weak - "then wait half a minute. Give it a short an' a long. When a guy calls down to you, say 'Hello, Hoppy' - an' that's all -"

Racked by a sudden coughing spasm, Bosco came upright. A sudden recollection had gripped him. His eyes bulged open; for the moment, they were sightless as the crook snarled:

"Say - I spilled all that dope to you before! You ain't Pike -"

They were taking a curve to the left; the lights of a car coming from the opposite direction bathed the interior of the coupe. In that sudden glare, Bosco's tortured eyes saw the driver beside him.

"The Shadow!"

BOSCO'S move was as quick as the rasped recognition he uttered. Gripped by a convulsive fury, the dying thug whipped a knife from his coat, drove it for The Shadow's heart.

Twisting at the wheel, The Shadow parried the stroke with his elbow. His foot left the accelerator, but the car was on a downward slope. It was scorching along that straight stretch of road at more than sixty miles an hour.

One curve was past; another lay just ahead. It went to the right; if another car appeared, it would come squarely into the path of the hurtling coupe. Like Bosco, the coupe had to be controlled within the next few seconds.

Shoving his left shoulder through the open window, The Shadow kept a left-hand grip on the wheel. Simultaneously, his right hand grabbed Bosco's knife hand, held it at bay, the blade point almost at The Shadow's heart.

A long right leg shoved clear across the car; The Shadow's foot hooked the handle of the door on the right. As the handle came downward, The Shadow lunged inward from his own window. Heaving hard against Bosco, he flung the crook to the right side of the car.

The loosened door gave. Bosco took a long, clawing dive to the highway. His last spasm was ended before he hit the concrete. The crook had given his last ounce of life in his murderous attempt to obliterate The Shadow.

Gloved hands wheeled the coupe hard, out of the path of an oncoming car. The flapping door, hinged at the front, slammed shut as The Shadow stepped on the gas.

Bosco's body had rolled deep into a gully, to lie forgotten. The Shadow was speeding onward to settle scores with mobsters who believed him dead!

Those tools of Professor Lawsham had handled earlier victims; men, at present helpless, who were termed the "Dead Who Lived." They were to learn, however, that such a title could be improved - and regarded from another viewpoint.

They were to meet another kind of Dead Who Lived - as represented by The Shadow, risen from a fiery grave to complete a new errand of justified revenge!

## **CHAPTER XVII. IN THE HIDE-OUT**

THE East Side street was in a rundown neighborhood; but it was quiet. It wasn't the sort of thoroughfare where crooks would ordinarily choose a place for conclave. Perhaps that was why Quill Baxton had picked it; particularly the address that Bosco had mentioned.

It was a narrow house, brick-fronted, its door boarded up. There were steps, however, that led down to a basement entry tucked well from view. That was the spot The Shadow chose, when he left the cab that brought him.

The Shadow had been forced to use precious minutes, preparing for this foray. That had necessitated a stop at his sanctum, a hidden room in the heart of Manhattan. Since time had to be taken out, The Shadow had left the coupe and summoned the cab instead.

Curiously, The Shadow was visible, despite the darkness at the little doorway. That was because of the new garb he wore. His khaki pants, though darkish, could be spied. The same applied to the brown-striped jersey and the checkered cap that topped The Shadow's head.

Finding the bell-push, The Shadow gave the signals. Someone opened the door, stepped out of sight. Moving into darkness, The Shadow sensed that a gun was covering him. It would be a bad spot if he didn't know the password.

A hoarse voice whispered from a stairway: "Who's there?"

The Shadow gave a guarded growl; "Hello, Hoppy!"

A flashlight glimmered to guide The Shadow up the stairs. At the top, the beam was turned upon the visitor's face. The Shadow was prepared for the doubtful grunt that came.

"Take it easy, pal," he told his challenger. "I'm Pike Fengel. Working with Bosco Treff. Where's Quill?"

The Shadow was guided to a closed door; when it opened, he saw a lighted room, its windows completely shuttered. Quill Baxton was seated there, eyeing a man who lay bound in the corner. The prisoner was Dick Remingwood.

The room had soap boxes for chairs, army cots for beds. Evidently Quill and his tribe lived tenement fashion when they occupied these premises. There were other furnishings, though, that caught The Shadow's notice.

A big compressed-air tank stood in the corner; the object was fully five feet high. In addition to that large cylinder were smaller, portable tanks. The big tank was evidently loaded with a supply of sleep-inducing gas. The small ones were used to carry lesser quantities. One had been taken to Mandor's apartment, for the job there.

The Shadow also saw the apparatus that had been used in Thurnig's Servidor, and the mechanism from the telephone booth where Brellick had been overpowered.

There was no sign of Harry and Arlene. The Shadow had no time to speculate on their absence. Quill was glaring in his direction.

"I'm Pike Fengel," rasped The Shadow. "In from the joint at Hadley."

"Yeah?" queried Quill. "How'd you crawl out of there?"

Pike's appearance suited Quill. The Shadow looked as tough as any of Quill's own crew. What was more, The Shadow's present face was copied from a rogues' gallery portrait of Pike. What puzzled Quill was the manner of Pike's escape. The Shadow answered the query with a blunt tone that made Quill like him.

"You'd have seen me get out, if you'd stuck around," said The Shadow. "Instead, you lammed, leaving

me in a tough spot!"

"I thought you'd took a dive," apologized Quill. "Like the rest of 'em."

"The floor didn't cave where I was. But I had to punch through a wall and a window, before the whole works went."

Quill recalled that Pike had been in the big room when the crash came.

"The Shadow got his!" gloated the pretended Pike. "Too bad Bosco went with him. He and me was pals. What he'd do for you, you can count on me doing, Quill."

"I'll use you," Quill told The Shadow. "Only, there ain't much to do, with The Shadow done for."

"What about them stooges of his - that guy Vincent and the moll? Ain't you going to put the heat on them?"

Quill came up from the soap box. He snapped his fingers in a gesture of annoyance.

"What?" he exclaimed. "We figured Vincent was just some dumb dick. It's too late for the heat. We gave 'em the gas pipe. We shipped the dame back to the joint where she was staying. Then we found out that Vincent lived at the Hotel Metrolite, so we lugged him to his room."

For a few moments, Quill glared, his mind imbued with regret at the lost opportunity. Quill would have liked to put the heat on anyone who served The Shadow. Then his lips writhed into a grin.

"What's the diff?" he asked. "The stooge couldn't have squawked much; neither could the moll. They've got what was coming to 'em, and it makes everything more jake than ever. They're two more of the Dead Who Lived, and it was time we were adding to that bunch."

With his comments, Quill's admiration for the foresight of the visitor who called himself Pike Fengel, was increasing. He waited, hoping that Pike would offer something else.

Pike's hard voice put questions:

"What about this guy Remingwood? Going to take him to the prof?"

Quill's eyes flashed savage suspicion. His hand went to his gun hip.

"Where'd you hear about the prof, Pike?"

"That's what you said to Remingwood," reminded The Shadow, coolly. "Out at the nut joint. So what?"

Quill's hand came from his hip, empty. He was becoming more and more impressed with Pike.

"The prof don't want Remingwood," informed Quill. "He said to send him on a ride. So that's where he's going, when the mob gets back."

"Good enough," observed The Shadow, eyeing Dick. Then: "What're you getting for it, Quill?"

"Five grand. That's enough, ain't it?"

"Maybe it ain't anywhere near the right dough!"

Pike's idea that five thousand dollars was small money, was something that aroused Quill's interest. He motioned The Shadow to a soap box.

"You sound like you'd figured something," said Quill. "Let's hear it, Pike."

THE SHADOW plucked a bent cigarette from a crumpled pack. Lighting it, he let it hang from a corner of his mouth, while he maintained a hard, speculative stare toward Dick.

"Bosco talked to me some," declared The Shadow. "He made out this was a big-time racket; and with you being in it, Quill, I figured it was. The way I size it, this guy" - he thumbed toward Dick - "is worth a lot of dough to the prof you talked about. Am I right?"

"Right! But the prof ain't too well fixed for dough."

"Ain't he after any?" demanded The Shadow. "Or is he pulling this stuff for his health?"

"There'll be plenty of dough later," returned Quill. "I'll get my share. So will the guys that stick along, Pike."

"Sure! You'll get plenty! What's going to guarantee it?"

Quill looked doubtful. He growled that he could count on the prof; that he, Quill, was wise to the racket, and could talk if need be. Gradually, he became angry; finally, he demanded:

"You got any ideas, Pike?"

"Sure!" Rising, The Shadow stalked over to take a contemptuous look at Dick. "Hold this mug for a marker. Then you can make sure the prof comes through."

"That's an idea!" snapped Quill. "But what'll the prof say if Remingwood don't show up somewhere, dead on a parking lot?"

"Tell him you sunk the guy in Long Island Sound. When Remingwood ain't found, the prof will like it all the better. Only one trouble, though; some of these gorillas you got might know too much. You couldn't keep Remingwood here."

By this time, Quill was ready to listen to any suggestions from Pike, and said so. Pike came through with a plan. He'd take care of Remingwood, using some mobbies that he could summon in a hurry.

With paper and pencil, Pike marked out the location of a hideaway so well located that Quill's own headquarters seemed worthless in comparison.

There was a telephone in the next room. Quill told Pike to use it. When The Shadow reappeared, his disguised face showed ugly satisfaction.

"They're coming to the back alley," he told Quill. "Show me the way through. And listen; these mugs won't know who they got, see? That's what makes it slick. You can tell your own crew that it was me took Remingwood for the ride."

"I'll tell the prof the same," decided Quill. "I'm going over there to see him. Only listen, Pike - where'll I say you planted Remingwood?"

The Shadow stroked his hard chin.

"Suppose you have me show up," he told Quill. "Didn't you ever take Bosco over to the prof's?"

"No. I could have, though, if it was important enough. It'd be a good gag, having you blow in and hand him the story of how you got rid of Remingwood."

"Sure! I'll make it sound like the McCoy."

QUILL scrawled the name of Professor Lawsham on a sheet of paper. With it, he added other details, then shoved the paper in The Shadow's hand.

"There's the dope," said Quill. "C'mon; let's get Remingwood started."

They lugged Dick out through a back passage and down a stairway to a door that Quill unbolted. They were in the alley when a car nosed in from the street, gave its dim lights a double blink.

"The crew," whispered The Shadow. "Don't let 'em see you, Quill. They ain't to know you're in it."

"O.K., Pike. I'll be waiting upstairs."

As the door closed behind Quill, there was a low hiss in the darkness. Agents of The Shadow joined their chief; they were startled when they saw his attire. Only the voice that came from the bloated lips of the supposed Pike gave proof that this was The Shadow.

Instructions were brief. Dick heard them along with the agents and listened in amazement, while bonds and gag were being removed from him. There was work ahead, and Dick would be needed, for other agents had varied tasks.

Watch had to be kept over Harry and Arlene, to make sure that crooks didn't change plans about them. It was bad enough that they had been made victims of the sleeping gas. That was why The Shadow had made such extensive plans with Quill.

As Pike, The Shadow needed a wedge, to work on Professor Lawsham. He was out to play a bold game, and a rapid one, staking everything to save the lives of Harry and Arlene, along with those three men who were the Dead Who Lived.

As soon as the car had pulled away, The Shadow returned into the house. As he ascended the back stairway, he heard shuffling footsteps above: Quill's crew, returning to the hide-out. That bunch of mobbies had come in from the front, and The Shadow was glad that they had returned. It meant that Harry and Arlene were where his agents would find them. Quill's crew didn't matter; with Dick removed from the hide-out, they would make no trouble.

Such was The Shadow's thought. For once, his judgment was to prove wrong. There was dynamite awaiting him - human dynamite, as dangerous as the actual explosive that had blasted the house in the hills.

It came when The Shadow stepped into Quill's main room, confident that his disguise would still serve him. Scarcely across the threshold, he was suddenly surrounded by bristling guns held by thugs who had leaped from every corner.

Looming squarely for The Shadow's eyes were two other revolvers. One was gripped by Quill Baxton, the other by a man whose face glared a similar ugly challenge. At sight of the newcomer, The Shadow instantly realized the threat that faced him.

Like The Shadow, Quill's companion had come from the dead. The man with the ugly glower was the real Pike Fengel!

## **CHAPTER XVIII. THE SHADOW TALKS**

COOLLY, The Shadow faced Quill Baxton, undisturbed by the guns that prodded him from every side.

Death wouldn't come until Quill gave the word; and Quill had some reason to wait. Otherwise, The Shadow would have been greeted by gunfire the moment he entered.

Not for an instant did The Shadow's disguised face show a flicker of alarm. Instead, he outstared Pike, at those intervals when he studied the fellow. Finally, The Shadow centered his gaze on Quill. Keeping his hands half raised, he nudged his head in Pike's direction.

"Who's the lug?" queried The Shadow, roughly. "Where'd he come from?"

"You know who he is, Shadow!" sneered Quill. "Leastwise, you ought to know. You've got your mush fixed like his. He's Pike Fengel!"

"You mean, he looks like me?" The Shadow's growl was incredulous. "Say - what is this? Some initiation that goes to guys who join up with your mob?"

Quill studied The Shadow closely, then looked at the real Pike. That was the moment when The Shadow repressed a grim smile. There was still a chance for life, even though the odds were long ones.

Baxton wasn't too sure that the newcomer was actually Pike Fengel!

That was proven, when Quill rasped for Pike to pocket his gun. Pike hesitated, snarled a protest. Quill prodded him; Pike let the revolver slide into his pocket.

"His story's the same as yours," Quill told The Shadow. "He says he got out of that side room. Only, he ain't handed me no smart stuff, like you did."

"Whatta you mean - smart stuff?" scoffed The Shadow. "I tell you how to make sure of your dough, so you think I'm The Shadow. That don't make sense!"

"No? Well, your shipping Remingwood off looks phony! Where'd you send the guy?"

"Where I told you. You know the place. If you don't believe it, send some of your gorillas to have a look."

The suggestion was offered coolly. Quill started to admit that it was a good idea, then stopped himself.

"Yeah?" he quizzed. "Send 'em, so there'll be less here, giving you a chance for a break! If you're The Shadow -"

"Still figurin' I'm The Shadow." The interruption came in a harsh chuckle.

"So you're going to croak me - and then find out you're wrong. What's the use? You'll only have to rub out that other guy, later. He's phony!"

It was Pike who gave retort.

"Me, phony?" he demanded. "With a slug in my shoulder, where you put it?"

Gingerly, Pike tapped the point of his left shoulder. The action brought a guffaw from The Shadow.

"He's queered his story, Quill!" The Shadow's harsh tone showed elation. "He don't even know where The Shadow winged me! He ain't The Shadow - he's too dumb - but he ain't me either! He's some guy working for The Shadow. He knows I was clipped in the shoulder; but it was the right one, not the left! Look!"

THE SHADOW thrust his right shoulder toward Quill. The mob-leader saw something that he hadn't noticed before: the bulge of a bandage beneath the brown-striped jersey.

Remembering that Quill had seen him shoot at Pike, The Shadow had bandaged that shoulder as part of his make-up. But he had purposely bandaged his right arm, to make it more effective. Actually, The Shadow had picked Pike's left side, because Bosco had partly blocked the line of fire. All that would have been too much to explain to Quill.

As luck had it, The Shadow's touch of added realism had become a vital issue. It not only enabled him to dispute Pike's claim; it gave The Shadow the stronger case.

"You shoulda knowed it would be my gun arm," scoffed The Shadow. "That's the one The Shadow always shoots for, ain't it? Maybe I'd have dropped him, if he hadn't winged me the way he did. You want to see how bad he got me? Take a gander!"

Hauling down his jersey with his left hand, The Shadow showed the red-dyed bandage on his right shoulder. That was another faked proof that caught all eyes. Quill and his craning mobbies, even Pike, scarcely saw The Shadow's left hand continue its down-sweep to the belt that encircled his khaki pants.

Though gunners still prodded him with revolvers, their fingers were lax on triggers. Knowing it, The Shadow risked everything on one surprise move. Before the startled mobsters knew it was coming, he took a long twisting leap from their very midst.

As he twirled, The Shadow whipped an automatic from beneath his belt. His spin was leftward; the sweep of his left hand seemed to carry his weight around, thanks to the heavy gun. He had started for the center of the room, but his swift whirl took him past the flank of the mobster group. He was halfway to the door when his automatic covered them.

Revolvers were barking, late in their aim. Instinctively, the gunners leaped toward the inner wall, where Quill and Pike were coming into action. Their game was to wither The Shadow before he could reach the exit.

Had he been clad in black, The Shadow might have made a fade, to put up a shifting battle from the gloomy fringes of the room. His present attire didn't allow him that chance. Not counting the first shots, which were wild, The Shadow was in position to beat any crook at accurate aim.

He might even have clipped a pair before they could drop him; but these odds were impossible. The Shadow was one against six, all spread apart, and the battle was scheduled for close range.

Crooks didn't know the measure upon which The Shadow had decided.

His .45 spoke without a human target in its path. Not once but in rapid fire, keeping on a certain mark, while he suddenly reversed his shift. There were clangs that answered those drilling bullets. Those sounds came from a bulky target that was a more useful mark than any of The Shadow's foemen.

A fierce sizzle issued from beside the wall. The Shadow had punctured the tank that held the sleep-inducing gas!

HIGHLY compressed, that vapor spat forth enveloping fumes - a yellow cloud that came between The Shadow and his foemen. Thugs saw the menace; with one accord, they hurled themselves for the doorway, forgetting The Shadow as they dashed.

Past the fringe of the gas, driving like a human arrow, The Shadow came to intercept them. He was locked with the first of those enemies, smashing their faces with his bare right hand, as he pounded hard

with the gun in his left.

Crooks went down, some plunging through the doorway. Others paused, hoping to riddle The Shadow from their path. His shots were speedier. Men caved away. Pike was lunging in the rear of the throng; The Shadow caught him, hurled him back into the spreading gas.

Stumbling about, Pike came head-on against another fighter. That man was Quill; the mob-leader was desperate. Thinking Pike to be The Shadow, Quill jabbed his gun against the fellow's stomach, fired shots until the revolver was empty.

The Shadow, meanwhile, had settled the last opposition near the doorway. In that chaos, crooks had lost their heads. They hadn't realized that the spreading gas could not immediately overpower them. It was Quill, alone, who learned that fact.

Quill was choking only slightly, when he came through the doorway. He steadied there, looked back at the sprawled form of Pike. With a sneer, Quill triggered his revolver, to enjoy another shot at the man he had mistaken for The Shadow.

The hammer clicked on a dead cartridge. Quill realized that his gun was empty. So did The Shadow, standing just beyond the door.

Shivers of a mocking laugh toned close to Quill's ear. Wheeling savagely, Quill again saw the face of Pike; he realized his mistake. Starting to tug at the trigger again, he remembered that the gun was empty and made a sideward swing instead.

That savage blow was parried the instant it started. Plucking Quill's arm, The Shadow used his other hand to get a throttling grip on the racketeer's throat. He shoved Quill back into the room. Bulge-eyed, Quill could hear the hissing gas behind him.

Handling Quill like the rat he was, The Shadow gave him a terrific sideward shake. Half strangled, Quill sagged; his eyes were dazed. The Shadow gave him a spinning fling that landed Quill close beside the gas tank.

The heavy vapor was settling on that portion of the floor. Quill's flattened figure disappeared in the yellow haze. From the doorway, The Shadow watched, ignoring the moans of thugs who lay close by him.

There were other sounds, too, to which The Shadow paid no heed: the muffled shrills of police whistles; the rattles of a nightstick from the sidewalk in front of the house. All that concerned The Shadow was the subsiding of the gas. It required less than one more minute.

As Quill's figure came to sight, like a derelict motionless in settling fog, The Shadow strode over and hoisted the senseless racketeer across his shoulders. Lighter than Bosco, Quill made an easy burden. Rapidly, The Shadow reached the hall.

ALTHOUGH the boarded front door was bursting under the attack of the police, the rear route still was clear. Descending the short stairway, The Shadow reached the back door, that he had left unbolting when he returned from carting Remingwood down. He was in the blackness of the alley, when he heard the faint crash that told the front door had gone.

The Shadow had added to the ranks of the Dead Who Lived; but the victims upon whom he had forced the sleep gas were the sort who deserved its clutch. When found by the police, their part in crime would be recognized, for the punctured gas tank stood as evidence.

No longer would mystery enshroud the Dead Who Lived. The condition attributed to a malady would be



properly classed as a man-made state, produced through criminal deeds. But there was still a task that concerned The Shadow. It was the rescue of the other Dead Who Lived - innocent persons, among whose number were Harry Vincent and Arlene Delton.

To save them, The Shadow needed an interview with Professor Lawsham. His only course would be to outwit the schemer who held the precious antidote. After a return to life was assured the Dead Who Lived, The Shadow could take up the matter of Lawsham's crimes.

So far, only one murder could be checked against the crafty professor - the death of Doctor Broyce. But other murder was on its way, creeping in with slow-motion precision. Murder of the Dead Who Lived, unless Lawsham could be tricked into revealing the secret that could save them!

Soon, The Shadow was riding in the taxi that had stayed by to await him. Beside him lay Quill Baxton, breathing in the belabored fashion that maintained a ceaseless monotone.

That strange breathing was drowned by an even stranger tone, that issued from lips that looked like those of Pike Fengel. That tone, a whispered prophecy, was the laugh of The Shadow.

For The Shadow had found a way to enter Lawsham's close-guarded preserves. As Pike Fengel, he was bringing a human passport in the person of Quill Baxton, the most recent addition to the Dead Who Lived!

## **CHAPTER XIX. IN THE TEST ROOM**

A TINY flashlight glowed upon a grimy hand; in the palm lay a paper, written in the scrawled penmanship of Quill Baxton. The tiny light went out. A figure moved along the sidewalk, to a gateway between two buildings.

That figure was carrying a burden. Lugging it through the gate, the carrier followed a darkened passage hemmed by old brick walls. He came to another gate, then a tiny courtyard where stunted trees grew from hardened ground.

There were steps that led downward to a rear door of a basement. That was the carrier's destination. He halted; found a bell-button and pushed it. Soon, he detected footsteps beyond the heavy door.

The grimy hand delivered a tattoo of knocks. A wicket opened in response to the signal. A blocky-jawed man spoke from within:

"Who is it?"

"Pike Fengel," was the word from outside. "Bringing Quill Baxton!"

A face thrust close to the wicket. The inside man saw the thuggish features that looked like Pike's. He didn't guess that behind that disguise lay the unknown face of The Shadow. The guard looked doubtful.

"Who did you say was with you?" he asked.

"Quill Baxton," whispered The Shadow, hoarsely. "Take a gander at his mush. You'll know him."

Hoisting the man that he had carried through the passage, The Shadow shoved a drooped face into the light. The guard recognized Quill; moreover, he knew what had happened to the racketeer. He opened the door.

Together, The Shadow and Lawsham's servant lugged Quill to another barrier. There, the servant told

The Shadow to wait, while he reported. It wasn't long before more servants arrived. They carried Quill through; The Shadow picked up a small satchel and followed.

Professor Lawsham was in a little corner room fixed like an office. It was an untidy place; among its furnishings was a book-strewn couch. The books were removed and Quill was laid on the couch. Eyeing The Shadow over spectacle tops, Lawsham motioned him to a chair.

The professor didn't doubt that this visitor was one of Quill's outfit. But there were questions that he wanted to ask. He put the first one:

"Your name is Pike Fengel?"

"Sure!" The Shadow gave a grin. "That's me! Pal of Bosco Treff's. It was him got me into the racket."

"Ah, yes." Lawsham evidently recognized Bosco's name. "And how did you happen to come here?"

"So's to bring Quill." The Shadow pointed to the slow-breathing racketeer. "That's easy to answer."

"Yes, yes!" Lawsham's eyes were darting. "But why did you choose this place?"

"Because Quill gave me the dope on how to get here. He wrote it out for me."

The Shadow shoved Quill's direction paper into Lawsham's hand. The professor frowned.

"I know what you're thinking, prof," said The Shadow, in his rough tone. "Quill wasn't supposed to put nobody wise. Only, he did - and I was the guy. His idea was to double-cross you. Savvy?"

THE evidence bore that trend, and Lawsham was shrewd enough to see it. Clasping his hands together, he suggested that Pike tell his story. The Shadow gave it, suiting the details to his present purpose.

"Quill hands me this guy Remingwood," The Shadow related. "Tells me he's slated for the spot, but the idea is to stow him somewhere. Then Quill's coming here to collect five grand. I'm to show up later and tell how I croaked Remingwood.

"All the while, he's keeping the guy, to make sure you cough over the coin. And maybe - he makes me think it, anyway - maybe he's going to shake you down, later. So I takes Remingwood and croaks him!"

Lawsham's eyes showed sharp delight.

"You did that?" he exclaimed. "Even though Quill ordered otherwise?"

"Why not?" The Shadow puffed his lips into a grin. "Quill was staging a double cross. And the way I figure it, a guy's always O.K. if he fixes a double-crosser.

"When I get back with Quill, I fixed him! Took him like that" - The Shadow spread his hands to indicate a choking gesture - "so's he wouldn't make no squawk! Then I hands him the gas pipe!"

"Rather a drastic step," observed Lawsham.

"How come?" demanded The Shadow. "I had to lug him here, didn't I? Anyway, Quill says that you can snap guys out of that sleep, if you want to."

Reaching for the old satchel, The Shadow plunked it on Lawsham's desk.

"That's to hold the mazuma," he told the professor. "Only, five grand ain't enough. I ought to get that

much for croaking Remingwood. Some more dough for fixing Quill."

LAWSHAM was tapping the desk. He saw a possible flaw in the story. That was exactly what The Shadow wanted, and had expected. He didn't have to read Lawsham's thoughts; he had foreseen them.

There was a chance that Quill had needed special services from one of his men. Logically, he would have chosen Bosco; but Lawsham knew that Bosco was dead. Quill could have chosen Pike as substitute.

Pike, not Quill, might be the double-crosser. Knowing too much of the game, he might have gassed Quill, then cooked up the story, to claim the five thousand dollars - and more. Lawsham finished that mental process. Tilting his head, he looked shrewdly toward The Shadow.

"Think I'm stringing you, prof?" demanded The Shadow, preserving his thick-lipped grin. "That's why I gassed Quill, instead of croaking him. Just so there wouldn't be no argument."

"No argument?"

"That's it!" The harsh tone became earnest. "Look, prof. I ain't selling you no bum bill of goods. You yank Quill out of this trance he's in and put the heat on him. You do it right and he'll go yellow. When he does, you'll find out that what I told you is the real McCoy!"

Lawsham considered; at last, he nodded.

"An excellent idea!" he decided. "By tomorrow night -"

"Nothing doing!" The Shadow shook his head. "I'm lamming tonight, and I want the dough that'll be coming to me. Besides" - The Shadow added the next bait shrewdly - "there's a chance Quill may have put some other guys wise to something. If I was you, I wouldn't waste no time finding out. Quill's the bozo that can answer. If you don't know how to give the heat, I'll show you."

Lawsham saw the value of the argument. He also decided that Pike's services might prove useful, if Quill refused to talk. Opening the door, Lawsham called his servants. He told one to remain with Pike; he ordered the others to carry Quill to the test room.

While the servants were present, Lawsham reached in a desk drawer, took out a leather-bound notebook. He didn't see the glitter that came to the eyes of the pretended Pike Fengel.

The Shadow knew, almost to a certainty, that the little book contained the formula for the antidote to the sleeping gas. To risk fighting for it at this moment would be too great, especially with three of Lawsham's men on hand.

Indifferently, The Shadow lighted a cigarette. He asked as Lawsham was leaving the office:

"How long you going to be, prof?"

"About a half hour," replied Lawsham. "Just why do you wish to know?"

"Thought maybe you had some books with pitchers in 'em," returned The Shadow. "I get the heebies, sitting around looking at nothing."

Lawsham told the servant to bring some picture magazines from a book rack in a corner of the office. Leaving, the professor closed the door. He decided that one of his capable watchers could keep Pike Fengel pacified.

IN the test room, Professor Lawsham consulted the formula book. His assistants brought him chemical

mixtures as he called for them. From those, Lawsham compounded a greenish gas, that filled a large glass cylinder.

They wheeled in a portable bench that looked like an operating table, with Quill stretched upon it. An oxygen tent was placed over the racketeer's head. Attaching a hose, Lawsham let the gas trickle through.

The door of the test room was shut; the scene was tense. Lawsham was counting seconds, as he changed the flow of the gas. Slowly, the greenish line descended into the cylinder, then stopped.

Like Lawsham, the assistants were intent upon the scene. They didn't notice the slow inching open of the door, when it occurred. All during the process, they were watched by eyes that peered from the outer laboratory.

Lawsham tolled off several minutes, then gave another application of the gas. He cut the flow to a mere trickle, as he leaned beside the oxygen tent to listen. Quill's breathing had changed. It was choky, spasmodic.

"Oxygen!" ordered Lawsham, cutting off the gas. "Let him have it slowly."

One assistant removed the gas hose; the other applied a tube from an oxygen tank. The new flow brought deeper, steadier strength to Quill's stifled breathing. Lawsham nodded; the treatment was finished.

The little tent was taken away. Quill lay with his eyes closed, breathing ordinary air in long, satisfied drafts. His eyes opened; he propped himself upon the table, blinked at Lawsham. The professor glanced at his watch.

"Pike will be pleased," he remarked, dryly. "The half hour is not quite over."

Quill's senses were restored, although he looked weak and shaky. Perhaps that shakiness was due partly to another sight that met his eyes. Lawsham's assistants had produced revolvers. One on each side of the table, they were holding Quill covered.

"What - what's the idea?" gulped Quill. "Say, prof, how'd I get here - and why the gats?"

"You don't remember," soothed Lawsham. "Ah! Neither did Remingwood, until I unwisely reminded him. In your case, Quill, a jog of the memory may be useful. I spoke of Remingwood - by the way, where is he?"

Quill chewed his lips. Lawsham nodded, wisely.

"So you double-crossed me!" he sneered. "It appears that Pike was right. Pike Fengel - do you remember the name, Quill?"

A look of terror came to Quill's blunt face. His hard eyes darted wildly, his long jaw quivered. The men who covered him thought that mere guilt caused that expression; but Lawsham knew Quill too well, to let it pass at that.

"Pike Fengel!" blurted Quill. "What do you know about him?"

"I've met him," replied Lawsham, watching Quill closely. "He's here - in my office."

"He can't be!" Quill's tone was frantic. "Pike's dead! The guy that's here - he's - he's -"

Lawsham didn't wait for the completion of Quill's gasping sentence. The truth had struck the shrewd professor. He grabbed his men, pointed them to the door and gave a raucous order.

That command drowned the final words that Quill panted:

"The Shadow!"

## CHAPTER XX. LIVING AND DEAD

LAWSHAM'S burly servants were through the doorway and halfway across the laboratory before the professor was out of the test room. Stopping just beyond the threshold, Lawsham pulled a revolver of his own, to back his fighters in case of a sudden fray.

He saw them yank open the door of the office. As they sprang in, Lawsham viewed the scene they uncovered.

The only person in the room was the servant who had stayed to watch Pike Fengel. The servant was bound and gagged, stretched on the couch amid a litter of discarded pictorials.

On the desk rested the satchel that the fake Pike had brought. It was open, empty, but not in hope of receiving Lawsham's tainted cash. Black objects had been taken from that bag; the crooked professor was soon to realize what they were.

An eerie laugh whispered through the laboratory. Lawsham heard it, realized that the sound came from behind him. The professor spun about, to see The Shadow step from the wall, squarely to the threshold of the test room.

Cloaked in black, The Shadow had become a being of vengeance. He had penetrated to the source of crime; he held its chief perpetrator helpless. For an instant, Lawsham's scrawny hand tightened its clutch on his unaimed revolver, despite the menace of The Shadow's looming automatic.

"Unwise, professor!" The Shadow's tone was sibilant. "Your efforts will be useless. Your formula book is on the bench. The tank is still well filled. I have witnessed your entire procedure. No details were missed."

Recognizing that his life was worthless to The Shadow, Lawsham let the revolver clatter. His thin arms came upward. At a motion from the automatic, Lawsham sidestepped. Two seconds later, he was gritting oaths at his folly in obeying that gun nudge.

The Shadow had moved Lawsham over, to point a second .45 at the two servants who had piled from the office. Tricked by the tone of The Shadow's laugh, they had looked in the wrong direction. When they stared toward the test room, they saw that they were covered. They let their guns drop.

Two steps back in the test room, The Shadow spoke cold words to Lawsham.

"Your pretexts were useless," he told the professor. "The evening that Arlene Delton came here, this house was unwatched. Yet crooks sought her life immediately after she returned to her apartment. It was obvious that you had issued the order.

"Odd, too, how you 'remembered' those telephone calls from Hadley; how crooks showed up here to trail Vincent when he left. You had time to summon them when you went below. All in all, professor," - the tone was mocking - "Remingwood's testimony was helpful, but not essential."

Lawsham stretched to his full height. He folded his arms, tilted back his head to shake away locks of

whitish hair.

"Of what am I guilty?" he questioned, cannily. "Thurnig, Brellick, Mandor - none are dead. They are ill, like Vincent and Arlene. You will restore them to soundness - and I will be very much obliged to you, for then I cannot be charged with murder!"

LAWSHAM'S beady eyes were watching The Shadow. Tiny pinpoints, they sought to scrutinize the face beneath the brim of the slouch hat. Lawsham wanted to analyze The Shadow's expression, before offering more argument.

There was one fact which the shrewd professor had wisely dodged. It was The Shadow who suddenly presented it.

"You have forgotten Broyce," spoke The Shadow. "One man, Lawsham, who was murdered at your order."

The professor's lips produced a grin. He was prepared for that statement. His smirk faded, his face took on a look of well-feigned sorrow.

"Poor Doctor Broyce," he said. "He had a shock - one that his weak heart could not stand. There is no one, however, who could ever prove that Broyce was here when the attack struck him; that it was induced by inhalation of the sleep gas.

"Broyce was found dead, in a bus, traveling west. He was pronounced a victim of a heart ailment. Unfortunately" - Lawsham's smirk had reappeared - "he had no papers that identified him. No, Broyce's death will never be classed as murder."

So sure was Lawsham of that point that he stepped closer to The Shadow, raising his head boldly. If ever a master mind of crime had prepared to meet all emergencies, that man was Professor Uriah Lawsham.

"Should you testify regarding my activities," he chuckled, "you can swear only that you saw me restore a gassed victim - our friend, Quill Baxton. Young Remingwood, it happens, owes his life to me, and will have to testify to that effect. More than that, I can produce the record that credits him with our new process, granting me only the right of purchase.

"As for the option that I gave Mandor and his associates, I can produce it also, with receipts for money already paid me. When they reached Mandor, he can only thank me for preserving them. He will be too pleased to accuse me of misdeeds."

The Shadow shifted slightly. From the edge of his cloak, a bit of white appeared - the end of a long envelope. It told Lawsham that The Shadow had already acquired the papers mentioned, while in the little office. Lawsham bowed, as though The Shadow had done him a favor.

Despite the professor's smugness, the pretense that he wished to clear himself, The Shadow could see an evil gleam in those tiny eyes. It was a quick-flashed signal, well-covered; but it gave the next move away.

Behind The Shadow's back, Quill Baxton had risen from the wheeled table. He was reaching for the tank that contained the green gas, hoping to smash it upon The Shadow's head. That would have been a double deed to Lawsham's liking: elimination of The Shadow, along with the antidote that could save the Dead Who Lived.

Lawsham's quick look was an instinctive signal of encouragement to Quill. It proved useless. Quill's

fingers were numbed forever before they could tighten on the glass.

The Shadow's right hand sped in a semicircle; his fingers pressed a gun trigger. Quill sagged, stabbed to the heart by the bullet that came with tonguing flame.

THE SHADOW had seen Quill's moves reflected in the chromium-plated surface of a globular sterilizing cabinet just inside the doorway. With Quill's figure dwarfed by that convex mirror, The Shadow had too small a target to take chances on a clipping shot.

The sweep of The Shadow's arm took away the gun that covered Lawsham. No longer did the professor display a faltering gait. He was on the move the instant that The Shadow started to cover Quill.

Recovering his revolver with a long-armed scoop, Lawsham came bounding in with agile speed. His servants gave a shout as they sprang from the office doorway, reclaiming their guns.

The Shadow made a long step forward to meet Lawsham. His left hand was busy loosing shots at the reckless servants. While they were doubling to the floor, The Shadow made a sidestep that forced Lawsham to a shift of aim. The old professor fired; his shot hit the door frame.

With a sweep, The Shadow sidled in upon him. A fierce laugh mocked Lawsham; he was covered again, by a muzzle that almost touched his forehead. Wildly, the professor dropped; as The Shadow's hand slugged downward, Lawsham came up beneath his swing.

A choppy left-hand stroke was all The Shadow needed to bash the revolver from Lawsham's fist. Even the loss of the gun didn't stop the maddened professor. He had become a frantic fiend. Clutching for The Shadow's throat, he forced his black-cloaked adversary toward the wall.

Footsteps pounded; more servants were coming from the floor above, attracted by the gunfire. They saw the struggle between their master and The Shadow. Four in number, they deployed, hoping to get an angled range of fire.

While he fought off Lawsham, The Shadow kept the professor as a shield. He had a gun loose; with it, he could have picked off the servants. Instead, The Shadow gave them a defiant laugh - one that halted them. There was something sinister in that challenge, that told them they were trapped.

New footsteps proved it. Before the servants could wheel to the stairs, men appeared there. Dick Remingwood had arrived, accompanied by a pair of The Shadow's agents. They had used the old route through the bay window.

Flinging Lawsham to the floor, The Shadow let the murderous professor grovel there, his gun just out of reach. The servants were disarmed. Dick and the men with him were following The Shadow's low-toned orders, while their cloaked chief kept foemen covered.

It was Dick who pocketed the precious notebook that contained the formula for the antidote. Cliff Marsland and "Hawkeye" - the two agents of The Shadow - carried away the cylinder of green gas. The Shadow intended to use it immediately, without mixing more.

Dick stopped to open the rear entrance to the basement. When he had gone up the main stairs, The Shadow stepped in the same direction. Lawsham, glowering, kept watching him; the servants stood sullen and silent.

Men were coming through that rear passage. The first to arrive was Inspector Joe Cardona; behind him, a squad of detectives. They had received a tip-off while searching through Quill's hide-out; a call from The Shadow!

Knowing that Lawsham had intended to take half an hour, The Shadow had made that call from the professor's own office, just after overpowering the lone guard stationed there. When Cardona received orders in The Shadow's whispery voice, Joe followed them.

THE SHADOW watched the law take over. Uriah Lawsham made a grab for his revolver; but one detective kicked the gun away, while another pinned the professor's arms behind him. That grip didn't last long.

Madly, Lawsham broke the hold. Fighting, clawing at the dicks, he dived for the test room. The Shadow couldn't get off a shot; the detectives were in the way. Like The Shadow, Joe Cardona saw the professor grab bottles from a shelf. Joe shouted a warning.

Detectives dropped back. Triumphantly, Lawsham, raised those bottles, to heave them into the laboratory. His murderous eyes were wild with delight; like his high-pitched, incoherent cries, they registered his thoughts.

The Shadow had left! There was still a chance for flight! Moreover, it meant death for these invaders who represented the law that Lawsham despised!

A gun sputtered from the stairway. That shot was aimed three inches above Lawsham's right hand. It cracked a bottle filled with purplish fluid, sent the liquid deluging to the floor. Lawsham jolted in stark surprise, as if he had received the bullet himself. As he clawed the air with his empty right hand, he lost his grip on the bottle in his left.

The second container shattered. Thick, blackish fluid mingled with the purple. A puff of smoke filled the test room; flames sputtered everywhere, licking along the shelves. More chemicals exploded in a miniature cannonade.

Fire roared from the little room, coming in furious spurts. Detectives snatched up extinguishers from the laboratory, hoping to confine the blaze to the smoke-filled test room. In that, they were successful, although the place had the appearance of a turbulent volcano.

Amid the roar of the flames came a fade of wild-screached shouts, that were gone with the man who uttered them, long before the deluge of flame had subsided.

Those shrieks were the last of Uriah Lawsham, as the evil professor perished in his self-made hell.

## **CHAPTER XXI. THE DEAD RETURN**

THERE was a laugh, mirthless as a knell, that sounded when Professor Lawsham perished. It came from the blackness of the stairway. Listening detectives heard it, but could not guess its source.

For the stairway, itself, was void by the time those echoes faded, like the dwindling crackles of the flame. The Shadow had conquered crime; he had been present to stifle a master fiend's last thrust. The Shadow was gone.

Again, his departure told of things to come.

The next sensation in the episode of the Dead Who Lived was the sudden and remarkable recovery of all the victims who had inhaled the sleep gas. It took place within the next few hours, under the supervision of Doctor Rupert Sayre.

First to revive were Harry Vincent and Arlene Delton, whose stay under the power of the death sleep had been a short one. Thurnig, Brellick and Mandor were more difficult cases; but Sayre's skill eased



them back to life, thanks to the antidote that The Shadow provided.

The three investors were well enough, the next day, to read the newspaper reports that supplied the final links to crime; for Sayre had also revived the crooks who served Quill Baxton, and for once, such thugs were telling the police everything they knew.

That departure from underworld tradition was attributed to the after effects of the sleep gas; but the theory was wrong. What loosened the tongues of all the crooks was their recollection of the mighty battler who had overpowered them single-handed, and put them among the Dead Who Lived.

The revived crooks wanted no more conflict with The Shadow. To avoid it, they talked, even admitting their part in murder, rather than again incur The Shadow's wrath.

In fact, Sayre's observations indicated that the sleep gas left no after effects upon persons who had been strong enough to stand the original treatment. Such talk had been a pretext on the part of Professor Lawsham, to induce Dick Remingwood to stay in Hadley at the crook-manned sanitarium.

The spell of the sleep gas was ended. Those longest under its influence were wholly recovered, except for weakness that was attributed to lack of recent nourishment.

TWO days later, at the hospital, Doctor Sayre allowed the three investors to hold a brief conference. James Mandor showed the options to Martin Brellick and George Thurnig, explaining that the papers had been mysteriously delivered to him. The three discussed other matters, that were finally left entirely to Mandor.

That led to a meeting between James Mandor and Dick Remingwood.

Himself the proven owner of the formula for the cheap production of synthetic rubber, Dick held the very key that the investors wanted. The process was his, not Lawsham's, and he was free to discuss new terms. They were fair enough, and Mandor eagerly accepted them.

The proposed company was incorporated, with Dick as an equal shareholder. The directors - Mandor, Brellick, and Thurnig - forthwith elected him president. Dick was given full charge of production, while their task was to raise additional capital, a matter which offered very little difficulty.

Among those desirous of buying stock in the new concern was Lamont Cranston, a millionaire whose ability at picking good investments led many to follow his lead. Again, the hand of The Shadow was visible in the affairs of the Dead Who Lived.

To Dick Remingwood, however, there came a greater reward than any that promise of wealth could produce. That was his marriage to Arlene Delton, a quiet ceremony attended by only a few friends, Harry Vincent among them.

The bride and groom were aboard a liner, ready to depart for a long West Indies cruise, when Harry joined them, to see them off. They were seated in the spacious lounge, when they heard a steward's call:

"All ashore!"

Harry raised his glass. He gave a toast:

"To the honeymoon!"

Dick shook his head. He smiled at Arlene. She knew the words that were in her husband's mind.

It was Arlene who spoke them, her tone filled with fervent recollection of the person whose deeds had brought this final happiness:

"To The Shadow!"

THE END