

THE RADIUM MURDERS

Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. THE LOST ROAD

BALMY breezes from Long Island Sound wafted across the broad veranda of the Regatta Club. The cool night air streamed through the palatial lobby, and brought a smile to the lips of a clerk who leaned indolently on the marble desk.

A rasped voice ended the clerk's reverie. A thick-set man was pounding on the desk. The clerk saw lips that had a bitter downturn; a flattish nose with widened nostrils. Above were bushy brows, over bulgy eyes. The clerk knew that face.

"What – what is it, Mr. Jadway?"

The clerk's stammer was apologetic; but it did not appease the thick-set club member.

"Telephone calls came for me last night," snapped Jadway. "At ten o'clock. But I was not notified."

"I wasn't on duty last night, sir –"

"You're on duty tonight," interrupted Jadway. "I'm driving over to the Hillside Country Club in Westchester, so remember it! If any one calls tell them I am here."

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Jadway strode from the club. The clerk mopped his forehead. The job was an easy one at this exclusive North Shore club, except when members like Ursus Jadway found some fault. Jadway was the sort who could have an employee fired as quickly as he could snap his fingers.

Jadway, the clerk had been told, was a millionaire.

Others had heard that same story including wealthy members of the Regatta Club. All had been hoaxed. Actually, Ursus Jadway was a swindler of deepest dye. He was a confidence man who used deluxe methods. His haughty manner, his pretended wealth were shams.

Jadway's true character had been uncovered by one person only. That investigator was The Shadow.

Hidden master who defeated men of crime, The Shadow had studied cases where wealthy dupes had been plucked of fortunes. Behind those swindles, The Shadow had seen the evil genius of Ursus Jadway.

The Shadow had placed a trusted agent on the swindler's trail.

Soon after Jadway's departure, a young man entered the lobby of the Regatta Club and asked for the pretended millionaire. The clerk informed the questioner that Jadway had gone to the Hillside Country Club.

The young man was Harry Vincent, an agent who worked for The Shadow. Five minutes later, Harry was driving a swift coupe in the same direction that Jadway had taken. It was Harry's job to report on all contacts that Jadway made; and so far, Harry's work had taken him to three specific places.

One was the apartment house where Jadway lived, in New York City. The second was the Regatta Club, on the north shore of the Sound. The third was the Hillside Country Club, near the Hudson River.

The three spots were like the points of a triangle. But at none of them had Harry seen Jadway start any conference that looked like the build-up of a swindle.

It was a twisty route through Westchester County, between the Sound and the Hudson. Harry thought that he knew the byways perfectly; but halfway along his journey, he struck unfamiliar territory.

A slight fog had risen beneath the moonlight. Harry felt the engine labor, as the coupe took a winding hill. The slope was new to him. He was on the wrong road.

The top of the hill offered a left-hand fork that led downward. Harry took it; he ran into a stretch of rough road. Half a mile produced a well-paved fork to the right. Taking that route, Harry struck a twisty hill that was steeper than the previous one.

He crossed a road that followed the contour of the hill. He twisted among thick trees; then came to a clearing. The fog had lessened on this high ground.

At the top of the hill, Harry looked off into the clear moonlight. He stopped his car in wonderment.

Outlined against the night sky was a huge house that dominated the crest. Its walls were grim, gray stone. From its high front ran two wings. The nearer was two stories high; the farther wing must have had four floors, for it was visible beyond the closer wing.

Near the rear of the lower wing was a turret, two floors in height, topped by a cone-shaped roof. It could once have been the end of the building, but at present, it had an addition that led to a three-story annex at the

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back of the building.

The annex connected both wings of the house, thus forming a courtyard within the strange old building.

The mansion was weird and gloomy – a forgotten edifice lost on the hilltop. Its seclusion was that of a wilderness, although there were many towns in this vicinity.

What impressed Harry most was the repressive effect that gripped the house itself. Though many windows were lighted, they were dim, as if vast rooms swallowed all the glow that they possessed.

The road evidently ended at the house. Harry drove forward; he intended to follow the driveway beneath a front portico and swing around a circle that was visible in the moonlight. But as he came to the porte-cochere that covered the driveway, he was forced to jam the brakes in haste.

A car was already parked there, blocking Harry's route. The coupe's lights showed a squatly, wide-built roadster, with low top.

Sight of that roadster gave Harry Vincent a new surprise. He recognized the car instantly. It was the very automobile that he had set out to trail.

The squatty roadster belonged to Ursus Jadway!

FACTS were explained. At last, Harry understood why Jadway made trips between Long Island Sound and the Hudson River. Somewhere between, at this forgotten mansion, the swindler had a stopping-off place. His trips were blinds to cover his visits here.

Whatever crooked scheme Jadway was promoting, it certainly involved someone who lived in this gray-walled house.

Harry smiled to himself. So far he had kept out of Jadway's sight; therefore, he could see an excellent way to learn what the swindler was about. That method was to enter the house and meet the owner himself.

Harry extinguished the lights of the coupe. Walking past Jadway's roadster, he ascended stone steps to the front door. Seeing no bell, Harry pounded upon a huge brass knocker. Ten seconds later, bolts were drawn.

The door opened inward; by the light from a great, dim hall, Harry saw a stalwart servant.

The man looked dull; but he was certainly brawny. His shoulders were almost as wide as his stocky height. His arms had the long swing of an ape's. Harry saw beady eyes that blinked from a chunky face. Thick lips moved, as if to mutter a question. Harry did not wait for the servant's coming words.

"Good evening," said Harry. Then, in casual tone: "I am Mr. Vincent."

The servant looked puzzled. He muttered:

"You came to see Professor Dorth?"

"Yes," returned Harry, boldly. "He may not expect me; but he will be glad to see me."

The servant motioned for Harry to enter. He closed the door, slithered the bolts in place. That done, he conducted Harry across the huge hall, to a forty-foot living room. Harry took a chair and watched the apish

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man go back through the hall.

The living room fitted Harry's idea of the interior. It was gloomy, despite the dozen lights that Harry counted in table lamps and wall brackets. One end of the room had bookshelves running from corner to corner, clear to the ceiling; yet Harry could scarcely discern the books.

The end of the room was almost a blot of darkness. Side walls and corners were vague and deep. Drawn curtains indicated the presence of deep-ledged windows. This room could shelter a host of unseen spies.

Harry felt that the huge house had swallowed him. The sensation caused a chill, that made him approach a fireplace. There, the pitiful crackle of dying embers afforded the only sound within the hush of surrounding walls.

At last, Harry heard another noise. Footsteps, coming closer, from somewhere beyond the great hall. They reached the hall itself, and crossed it. Still, Harry could see no one in the gloom.

Suddenly, a white-coated figure appeared at the living-room door. Harry could see a face, also; but the form seemed legless, until the man was almost at the fireplace. Then Harry noted that he was wearing black trousers below his white coat.

THE man's face was a darkish one, topped by sleek light hair, parted at the left. He looked about forty years of age; his expression was a solemn one. In purred tone, the man inquired:

"Mr. Vincent?"

"Yes," returned Harry. "Are you Professor Dorth?"

"No. My name is Van Bryck. I am chief technician here. Do you come from the Superior Placement Bureau?"

Harry had a quick dash of thoughts. Van Bryck supposed him to be some applicant for a position in the household. To pose as such would give The Shadow's agent an opportunity to learn what Ursus Jadway was seeking here.

"Why, yes," replied Harry. "That is, a friend told me that there was a job here. He had learned it from the Bureau. But I didn't go there myself –"

"I see." Van Bryck accepted Harry's explanation. "Read this letter, Mr. Vincent."

The letter was from the Superior Placement Bureau, dated a day ago. It was addressed to Professor Lycurgus Dorth. It stated that the Bureau regretted that no suitable applicant had been found for the post of secretary. That fitted well with Harry's bluff.

"My friend probably knew nothing of this," said Harry, glibly. "He told me about the opening, a few days ago. But if there is no job –"

"There is," interposed Van Bryck. "Professor Dorth has just concluded a business arrangement that will make a secretary necessary. Are you prepared to remain here, Mr. Vincent?"

Harry smiled. In his coupe was a packed suitcase that he always carried. He told Van Bryck that he had brought his luggage, in case he landed the job. The technician was pleased.

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"We can attend to the suitcase later," he told Harry. "Professor Dorth will see you first. This way, Mr. Vincent."

Harry followed the technician across the gloomy hall. They took an inner corridor that led deep into the house.

They came to a square-walled room. Van Bryck motioned Harry to a chair in a deep, dim corner. The technician went through a farther door; made an announcement and returned. He sat down near Harry.

SOON, the far door opened. Two men stepped from it. One was Ursus Jadway, whose big lips showed a smile. The other was unquestionably Professor Dorth.

Tall, but bent of form, Dorth was about Jadway's height. The professor's face was a sharp one; but so pale that it almost matched the shock of white hair that tapped his head. Keen, blue eyes gleamed from Dorth's dryish features. The hand that he extended to Jadway looked like a scrawny claw.

"Good night, Mr. Jadway," said Dorth, his tone gleeful. "Everything rests with you, from tonight onward."

"A wise decision, professor," returned Jadway, in bluff fashion. "Your invention needs promotion. I can handle it."

"Be sure to see Rune," reminded Dorth, "soon after he arrives in New York. He will reach the Hotel Moreland at midnight."

"Leave it to me, professor," promised Jadway. "I'll talk to Prescott Rune. I'll sell him on the idea."

Dorth accompanied Jadway out through the passage. Van Bryck arose and pointed to the room that the pair had left.

"Wait in the professor's study," he ordered.

Harry entered a well-lighted room. He saw a desk with a chair in front of it; and seated himself to await Dorth's return.

There was a slight click from the doorway that Harry had left. Van Bryck had closed the door to leave Harry alone in the study.

The Shadow's agent was free to smile at the facts that he had learned.

Ursus Jadway was going into New York. That would place him under The Shadow's own observation. Hence Harry could remain here and make the acquaintance of Lycurgus Dorth.

By taking the job of secretary, Harry could learn facts regarding a man named Prescott Rune, whose name had been mentioned by both Jadway and Dorth. Evidently, Rune must hold an important part in matters to come.

Had Harry Vincent even guessed the part that Prescott Rune was to play, he would have lost his present elation. Grim events were in the making; but The Shadow's agent had failed to gain even an inkling of the horror that the future held.

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By staying in this weird mansion, Harry was postponing contact with The Shadow. That postponement, though circumstances justified it, would later handicap The Shadow in a struggle against hideous, ruthless crime.

CHAPTER II. ANOTHER VISITOR

WHILE he awaited Professor Dorth's return, Harry took opportunity to observe the room about him. Professor Dorth's study was a most curious place; that fact told Harry in exactly what portion of the house the room was located.

The study was circular in shape. Therefore, it was obviously situated in the rounded turret that ended the rear of the two-story wing. In viewing the house from outside, Harry had been positive that this wing ended in a dead wall, for the three-story addition beyond it appeared to be of later construction.

Here, inside the turret itself, Harry saw proof of his earlier opinion. This room had only one door; that was the one through which Harry had entered.

The room had windows, arranged in pairs. There were two such sets. One pair of windows opened on the front of the house; the others, directly opposite, opened into the inner courtyard. Harry could see the windows; he observed that they were barred on the inside.

One notable feature of the room was the thickness of its walls. They were solid and covered with heavy wall paper that looked almost like a tapestry. The doorway through which Harry had entered was a deep one, with fully three feet of space from the wall to the door.

Similarly, the inner window frames were a three-foot depth.

From the front windows, Harry saw the lights of an automobile swing along the driveway. It was Jadway's car, departing. A few minutes later, Harry heard the study door open. Professor Dorth entered.

With a smile upon his withered face, the professor took a chair behind the desk, his back toward one of the courtyard windows.

A desk lamp threw a pleasing glow upon Dorth's features. He looked so friendly that Harry was sure the professor was the sort of dupe that Jadway would try to swindle. Dorth's tone, however, showed some shrewdness.

"Mr. Vincent," said the professor, "your work here will be very important. Therefore, I insist upon the utmost secrecy; also that you remain here constantly."

Harry nodded his acceptance of the terms.

"I am an inventor," continued Dorth. "I have produced a substance that is similar to radium. A chemical compound that retains its radioactive qualities. Certain men wish to invest in the manufacture of this synthetic radium.

"A promoter named Ursus Jadway approached me. He is the man who just left here. He wants to handle financial matters for me. But I am not sure of Jadway's honesty. I decided that I needed a secretary, after all, to help me keep check on Jadway."

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The statement pleased Harry. Since the professor suspected that Jadway was a crook, it would be easy to trap the swindler when the right time came. When Dorth made his next statement, Harry had even more admiration for the professor's foresight.

"Perhaps" – Dorth was smiling wisely – "you heard me mention the name of Prescott Rune, who will arrive in New York late tonight. Rune wants to invest in my invention. I did not tell Jadway that Rune is stopping here on his way into New York. Glidden, my chauffeur, went to meet his train at Harmon. Rune is due here any minute."

DORTH had scarcely finished before there was a rap at the door. It was the apish servant. Dorth addressed the fellow as Tardon.

The servant announced that Mr. Rune had arrived; that Van Bryck was bringing him to the study.

Prescott Rune arrived. He was a portly, gray-haired man whose manner was mild and pleasant. Dorth introduced him to Harry; as Rune seated himself, Van Bryck joined the group.

"Here are the papers," said Dorth, to Rune. "Made out as we agreed, when you last visited here. We can sign them tonight. Van Bryck and Vincent can act as witnesses."

Rune read over the documents. He brought a large fountain pen from his pocket and signed. Dorth took the pen and did the same. The pen passed to Harry, who signed on a witness line. Van Bryck did the same.

"You will hear from a man named Ursus Jadway," Dorth told Rune. "He is a New York promoter, who wants to push my invention. I told him that he could proceed."

"But I have purchased full rights!" exclaimed Rune. "You have my payment of two hundred thousand dollars! I expect to see your radioactive powder exhibited at the medical convention, in New York. That is why I came here this week."

"Of course," assured Dorth. "Meanwhile, Jadway approached me. I am suspicious of him, because he learned of my invention despite my efforts at secrecy. I told him to see no one except persons whom I named."

"That's why you gave him my name?"

"Yes. So that you can size the fellow. He does not know that the invention belongs to you. If Jadway seems honest, you can use him later, to promote the invention. If you consider him a doubtful character, postpone any decision. Jadway will come back to me; and I shall tell him that I do not need his services."

"You have a good business head, professor. Unless you signed an agreement with Jadway."

"I signed nothing."

Dorth looked at his watch; and decided there was just time for Glidden to take Rune to a branch-line station named Woodbury, where the portly man could catch the last train into New York.

Van Bryck opened the door for them to pass; as Rune went by, the technician handed him his fountain pen.

"Thank you, Van Bryck," laughed Rune. "Most people forget to return fountain pens. It is pleasing to meet an exception."

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Van Bryck produced a sheaf of expense sheets and asked Harry to put them in proper shape. There was a typewriter on a table near Dorth's desk, so Harry went to work. Van Bryck watched a while; then went out. Alone, Harry finished the report sheets.

He had time to type a brief note of his own. It concerned some small investments; Harry addressed it to Rutledge Mann, a New York broker. Mann was an agent of The Shadow. He would forward the letter, thus informing The Shadow of Harry's present address.

Pocketing the letter, Harry went out through the long passage. He found Van Bryck in the living room.

"Hello, Vincent," greeted the technician. "I was just coming in to see if you had finished. Professor Dorth has retired. Glidden is just back from the station, ready to put your car away. You will find him out front."

HARRY went out through the front door, to encounter a stocky man in uniform who introduced himself as Glidden. The fellow flicked a flashlight under the porte-cochere; Harry gave him the key to the coupe as they walked toward the car.

"Any mail, sir?" queried Glidden. "I'm driving to town early in the morning."

It was the very opening that Harry wanted. He gave Glidden the letter that was addressed to Rutledge Mann. The chauffeur pocketed it and helped Harry haul his bag from the coupe.

Tardon appeared from the house and took Harry's bag. Harry followed him into the house and up a long flight of gloomy stairs. They reached a room located in the high wing of the house.

Alone again, Harry reviewed all that had happened. He was sure of his guess that Professor Dorth was smart enough to deal with Ursus Jadway. Dorth had proven that in his conversation with Prescott Rune. Jadway was being bluffed; for he did not know that Rune had already purchased full rights to Dorth's invention.

As for himself, Harry felt secure. He could easily keep on with the part that he had undertaken. Once The Shadow had received Harry's letter from Mann, there would be new orders. This house, though gloomy and weird, was a place where danger was merely imaginary. Such was Harry's opinion.

THE SHADOW'S agent might have changed his viewpoint, had he been able to gain another glimpse of Professor Dorth's study. That turret room was still illuminated; it held two occupants: Professor Dorth and Van Bryck. The technician's statement that the professor had retired was a falsehood.

Professor Dorth was scanning the pages of a letter. Finished, he folded the note and thrust it back into its envelope. The flap of the envelope was loose. Poorly gummed, it had not remained closed.

"So he gave this to Glidden," snorted Dorth. "Bah! I knew the fool would try to send a letter from here!"

"It doesn't state much," remarked Van Bryck. "There is a chance, though, that it is written in code."

"I shall study it tomorrow," declared Dorth. "If it is a code, I shall solve it. A code will prove definitely that Vincent is working for Ursus Jadway."

"And if it is not code?"

"Then we shall know that he is in the employ of someone else. In either event, Vincent will remain here, lulled into the belief that he is secure."

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Van Bryck pondered, then shook his head.

"We must be wary, professor," he insisted. "Vincent may learn too much."

"Learn too much?" echoed Dorth. "He has learned too much already!"

"But he suspects nothing as yet."

"We shall let him suspect something. We shall watch his reactions, Van Bryck. They may be of value as we proceed. Remember: we hold this fellow helpless. With Tardon, Glidden, half a dozen others whom Vincent has not seen, we shall have no trouble in disposing of him when circumstances require it."

Leaning back in his chair, Professor Lycurgus Dorth delivered an insidious chortle, revealing an evil nature that the professor had wisely veiled when in the presence of visitors.

The glare of Dorth's eyes was ominous. Van Bryck observed it and was pleased. The technician, as vicious of nature as the professor, was convinced upon one point.

Van Bryck was sure that Harry Vincent would remain alive and unharmed only so long as Professor Dorth chose to tolerate the new secretary's presence within this strange mansion of evil.

CHAPTER III. DEATH'S LONE CLUE

THE trip from Woodbury to New York City required about fifty minutes; hence it was about twenty minutes after eleven when Prescott Rune came into Grand Central Station.

He took a cab to the Hotel Moreland, registered there and was assigned to Room 1218. He left orders to be called at eight-thirty in the morning.

Rune started unpacking his suitcase. This took about a dozen minutes; when he had finished, he lifted the bag from a trunk rack and placed it on the floor.

Rune gasped. His lips twitched from a twinge of violent pain. Doubling his portly body, he pressed both hands to his heart. His expression became bewildered. Whatever the attack, it was a sort that Rune had never before experienced.

The pain continued. Rune made a feeble outcry. When he tried to straighten, he staggered. Pangs of agony expressed themselves upon his face, as his hands tugged at the buttons of his vest. Finding his fingers nerveless, Rune started for the telephone. He never reached it. Instead, he sprawled upon the floor.

The stricken man tried to crawl to the door. He flattened five feet short of his goal. The mirror of a closet door reflected his face; Rune was wild as he eyed his own distorted countenance. It was a demon's visage, mocking him.

Rune gave a final quiver, and lay still.

For five minutes, shaded lamps threw their glow upon the twisted figure. Then came the tingle of the telephone bell. Rune neither heard nor stirred. He was dead.

DOWN in the lobby, a short while later, Ursus Jadway received the clerk's report:

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"Sorry, sir. Mr. Rune does not answer."

Jadway glared angrily at the clock above the desk.

"If Mr. Rune came in at midnight," began Jadway, "he ought to be awake. It's only ten minutes after twelve."

"Mr. Rune arrived at half past eleven," informed the clerk. "He left orders to be called at eight-thirty. If you will leave your name, sir –"

"I'll call him in the morning. Since he's gone to sleep, I won't disturb him."

As Jadway strode from the desk, a tall, calm-faced stranger let him pass. The new guest stated that he had luggage in a taxi, waiting outside. The clerk called a bell boy. The tall arrival followed.

When the bell boy had unloaded the cab, the stranger spoke to the cab driver, in whispered tone:

"Follow Jadway! Report to Burbank. Tell him to call Henry Arnaud at the Hotel Moreland."

The tall stranger was The Shadow. Hearing nothing from Harry Vincent, The Shadow had watched Jadway's Manhattan apartment. He had trailed Jadway here, in a cab manned by one of his own agents – Moe Shrevnitz, taxi driver. Having overheard the conversation at the desk, The Shadow intended to stay at the Moreland.

As Arnaud, The Shadow asked for a top-floor room. The Moreland had just twelve floors; and he had noticed Rune's name on the register, with the listing, 1218. The clerk offered Room 1212; the new guest thought it too near the elevators. He received 1220, instead. That room was next to the one occupied by Rune.

Reaching his room, The Shadow opened a suitcase and donned garments of black. A cloak rendered him almost invisible in the room light. His disguised face was lost from sight beneath the brim of a slouch hat. A being of blackness, The Shadow stepped out into the hall, to listen at the door of 1218.

The carpet was too thick to allow light beneath the door. A key blocked the lock; the Shadow, however, began operations with a tiny pick-like instrument. In another half minute, he would have silently entered Rune's room, to learn of death there. A chance interruption was the factor that halted The Shadow.

The telephone bell was ringing in Room 1220.

Returning quickly to his own room, The Shadow answered the call in the tone of Arnaud. It was Burbank, The Shadow's contact agent, reporting that Jadway was back in his apartment. Hanging up, The Shadow saw no further need to enter Rune's room.

Since The Shadow had heard the ring of his own telephone bell, while he was in the hall, he had merely to open the transom in order to hear any tingle of the phone bell in 1218. He could then listen in from the hallway, if a call came for Rune.

That seemed sufficient, even to The Shadow; for he was dealing with Ursus Jadway, who had a bad listing only as a swindler; not as a criminal who dealt in murder. Unquestionably, Jadway would use strong-arm men if he saw himself in a tight spot; but there was no indication that Jadway feared Prescott Rune.

On the contrary, Jadway's whole manner of action indicated that he was seeking Rune as a dupe for some new swindle. Therefore, The Shadow's time to listen in would be tomorrow morning, when Jadway called.

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MORNING arrived. The Shadow was wakened from his customary light sleep, by the jangle of Rune's telephone bell. The ringing persisted, while The Shadow was getting into his clothes. He was fully dressed before the bell stopped.

Stepping into the corridor, The Shadow could hear no voice beyond Rune's door.

An elevator stopped at the twelfth floor. As Arnaud, The Shadow stepped back in his own room. He watched while a bell boy arrived to pound on Rune's door. Gaining no response, the bell hop hurried back to the elevator.

Rune's failure to answer the phone call had alarmed the downstairs clerk. A scare could spread quickly at a placid hotel like the Moreland. The bell boy would soon be back with the house detective. The Shadow did not linger; it would be advantageous to be elsewhere, if there proved to be something wrong with Rune.

Packing quickly, The Shadow went downstairs. While he was paying his bill, he noted that the bell boy was absent. He had probably gone upstairs on another elevator, taking the house dick. That proved to be the case.

There was a ring from the telephone bell behind the desk. The clerk answered it. The Shadow heard his gasp:

"What? Dead! You say that Mr. Rune is dead?"

Staring, the clerk saw a tall form going through the doorway to the street. He called to the cashier:

"Who was that who just checked out?"

"Mr. Arnaud," was the reply. "From Room 1220."

Excitedly, the clerk dashed to the street. A taxi swung from sight around the corner. The Shadow had made a complete departure.

LATER that same morning, a tall, hawk-faced stranger strolled into the lobby of the Hotel Moreland. His resemblance to Henry Arnaud was so slight that the cashier did not notice it. The visitor inquired for Police Commissioner Weston.

"Sorry, sir. The commissioner can see no one –"

"Tell him that Mr. Cranston is here," interposed the stranger. "Mr. Lamont Cranston."

A call to Room 1218 brought a reply to send Mr. Cranston there immediately. The Shadow's thin lips wore a smile. As Lamont Cranston, millionaire clubman, he was always a welcome arrival, when he called upon his friend the police commissioner.

In 1218, The Shadow found Weston. With the commissioner was a stocky, swarthy-faced police inspector. He was Joe Cardona, ace sleuth upon whom Weston depended. Both greeted Cranston. They saw him look about as he shook hands.

There was no body on the floor; Rune's corpse had been removed. His bags and apparel were still here, however, plus a collection of personal effects that Weston had been examining beside the window.

"A strange murder, Cranston," informed the commissioner. "Prescott Rune, a Cleveland manufacturer. As near as we can determine it, his heart was subjected to radium burns. But there's no radium on his body."

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"And no way any one could have taken it away," put in Cardona. "This room is tight. Windows clamped; door locked on the inside."

Pondering, The Shadow was ready to place the time of Rune's death as before midnight, the night before. Not knowing the turn of Cranston's thoughts, Weston made a different guess.

"I know what's in your mind, Cranston. You think it happened before Rune was found here. That isn't the answer. He walked in here by himself, last night. We've put a dark-room test on everything he carried. Nothing shows a radium glow.

"We have two suspects, however. Last night, a stranger called to see Rune. A man described as bull-faced, with bushy eyebrows. Also, a guest who registered as Henry Arnaud and took Room 1220."

"Arnaud doesn't count," put in Cardona. "His having the next room means nothing. There's no connecting door between; and Arnaud didn't ask for 1220. The clerk gave him that room."

Cardona had made good choice in picking Jadway as the proper suspect. But The Shadow was confident that Ursus Jadway had gained no opportunity to plant a quantity of radium upon Prescott Rune. If Jadway happened to be responsible for Rune's death, he had certainly made a foolish and unnecessary step, calling at the hotel last night.

Yet, Jadway might lead to the actual murderer. That was why The Shadow decided to keep the unknown caller's name a secret. Jadway was clever. If the law inquired for him, he would depart for places unknown. The Shadow intended to track Jadway before that could happen.

WHEN Cranston left Room 1218, he did not go downstairs. He had kept the key to 1220. He entered there while the commissioner and Cardona were still talking in Rune's room. After they went out, Cranston's tall form emerged from 1220 and stopped at the door of 1218.

Quickly, he probed the lock. His picks opened it easily, for he knew the exact type of key that was used.

Inside the room, Cranston was no longer the leisurely clubman. With the swift precision of The Shadow, he made his own inspection of the articles on the table by the window.

There was a wallet, some loose coins, a fountain pen, watch, check book, and a few other items. Though these had been subjected to a test, The Shadow was not satisfied. Thoughtfully, he tapped the upper left pocket of his own vest. That was the spot where the radium was probably planted on Rune.

Immediately afterward, The Shadow examined Rune's fountain pen. He unscrewed the barrel and studied the rubber filler. It was a full inch too short. Working on the barrel, The Shadow gave it a reverse twist. A short length unscrewed from the tip.

It was an extension, fitted so tightly that the eye could not discern the join. Moreover, it had a left-hand thread; to fool the ordinary handler.

From the cuplike container, The Shadow poured a quantity of grayish powder that resembled burned ashes. He found a hotel envelope; dumped the powder into it. He replaced the fake tip upon the fountain pen and left it as he had found it.

Pocketing his envelope, The Shadow left the room. He sidled into a passage, just in time to avoid Joe Cardona and a plain-clothes man, when the pair arrived up from the lobby. They went into 1218 to gather

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Rune's effects. Lamont Cranston was gone when they came out into the corridor.

HALF an hour later, The Shadow was in a room where black walls glistened. This was his own laboratory; he was making an important test with the grayish powder. He poured it on a sheet of thin paper; wrapping the powder within, he placed the packet on a small, horizontal screen.

The Shadow extinguished the lights. The lab became pitch dark, except for one spot. The screen beneath The Shadow's hands remained aglow.

The screen was coated with phosphorescent zinc sulphide. Upon it were brilliant streams; they were radioactive emanations. The Shadow moved a black-gloved hand above the screen. The emanation vanished; with it went the greater part of the phosphorescence. The glow returned; fresh emanation was diffused.

His experiment ended, The Shadow turned on the lights.

The Shadow had identified the grayish powder. It was a compound of actinium, a substance far more radioactive than radium, but of lesser duration. Comparatively, a compound of pure actinium would fall to half its value in four seconds; while an emanation of radium would require four days for such a marked decrease.

The compound was not ordinary actinium; but it showed qualities similar to that element. It explained two facts: the death of Prescott Rune; also why a dark-room test had failed to show a glow from the fountain pen that contained the fatal powder.

Subjected to high-powered radioactive emanations, Rune had suffered the burns that produced his death. Had the fountain pen been examined at that time, it would have revealed a phosphorescent glow. By morning, its emanations had become too feeble to penetrate the barrel of the fountain pen. It had taken a laboratory test of the actual powder to show the remnants of radioactivity.

The Shadow had uncovered scientific murder of a new and devastating sort. No time could be lost in tracing the perpetrator.

From the laboratory, The Shadow entered another room: his sanctum. Picking up earphones, he called Burbank. The contact man gave a report on Ursus Jadway, furnished by agents whom The Shadow had ordered on watch.

At nine o'clock that morning, Jadway had been trailed to the Hillside Country Club. The swindler was playing golf there.

Ten minutes after Burbank's report, The Shadow appeared upon the street in Cranston's guise. He was carrying a light bag that contained his black garments. Stopping off at the exclusive Cobalt Club, he lunched with Commissioner Ralph Weston.

The Shadow's next destination was the Hillside Country Club, in Westchester County. There, he expected to begin an important trail. The Shadow had divined an important fact – that Ursus Jadway must have a stopping off place between the Hudson River and Long Island Sound.

The Shadow intended to trail the swindler to that spot. There, The Shadow would find the source of the doom that had struck down Prescott Rune.

CHAPTER IV. AT THE MANSION

IN his plan to trail Ursus Jadway, The Shadow had given special thought to Harry Vincent. When last seen, the agent had been on Jadway's trail. Since murder had entered the game, The Shadow knew that Harry might be in danger. Following Jadway was the best way to gain news of Harry.

At Dorth's old mansion, Harry had no inkling of danger. He had risen in the morning to find the old house gloomy, even by daylight. Dorth's study was well-lighted, however; and time passed rapidly while Harry sorted stacks of bills and attended to unimportant correspondence that the professor gave him.

At four in the afternoon, Van Bryck entered to remind Dorth of the hour.

"Ah, yes," nodded Dorth. "I had forgotten that James Farradon is coming today. He will probably drive in from the South, as usual. Take Vincent to the laboratory, Van Bryck. I shall join you later."

Harry felt a double interest. He wanted to see the laboratory; he was also anxious to learn who James Farradon might be. He had heard no previous mention of Farradon; and the name was not included in any of the letters that Harry had filed for Dorth.

Van Bryck led Harry to the front of the house; then clear through the far wing, to the rear annex. They descended a flight of steps and entered a large, stone-floored room.

The place was equipped as a laboratory – with benches, long shelves that held bottles and beakers. There were several large machines that looked like violet-ray lamps. Van Bryck saw that Harry had observed them, so he explained their purpose.

"We use these," stated the technician, "in our experiments with radioactive substances. This machine" – he pointed to the largest contrivance – "might be termed a radioactive charger."

Harry looked puzzled. Van Bryck explained further.

"You were present when Professor Dorth talked with Mr. Rune," reminded Van Bryck. "You heard them mention the radioactive powder."

Harry nodded.

"Professor Dorth developed the powder after long experiments," resumed Van Bryck. "His effort was to produce a synthetic composition that would have the same power as radium. He succeeded in producing substances that matched the effects of such elements as actinium and thorium, which are radioactive; but it was not until recently that he developed a composition that is the equal of radium itself."

"I see," remarked Harry. "Then this new powder is the substance for which Prescott Rune purchased full rights?"

There was a momentary glint to Van Bryck's eyes as the technician heard Harry's question. Van Bryck's lips pursed as he restrained a smile. Harry did not notice these expressions; he was looking at the machine that Van Bryck had indicated. When Van Bryck replied, his tone was as dry as before.

"That is correct," stated Van Bryck.

"Prescott Rune bought full rights for two hundred thousand dollars."

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TURNING, Van Bryck pointed to a small safe in the corner of the laboratory.

"That is where we keep the synthetic radium," he remarked. "Perhaps you will glimpse it later, Vincent. Naturally, I am telling you all this in confidence. You understand, of course, that Professor Dorth's invention will eventually be worth millions. That is why he has been forced to preserve such secrecy.

"In fact, it explains why the professor has cut himself off from the world. Perhaps you have wondered because there is no telephone here; also that no newspapers are delivered. The answer is that Professor Dorth wants nothing to distract him or those who work for him."

Leaving Harry to roam where he wished, Van Bryck went to a laboratory bench, and lighted a Bunsen burner. He began a test with a reddish powder, stopping at intervals to consult a notebook.

Harry said nothing to interrupt Van Bryck's experiment. A question had come to Harry's mind, but he did not voice it. Harry was wondering why Professor Dorth had peddled an invention worth millions, without getting more than two hundred thousand dollars for the rights.

It was a most puzzling question, particularly because Prescott Rune had been the purchaser. Rune had impressed Harry as anything but a bargain driver. In fact, Professor Dorth had warned Rune against Ursus Jadway, as though fearing that Rune would be unable to guard himself against the swindler.

Somehow, the circumstances did not fit. Dorth was a shrewder man than Rune; yet Rune had gained Dorth's invention for a fraction of its value.

True, Dorth was a friendly sort, who might have set two hundred thousand dollars as his goal, willing to let Rune gain all beyond that sum. Yet it was odd that Dorth had not reserved some rights to the invention; at least a form of royalty payment, should the profits reach a high mark.

While Harry was pondering over this matter, the door of the laboratory opened and Professor Dorth appeared. The old inventor was accompanied by a tall, stoop-shouldered man whose eyes had a sharp gleam and whose lips formed a greedy smile. This, Harry knew, must be James Farradon.

DORTH did not introduce the newcomer. The two walked across the laboratory to the safe in the corner. Van Bryck stopped work at the bench and followed, motioning to Harry to do the same. They came closer and stood aside while Dorth talked with Farradon.

Viewing Farradon at close range, Harry did not like the man's looks. Farradon seemed to be a man of influence and wealth; but he carried an air of self-importance, which he had demonstrated when he ignored Harry and Van Bryck.

In both attire and manner, Farradon carried his pose of importance. He was wearing clothes that were exaggerated in style; gray-striped trousers, topped by a frock coat. His right hand made a gesture as he swept it toward a slanted inside pocket on the left side of his coat.

With a grand air, Farradon produced a gold cigarette case, opened it and extracted a cigarette. He replaced the case, and raised a lighter from the end of a watch chain. Holding both cigarette and lighter, Farradon put the cigarette in a holder, placed the latter to his lips and struck a light.

Professor Dorth was opening the safe. From it, he brought a square wooden box, measuring about four inches across.

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"Let me have the box," snapped Farradon, between cigarette puffs. "I wish to examine the seals for myself."

Meekly, Dorth handed over the box. Farradon laid it on a workbench. He extinguished his cigarette against the stone window sill; then held the box to the light. Harry saw seals upon the box. They were intact. Farradon was satisfied.

The visitor allowed Dorth to open the box. It looked heavy for its size; that was explained when Dorth brought out a small lead casket, almost the size of the wooden one. Farradon had lighted a second cigarette, he extinguished it hurriedly, so that he could examine the lead casket.

The inner box had seals; they, too, were unbroken. Farradon nodded his satisfaction.

"Bring the dark lens, Van Bryck," ordered Dorth. "We shall let Mr. Farradon examine the contents."

Farradon's cigarette case was empty. From a pocket of his frock coat, he produced a fresh pack of cigarettes. Ripping the pack, he stowed the cigarettes in the case while Van Bryck was bringing the dark lens.

It was blocky, like a box cover; and had a dark glass in the top. Above it, Van Bryck drew up an oval shaped telescopic tube.

Farradon opened the lead casket. Harry saw a small quantity of blackish powder in a thimble-like cavity. Farradon put the dark lens over the hollow. He looked down through the oval tube, as a photographer would, about to snap a camera.

Farradon's chuckle told that he was pleased by what he saw. Van Bryck took away the dark lens. Farradon returned the casket to Dorth.

"The powder has retained full intensity for one month," declared Farradon. "You may proceed with the manufacture of the required quantity. How long will you need, professor?"

Farradon was lighting another cigarette, when Dorth answered: "At least three months."

"Very well," decided Farradon. Then, in sharper tone: "Remember, though, that I have already paid you two hundred and fifty thousand –"

FARRADON clipped his words short, when Dorth gave a warning gesture. Farradon noticed Harry; Dorth bridged the gap by coolly introducing his new secretary. Politely, Dorth invited Farradon to come up to the study. The two left promptly.

"Farradon is a friend of Rune's," was Van Bryck's prompt comment to Harry. "That's why he is allowed here. The professor let him seal up the powder a month ago, to test its radioactive duration for himself. We keep the powder in a lead casket, the same as they do with radium."

Van Bryck locked the wooden box in the safe. He picked up Farradon's emptied cigarette pack; crumpling both the paper and the inner foil, he tossed the wad into a wastebasket. He suggested that Harry go with him to the living room.

Though it was an hour until sunset, the living room was almost dark. Tardon was fixing a fire in the grate; Van Bryck told him to light the lamps. Just then, Dorth and Farradon arrived from the study.

Van Bryck stepped into the hallway; he plucked Farradon's light overcoat from a rack by the front door.

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As he helped Farradon slip his arms into the coat, Van Bryck looked toward the floor. He stooped to pick up something.

"A pack of cigarettes, Mr. Farradon," remarked Van Bryck. "It fell from your overcoat pocket."

"An extra pack?" queried Farradon. "I did not know that I had one."

Farradon took the pack and dropped it in his pocket. Professor Dorth saw him out through the front door, with Van Bryck following.

Seated in the darkness of the living room, Harry Vincent was deep in thought when he heard the whine of Farradon's departing automobile.

At last, certain facts were plain to Harry. He knew why Professor Dorth had so obligingly sold his invention rights to Prescott Rune for a paltry two hundred thousand dollars. He knew also why Dorth was so competent to deal with a swindler like Ursus Jadway.

Professor Dorth was himself a swindler. That fact had escaped Harry down in the laboratory, when James Farradon had started to mention the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Farradon, like Rune, was a purchaser of full rights to Professor Dorth's radioactive powder.

Farradon was sharper than Rune; yet both had been bluffed by Dorth. Each had bought an invention that had been sold to the other; and Farradon, the wiser of the two, had paid the higher price.

Van Bryck was supporting Dorth in the crooked game. The technician had tried to cover up the slip by telling Harry that Farradon was a friend of Rune's; the statement had been a clever bluff, but Harry knew it for a lie.

Harry gained new suspicions. Perhaps there were others, besides Rune and Farradon, to whom Dorth had sold rights. Possibly the invention was a fake, despite the test to which Farradon had put it. What puzzled Harry was how the game would end. Eventually, he supposed, swindled men would find out the truth; then there would be trouble for Professor Lycurgus Dorth.

Confident that The Shadow would soon arrive here, Harry resolved to leave that problem to his chief. Harry's own part, he decided, would be to keep up a good front meanwhile; to pretend that he had not caught on to Professor Dorth's schemes.

Ignorant of the fact that Prescott Rune was already dead, Harry did not realize the depths of Professor Dorth's mad, insidious schemes.

Murder was the method by which Dorth had planned to rid himself of troublesome claimants for his supposed invention. Last night, Prescott Rune had been sent forth from this house to die. Tonight, the same fate was in store for James Farradon.

There was urgent need for The Shadow's prompt arrival at this house where doom was fostered.

CHAPTER V. THE BROKEN TRAIL

AT the time of Farradon's departure from Dorth's mansion, Ursus Jadway was crossing the side veranda of the Hillside Country Club, after a second eighteen holes of golf. Seated upon the veranda was a silent personage whom Jadway did not observe. The Shadow was awaiting Jadway's return from the golf course.

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Jadway was accompanied by other members of a foursome; the group was bound for the locker room. It was half an hour before Jadway reappeared with two of his friends.

The trio seated themselves on the veranda and ordered drinks. One man unfolded an evening newspaper that he had obtained in the club house.

The Shadow was close enough to observe the group. In his guise of Cranston, he looked like a chance member of the Hillside Country Club. Watching Jadway, The Shadow saw the bull-faced swindler eye the newspaper that one of the other men held. Apparently, Jadway noted a conspicuous headline; for he leaned sideways to view the outspread sheet. The other man spoke.

"Here's odd news!" came the exclamation. "A strange death reported at the Hotel Moreland. Wealthy man from the Middle West found dead from radium burns."

"What was his name?" inquired Jadway. "How did he happen to be carrying radium around with him?"

"His name was Prescott Rune," replied the man with the newspaper, "but the radium angle seems to be unfounded. The headlines shout about radium burns; but no radium was found on the dead man."

The Shadow saw relief on Jadway's face; then puzzlement. Jadway gulped the remainder of his drink; then drew a big cigar from his pocket.

Watching Jadway's flattish profile, The Shadow analyzed the thoughts that were in the swindler's mind.

Jadway had guessed this morning that something was wrong, when Rune did not answer his telephone call. He had probably not supposed that Rune was dead. Jadway's logical reaction was to think that Rune had gained suspicion of a swindle scheme, and was dodging it. On that account, Jadway had shied away from trouble.

Here, on the veranda of the Hillside Country Club, Jadway had gained his first news of Rune's death. He listened for more details.

"Somebody came to Rune's hotel at midnight," read the man who held the newspaper. "He wanted to see Rune; but Rune's telephone wasn't answered. There was a telephone call this morning, for Rune. The police think the same man made it."

Jadway shrugged his shoulders, as though his interest in the matter had passed. His bluntness regained, he arose.

"I'm driving over to the Regatta Club," informed Jadway. "There's some sort of a shindig there tonight. I'll call you fellows tomorrow, to arrange another golf game."

Jadway entered the club house and made a telephone call. Strolling past the club house door, The Shadow saw the swindler come from the booth and sit down to read a magazine. The Shadow took an obscure chair on the far side of the veranda.

THIRTY minutes passed. The sun had set; long streaks of dusk were stretching across the golf course, when a black sedan pulled up in front of the club house. A few minutes later, Jadway came out and entered his sporty roadster.

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Gloom was shrouding the veranda rail beside The Shadow. Easing across the rail, The Shadow went to his own car, which was in a parking space at the side.

The Shadow circled the club house. His route was timed to perfection. He saw Jadway's roadster rolling along the main driveway. The Shadow followed, keeping his trim coupe at a set distance behind Jadway's car.

It was an odd pursuit, for Jadway seemed in no hurry. He turned on his dim lights as he took the road toward Long Island Sound. The Shadow copied the move, a few minutes later; but with his lights on, he let Jadway gain more distance.

Peering into the rear-view mirror of the coupe, The Shadow saw something that he expected.

The black sedan had taken up the coupe's trail.

Traveling without lights, that car was unquestionably filled with men whom Jadway had summoned. Ordinarily, the swindler had no need for a cover-up crew; but he had been wise enough to have one always in reserve.

Under suspicion of Rune's murder, Jadway was running no chances. He intended to have thugs on hand to aid him, should he be challenged anywhere or any time.

The Shadow gave Jadway's car more leeway. Knowing the route from Harry's reports, he decided to look for suspicious spots along the way, rather than tag the roadster too closely. That might deceive the cover-up crew.

Slackening speed, The Shadow saw Jadway's tail-light disappear into a clump of woods.

During the next mile, The Shadow saw no sign of the roadster; nor were there any turn-offs along the road. There was one point where the highway turned sharply. There, The Shadow's headlights showed an old barn at the turn of the road.

Just after The Shadow's speedometer had clicked a mile and two-tenths, a warning sign glistened in the headlights. It marked a crossroads – a place where Jadway could have turned. Ordinarily, The Shadow would have paused to consider the best route, but he suddenly found good reason not to linger.

Headlights burned brilliantly from behind him. There was a roar of a swiftly gaining car. It was the black sedan, no longer playing its game of hidden observation.

As The Shadow kept straight on at the crossing, the brilliant lights tagged close to the rear of his car. It was plain that the sedan intended to trail the coupe closely from this point onward.

THE stunt would have been a good one, had The Shadow not known that the sedan was trailing him. Because of his knowledge, The Shadow divined the game.

Somewhere within the past mile, Jadway had managed to leave the main road. The Shadow's trail was broken. He had need of another move to trick the pursuing sedan.

Slightly increasing his speed, The Shadow watched the road ahead. After another mile, he saw what he wanted: a filling station on the right side of the road.

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The Shadow swung the coupe into the station, pulled up beside a gasoline pump and let the pursuing sedan roar past. He saw the other car disappear beyond a turn.

The service station man came from a little wooden shack. The Shadow ordered him to fill the coupe's tank with gasoline; to check the oil and water, and to put air in the tires. While the attendant set to work, The Shadow removed his small bag from the car and strolled into the little shack.

Choosing an obscure corner, The Shadow opened the bag; from it, he took cloak, hat and gloves. Swiftly, he donned his black garb; then chose a small rear window through which to leave the shack.

In darkness, The Shadow moved to the far edge of the little building. The ground was blackened, except for the lighted space in front of the service station. Avoiding that illuminated area, The Shadow glided invisibly toward a clump of bushes near the edge of the road.

He had not long to wait. Soon, he heard the approach of sneaky footsteps. Two men edged up in the darkness; they paused less than six feet from where The Shadow stood. The invisible listener heard their low whispers, as they watched the service station attendant, busy with The Shadow's car.

"The mug ain't in his bus, Caulkey," observed one of the two thugs. "Guess he's gone into the little house."

"I'll lamp the joint, Rip," returned "Caulkey." "You stick here. Get ready when he comes out. Hop on the running board and bean him. If the gas station guy don't wise to nothing I'll join you."

"Yeah. And when we go past Silk's sedan, I'll give the blink so's he'll know we've took the mug with us."

"O.K., Rip."

Caulkey moved away, followed the edge of the lighted space, just as The Shadow had done. Waiting in the darkness, The Shadow remained close to "Rip." From the brief conversation, The Shadow had learned various facts.

From the reference to "Silk," he had guessed the identity of the ruffian who headed the band of thugs in the sedan. A crook named Silk Marron had recently disappeared from Manhattan, taking a crew of picked "gorillas" with him. Obviously, this outfit was in the employ of Ursus Jadway.

Trailing The Shadow's coupe, Silk had stopped the sedan just past the turn in the road. He had sent Caulkey and Rip back to reconnoiter; to bag the occupant of the coupe and carry him away in his own car. It would be up to the thuggish pair to dispose of their victim, while Silk Marron went his own way with the remainder of the band.

UNWITTINGLY, Silk Marron had played into The Shadow's hands. That fact was proven soon after Caulkey began his foray toward the service station. Rip saw Caulkey edge past the shack; a moment later, the watching hoodlum heard a whispered laugh almost in his ear.

Wildly, Rip spun about in the darkness. It was the very move that The Shadow wanted.

A long arm hooked Rip's elbow and circled the thug's neck. Viselike fingers gripped Rip's throat. Powerful shoulders hoisted the hoodlum upward, twisted him and flattened him back downward upon the turf. Rip's head took a jolt, The thug subsided.

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Searching Rip's pockets, The Shadow found a roll of adhesive tape. He plastered a strip over Rip's mouth, rolled him face downward and bound his wrists with his own belt.

Caulkey was returning by the time The Shadow had finished the job. The second thug sneaked into the bushes; hearing a stir, Caulkey whispered:

"The mug ain't in the shack! C'mon out to the road, Rip –"

Blackness avalanched upon Caulkey. The Shadow sprawled the thug beneath the bush; caught his arm in a warning twist. A gloved hand plastered tape over Caulkey's mouth. The crook had suspenders instead of a belt, so The Shadow used them as bonds.

Gathering revolvers and blackjacks from the underworld pair, The Shadow returned to his car. When the service station attendant approached, The Shadow had one hand ungloved. He thrust a pair of dollar bills into the man's hand; told him to keep the change. The coupe was off before the fellow had a chance to look for the driver's face.

Swinging the turn, The Shadow saw the glisten of the black sedan. He blinked the coupe's lights. By the time he reached the end of a straight stretch, the coupe was coming along. Silk Marron believed that Caulkey and Rip had made their capture.

Turning into a side road, The Shadow extinguished lights and let the sedan pass. Returning to the highway, he reversed his route. He passed the service station and the crossroads, until he reached the mile stretch where Jadway could have disappeared. The Shadow stopped his car, facing the abandoned barn that marked the sharp curve.

On the hard ground, The Shadow saw faint traces of tire marks. He could see a purpose that the barn might serve, it could be a special camouflage to throw off trailers. A device intended for emergencies; therefore the sort that Jadway would use in tonight's pinch.

But there would have to be someone in the barn. Otherwise, Jadway would have had to pause to open the door.

TURNING off the lights, The Shadow crept from the coupe. Near the barn, he heard a slight scrape from the door. Someone had slid it slightly open, to watch the darkened coupe.

Drawing back, The Shadow drove his right fist shoulder high, straight for the opening. The punch ended with a jolt.

There was a thump inside the door. Edging in, The Shadow used a flashlight to reveal a groggy, rough clad man upon the barn floor. The Shadow had found the side of the watcher's jaw. The fellow had slumped when he received the punch from outside darkness.

The Shadow bound this new prisoner with chicken wire, which was strewn about the old barn floor. He used the last of Rip's adhesive tape to gag the watcher. Stowing the man in an empty stall at the side of the barn, The Shadow slid back the big door.

He went out to his coupe, turned on the lights, and drove the car into the barn. He closed the door behind him.

Reentering the coupe, The Shadow looked ahead. The glare of the lights showed what he had expected. The rear of the barn was partially demolished; it showed a space sufficient to allow the passage of an automobile.

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Beyond was a broad expanse of barnyard; then a broken fence. The Shadow saw the ruts of an old road that led off through the trees, evidently to some highway.

The Shadow had uncovered a clever device used by Ursus Jadway when the swindler feared followers during a journey to Professor Dorth's secluded mansion.

A man, stationed in the barn, had been ready for a distant signal from Jadway's approaching car. He had slid the door open for Jadway's entrance; closed it the moment that the swindler's car had entered.

Jadway had gone through, leaving Silk Marron and his henchmen in the sedan to take care of any suspicious followers. His trail broken, Jadway had continued his course to the house upon the hill.

The Shadow, however, had discovered the broken trail. Though he had not yet learned of Professor Dorth's strange mansion, he was soon to do so. As he followed the rutty road behind the barn, The Shadow came to a stretch of narrow but well-paved highway. Taking it, he ascended a slope; a treeless stretch gave him a chance view of a distant hill.

Moonlight had come from the horizon. It was sufficient to reveal high levels of ground that were silhouetted against the eastern sky. In the distance, The Shadow saw the outline of Dorth's gray-walled house.

The old mansion was the only habitation in this portion of the lonely countryside. Sensing the importance of the distant house, The Shadow chose it as his goal.

CHAPTER VI. HARRY LEARNS TOO MUCH

DESPITE the fact that The Shadow had uncovered his trail, Ursus Jadway had gained considerable distance on his pursuer. The Shadow had lost time in returning to the trail. Moreover, he was handicapped in his choice of torturous roads that might lead him to the mansion on the hill.

Hence Jadway arrived at Dorth's with nearly half an hour's leeway. Pulling up beneath the porte-cochere, the bull-faced swindler alighted and pounded the big knocker on the front door.

Bolts gritted; the door opened Tardon peered out to view the visitor. With a curt bow, the apish servant admitted Jadway.

Two men were seated in the gloom of the living room when Jadway passed. Those two were Harry Vincent and Van Bryck. They heard Jadway speak to Tardon while walking through the hall. Thus both recognized the visitor, despite the fact that they could scarcely see Jadway's figure in the gloominess of the hall.

To Harry, Jadway's arrival was a fortunate occurrence. It promised opportunity to learn more of Professor Dorth's methods.

Although Harry felt sure that Dorth could not expect to swindle Jadway as he had Rune and Farradon, it was certain that the professor would have to bluff this rival swindle artist. Harry had seen evidence of such bluff on Jadway's previous visit.

Unfortunately, Harry did not expect an invitation to the conference between Dorth and Jadway; nor could he think of any excuse for a visit to the professor's turret-shaped study.

Minutes passed while Harry sat before the fire, wishing he could overhear the conversation between Dorth and Jadway. Van Bryck was seated beside a table, jotting chemical formulas in a notebook. Suddenly, the

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technician arose and delivered a pleased exclamation.

"I've discovered something, Vincent!" exclaimed Van Bryck. "The very chemical solution that Professor Dorth requires! One of our problems has been the handling of radioactive substances. What we have needed has been a proper solvent for lead. I have made liquid compounds in the past, and have dipped gloves in them. But the cloth has always stiffened and cracked when dry.

"This new formula will work! It offers the proper amount of lead content, yet the treated cloth will remain flexible. Professor Dorth will be pleased when he sees the result. I am going to the laboratory at once."

Rising, Van Bryck glanced at his watch; then added:

"If Professor Dorth should inquire for me, tell him that I shall be in the laboratory for at least the next half hour."

VAN BRYCK departed from the living room. Harry heard the dying echoes of the technician's footsteps. Eagerly, Harry arose and crept out to the deserted hall. Now was his opportunity to visit Dorth's study.

Once in the hallway, Harry gazed keenly in every direction. Satisfied that the catlike Tardon was not about, Harry stole along the passage that led to the study, moving rapidly each time he came to a lighted spot; pausing momentarily amid patches of darkness. He reached the square-walled anteroom outside of Dorth's study. There, Harry paused.

The study door was ajar; from its edge came a streak of light. Listening, Harry could hear the murmur of voices within the brilliant, round-walled room.

Step by step, Harry advanced. When he reached the door, he paused. The voices were audible. Harry risked a look through the openings.

He saw Professor Dorth behind his desk, facing Ursus Jadway on the opposite side. The two were engaged in discussion; neither was gazing in Harry's direction. Harry held his position and listened intently.

Professor Dorth was speaking. The old inventor's tone had a dryish crackle that was delivered in sincere fashion.

"I ASSURE you again, Mr. Jadway," declared Dorth, "that I am distressed to learn of this death. I regarded Prescott Rune as a personal friend, even though I had scarcely ever seen the man."

"But what about those radium burns?" demanded Jadway, gruffly. "How did Rune get them?"

"I sent him a sample of my radioactive powder," returned Dorth. "He examined it and sent it back. I warned him that it must be handled carefully; that it must be carried in a lead container. Rune, apparently, neglected to follow my instructions."

"There was no radium found on his body –"

"Of course not! The powder had been returned. Rune's death was due to after-effects. It is what we term a post-radium poisoning."

Jadway grunted; then commented: "It's odd the police didn't think of that theory."

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"Not at all," assured Dorth, in his dry tone. "They are used to considering radium in very small quantities. The amount of radioactive powder that I sent to Rune was far in excess of the usual quantity handled by experts. I assure you again, Mr. Jadway, this was a case of delayed results, due entirely to Rune's own carelessness."

"I'll take your word for it, professor," decided Jadway, rising from his chair. "It's put me in a bad spot, though. You know, of course, that I was the last person to inquire for Rune before he died."

"You told me that, Mr. Jadway. But you also stated that you did not leave your name at the Hotel Moreland."

"That's the only good point about the mess. Naturally, professor, I don't want to put you in a jam. That's why I decided not to talk to the police."

"I understand."

Professor Dorth chuckled slightly as he made the statement. Harry caught the significance. Dorth knew that Jadway could not afford to come in contact with the law. Should the police investigate Jadway's past, they would certainly uncover his swindling career. To charge Dorth with murder would be a mistake on Jadway's part.

Harry could see Jadway's face at the moment of Dorth's chuckle. Jadway looked worried; it was plain that he had not caught the mild sarcasm that Dorth expressed.

A positive thought struck Harry immediately. Jadway had actually fallen for Dorth's bluff. After all, that was not surprising. Jadway, intent upon a swindle scheme, was so concerned with his plans to acquire Dorth's invention that he had failed to guess that the professor was as great a swindler as himself.

"WE must forget Rune," remarked Dorth, sadly. "After all, Mr. Jadway, we may consider Rune as a victim to science. His death was unfortunate, but it should no longer concern us."

"I guess you're right, professor," agreed Jadway, in a tone that showed relief. "Only there's one thing we can't forget. Rune was one of the big-money men on your list of prospects."

"There are others," remarked Dorth. "One man, in fact, may arrive in New York tonight. It would be wise for you to interview him, Mr. Jadway."

Jadway chewed his large lips in nervous fashion. He was becoming jittery regarding Dorth's prospective customers.

"Maybe I'd better wait a while, professor," began Jadway. "On account of Rune's death, you know –"

"There are reasons why you should not wait," inserted Dorth. "The man whom you must interview is named James Farradon. He is visiting a friend in New York. Since I did not know where Farradon would be, I telegraphed his home in Baltimore last night. I told Farradon to call your apartment by telephone after he reached New York."

Jadway gaped. Dorth smiled and added:

"Do not worry about Farradon. He never heard of Prescott Rune. When he telephones you, he will probably give his address. I advise you to go there and see him."

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"But Farradon may have read of Rune's death!" exclaimed Jadway. "That will put me in deeper, professor!"

Dorth shook his head.

"Quite the contrary," he insisted. "When you meet Farradon, you can tell him that neither you nor I ever heard of Prescott Rune. You can add that it would be unwise to even mention Rune's name, because of the adverse sentiment that might be raised in regard to radioactive experiments.

"Farradon is a keen business man, who is probably prepared to invest a large sum in my invention. He will agree with you, Mr. Jadway."

Harry saw a gleam upon Jadway's face. The swindler had taken the bait. He was nodding, to show his agreement with Dorth's plan.

"I'll go right back to New York," decided Jadway. "I stayed away from my apartment today; but my valet is there. He would have tipped me off to any trouble, when I called him up this afternoon. I'll go back to the apartment, to be there when Farradon calls. You're right, professor; it would be wise for me to talk to Farradon."

EVEN while Jadway spoke, a horror seized Harry Vincent. In learning of Rune's death; Harry had guessed Dorth's game.

Dorth had carefully kept Jadway ignorant of the fact that Rune had been in this very house last night. Somehow, Dorth had murdered Rune and had fixed the trail to Jadway. A faint trail, perhaps, but one that had started the police in search of an unknown caller who had stopped in to see Rune at the Hotel Moreland.

As he had dealt with Rune, so would Dorth handle Farradon. Instinctively, Harry realized that another victim was marked for death. Again, the trail would point to Jadway; this time, it would be more apparent than before.

Jadway would be sought by the law. His only course would be flight, to avoid a questioning that would make trouble for himself as well as for Professor Dorth.

Harry felt no qualms regarding Jadway. He was a crook; he deserved to be duped. The horror that gripped Harry concerned James Farradon. Sometime tonight, death would strike him as it had found Prescott Rune. How, Harry could not guess; he knew only that murder was due.

For a moment, Harry was ready to make a dash to the garage for his car. Harry wanted to contact The Shadow; to warn his chief of the harm that threatened James Farradon.

Before he could move, Harry found it necessary to remain within the anteroom. Double circumstances forced his choice. Ursus Jadway was stepping toward the door of the study; Professor Dorth was rising to follow him.

As Harry drew back into the gloom of the anteroom, footsteps sounded from the long passage that led to the front of the house.

Evidently, Van Bryck had cut short his experiments in the laboratory, for Harry recognized the footfalls as those of the technician.

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Realizing that persons would soon arrive from two directions, Harry dived for a deep corner and found a hiding place behind a large chair.

Temporarily, Harry felt secure. Concerned with thoughts of James Farradon's plight, Harry did not consider his own situation. He overlooked the possibility that Van Bryck might have noticed his absence from the living room.

Harry Vincent had learned too much. In so doing, he had overstepped his boundaries. Harry was to learn more; namely, that this old house held threats more real than those of the darkened depths within the walls of gloomy, silent rooms.

CHAPTER VII. THE ROOM OF DEATH

A MOMENT after Dorth and Jadway reached the anteroom, Van Bryck arrived to meet them. The technician nodded to Jadway; then flourished a notebook in front of Professor Dorth.

"Look, professor!" exclaimed Van Bryck. "I've found the formula we wanted. If –"

"One moment, Van Bryck," interrupted Dorth. "We can discuss that matter after Mr. Jadway has gone. Where is Tardon?"

"He was in the hall, sir, when I came through. Ah! Here he is."

Harry, watching from his hiding place, saw Tardon arrive from the passage. In the gloom of the anteroom, the wide-shouldered servant looked more ferocious than ever. Harry saw the apish man display a grin as his name was mentioned.

"Conduct Mr. Jadway to his car," ordered Dorth, speaking to Tardon. "If Glidden has returned from town, tell him that I wish to see him. If he is not back, leave a note for him in the garage. Then return here, Tardon."

The servant nodded; then turned and conducted Jadway along the passage. Dorth turned toward the study door. Van Bryck slapped him hastily.

"It's the lead solution, professor," explained the technician. "I have prepared a new formula –"

"A new one?" queried Dorth. "I thought that the last was satisfactory. You showed me a gallon of the liquid preparation in the laboratory."

"This new formula may prove better," insisted Van Bryck. "If you will look at my notations, professor –"

"Come into the study. The light is better there."

Van Bryck hesitated; Harry wondered why. If he had guessed the reason, Harry would not have felt so secure. At last, Van Bryck decided to follow Dorth into the study. When both had entered, they closed the door behind them.

Harry saw a chance for quick departure, but decided not to take it. He was uncertain about Tardon. If the servant happened to meet Glidden outside, he would return quite promptly; and Harry did not want to encounter him in the hall. It would be better to wait; to let Tardon come back and enter the study. Then the way would be clear.

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Nevertheless, Harry edged from behind the chair. He crept to the center of the anteroom; looked along the passage. He turned toward the door of the study.

A chance thought impelled him to make use of this interval; to peer in upon the conference between Dorth and Van Bryck. Perhaps they might be discussing facts that pertained to James Farradon.

Though the risk was great, Harry tried the knob of the study door. It did not yield; as he increased pressure, it continued to resist. Harry could not understand it. So far as he knew, the door had neither lock nor latch. The knob had never stuck before, and Harry had used the door often.

Whatever the explanation, it was unwise to meddle further. Harry moved away and again waited in his corner. As he lingered, he heard the distant purr of a departing motor. It was Jadway's car, pulling from the front of the house. To Harry, that meant that Tardon's return might be immediate.

OUTSIDE the house, keen eyes had witnessed Jadway's departure. From a space below the mansion, The Shadow was standing beside his coupe. He had reached the top of the hill; he had pulled his coupe into a clearing at the side of the road.

The Shadow moved forward. His eyes were upon the old house. He could discern the peculiar gloom that came from its windows. As Harry had done, The Shadow was visualizing the interior of the long-walled building.

He particularly noted the light that gleamed from the windows of the turret, for those ground-floor openings showed more light than other windows.

Skirting toward the front of the mansion, The Shadow paused. He had observed a singular phenomenon. The light in the front windows of the turret was fading before a creeping blackness, as if some unseen hand were pulling dark shades straight across the openings.

Not only was the occurrence odd because the blackness came across instead of down; it was peculiar because both windows were being shaded at equal speed.

Then came a difference. The window on the right showed light on both sides of the shade that slid across it; but the window on the left became totally obscured. After that, a new blackness crept across the right-hand window, to totally eclipse it. The turret was completely dark.

Seconds passed. Light slid slowly across the window at the left. It was followed by a short space of darkness. Suddenly, both windows began to show an edging glow that increased until they were entirely illuminated.

The Shadow waited a dozen seconds; then continued toward the front of the house.

Despite the fact that he was considering the singular behavior of the study windows, The Shadow was as alert as ever. Just before he reached the protecting roof of the porte-cochere, he heard the crunch of gravel. The sound was so slight that only the keenest ear could have detected it.

The Shadow waited. He saw a slight glow as the front door opened; against it, he discerned the wide bulk of a squatty figure.

It was Tardon. The apish servant had returned to the house; and The Shadow guessed from what spot he had come. Off beyond the mansion, another building was visible beneath the moonlight. It was the garage. Since the man had come from there, The Shadow decided that an investigation would be worth while.

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KEEPING close to the shelter of the house, The Shadow covered the space to the garage. He slid the door slightly to one side, entered the garage and probed its depths with the guarded blinks of a flashlight.

A license number showed on the rear of a stored car. The Shadow recognized it as Harry Vincent's license plate. The Shadow had the explanation of his agent's absence. He knew that Harry could have followed Ursus Jadway here; and gained admittance to the house. There was also the chance that Harry had encountered trouble.

Examining the upholstery of the car, The Shadow found no marks to indicate a past fray. He noted the absence of Harry's suitcase, which indicated that Harry might be a guest in the mansion.

As he turned toward the garage door, The Shadow glimpsed whiteness in the path of his flashlight. It proved to be an envelope, gummed to the interior of the door by means of the flap.

Carefully, The Shadow raised the envelope; found a note within it. The message was a clumsy scrawl, that read:

Prof want to see you in study.

It was obvious that the servant from the house had left the message for a chauffeur. That information gained, The Shadow replaced the note in the envelope. He stepped from the garage and slid the door shut. His flashlight blinks were ended.

For a brief interval, moonlight revealed a gliding, black cloaked shape. Then all signs of The Shadow were gone. He had reached the looming darkness of the mansion.

INSIDE the huge house, Harry Vincent had experienced a new spell of impatience. He was wondering why Tardon had been so long delayed in coming from the garage. Perhaps the servant had found other tasks before returning to Dorth's study.

With that thought in mind, Harry again crept from his corner and peered along the passage. Seeing no sign of Tardon in the gloom, he looked toward the study door. More than before, he had an impelling desire to try the balky knob.

Harry made the test. This time the knob yielded with the utmost ease. Harry edged the door a half inch inward. He saw Professor Dorth seated behind his desk, talking to Van Bryck. Both were engaged in deep discussion; but their voices were subdued to a murmur.

As he strained to listen, Harry suddenly remembered that there was still a likelihood of Tardon's return. He drew the door shut; began to release the knob.

At that instant, Harry sensed movement behind him. He spun about, too late. A bulky figure jumped upon him. Huge, hamlike hands caught his throat and slammed his head back against the study door.

Harry sagged in the clutch of a monstrous foe. His attacker was Tardon. The soft-treading servant had emerged from the gloom of the passage, to fall in tigerish fashion upon an unexpected prey.

The thump of Harry's head was heard within the study. The door popped open. Groggy in Tardon's grasp, Harry saw Dorth gloating from the threshold, with Van Bryck beside him. Dorth clucked a command. Tardon dragged Harry into the round-walled room.

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Immediately, Dorth closed the door. With hopping stride, he made for the space beyond the desk. There, he stooped and raised a strip of wood that ran between the two window ledges. The action revealed a small, hidden switch. Dorth pressed it.

Harry was still in Tardon's grasp, but the apish man was no longer throttling him. Hence Harry saw and noted all that happened.

First, there was a slight click, almost inaudible, from the door of the room. That accounted for the fact that the knob had previously resisted Harry's pressure.

Instantly after the click, the room began to move. Its action was smooth; undisturbed by any noise of hidden mechanism. The motion was circular; startled, Harry realized that the entire room – floor, walls and ceiling – was a massive turntable, working upon a vertical axis.

AS the walls performed their steady circuit, everything in the room remained the same; the only oddity concerned the windows and the door. Harry understood why the doorway was deep, with the door itself at the outside edge. He also saw why the room had deep window sills, with the windows fixed far out.

The room was like a huge cheese box, set within the house walls. The walls of the room were solid, except for cut-out spaces that matched the door and the windows. Through these moving openings, Harry saw the inside surface of rough gray walls. Then, as the room completed a half circle, the motion stopped.

The openings that had fitted the rear windows were now at the front. The spaces formerly at the front windows served those that opened into the courtyard. Each pair of windows were identical. The wall spaces fitted either set.

Naturally, Professor Dorth's desk was at the front of the room instead of the back; the remainder of the furniture had also reversed its position.

The doorway was the most peculiar feature. Instead of opening into the anteroom, it offered access to a space directly opposite. There, Harry saw a small square-walled room, some five feet across.

It was a secret chamber, cunningly contrived; for it actually belonged in the rear annex of the mansion; not in this wing that had once been the end of the house.

The tiny room was filled with a weird, phosphorescent glow. Half slumped to the floor, Harry was close to it, for Tardon had carried him just inside the door and the doorway was now the opening into the secret chamber.

Looking upward, Harry saw that the little room had a thick glass ceiling. That surface served as a mammoth lamp that poured its vivid rays down to the floor.

Professor Dorth pointed. His chuckle was an order. Tardon hoisted Harry; half flung him into the secret room. The evil-faced servant stood glowering from the doorway. Harry knew that resistance would be useless.

"I tolerated your presence here, Vincent," announced Dorth, in a harsh, dry tone, "only because I chose to observe your actions. I believed that you came here as a spy, sent by Ursus Jadway, to learn what might happen between his visits.

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"Perhaps I was wrong. Jadway has enemies. You may be someone sent to watch him instead of me. I have not time to question you upon the subject; probably your statements would be unreliable. Whichever the case, it does not matter.

"If you are serving Jadway, your disappearance will simply hasten his acceptance of the warning that I have decided to impress upon him. If you are serving someone else, that person will suppose Jadway to be responsible for your fate."

DORTH paused. Harry stared upward. The diffused light from the flat glass ceiling was delivering a peculiar, penetrating warmth.

"No one will know your actual fate," remarked Dorth. "I am giving you the punishment that I have delivered to the usual meddlers who have sought to interfere with my chosen methods. To save you trouble, Vincent, I might remark in parting that the glass above you is unbreakable."

Harry still stared at the phosphorescent light. He heard another chuckle from Dorth; this time, it was far from the door. Half rising, Harry looked quickly through the opening, to see Dorth beyond the study desk. With a sliding movement of a bony forefinger, Dorth pressed the wall switch.

Instantly, the study wall began to revolve. Harry came to his feet, ready to leap out. Tardon, at the doorway, drove a long arm through the closing space and thrust Harry's chin backward with his beefy hand.

As Harry sprawled on the floor of the little room, Tardon's hand whisked back to safety. The door space glided shut. All that Harry saw was a circling wall.

On his feet, Harry clutched futilely at a slippery, metal surface. Then came an opening, almost shoulder high. It was one of the window spaces, passing. Tardon was at it; he swung both fists like cudgels, beating Harry back.

As Harry rallied, the second window space came past. Again, Tardon was there with his tremendous hands. Harry warded one thrust; the next one clipped him.

The window space was gone, and Tardon with it. Slippery walls finished their half circuit. Harry pounded uselessly upon the barrier when it stopped. He realized that the blows of his bare hands could not even be heard in the circular room beyond.

Harry's breath came in short gasps; not from exertion, but from the heat which gripped this close-walled room, once all outside connection had been ended. Vainly, he looked up to the glowing ceiling, realized that it would be useless to attack the glass that Dorth had declared to be unbreakable.

For the first time, Harry felt the full power of the glow. He understood the nature of the weird light. These were the burning rays of some radioactive substance, invented by Professor Dorth. They filled every inch of the square room, and their power carried death!

Harry Vincent's sojourn in this evil mansion had reached its final hour. To Harry came the realization that whatever life remained to him would be dependent upon the time required for the murderous rays to deliver burning death.

CHAPTER VIII. BELATED WORD

PROFESSOR DORTH'S revolving study had completed the half circuit that restored it to its normal position. From behind his desk, again at the rear of the room, Dorth chuckled a statement of doom.

"Ten minutes will suffice," declared Dorth. "That treatment will finish our latest trouble-maker!"

"You were wise to set the time switch for twenty minutes," remarked Van Bryck. "Sometimes the heat is slow in gaining full intensity."

"Not when we allow an advance time," reminded Dorth, "as we did tonight, Van Bryck."

"I had forgotten," said the technician. Then, in a dubious tone, he added: "I think, though, it is a mistake to have the time switch in the cell itself."

"Why so?" demanded Dorth. "We have to keep a motor switch there also. Two are as easily concealed as one."

"Both are bad. Suppose a prisoner should find them?"

"Bah! Impossible!" Dorth was emphatic. "They are invisible, Van Bryck, except when the trap is dropped. No prisoner could reach them except with a special instrument."

As Dorth spoke, he drew his hand from his coat pocket to display a thin strip of metal with a hook-like end. The implement was slightly shorter than an eight-inch ruler that lay on the professor's desk. Dorth opened a drawer; tossed both articles into it.

"Open the door, Van Bryck," he ordered. As the technician obeyed the command, Dorth turned to Tardon: "I knew that we could rely upon you, Tardon. You timed your return perfectly."

"It was Mr. Van Bryck who planned it, professor," stated Tardon, in his heavy tone. "We both saw that Vincent was gone from the living room; but it was Mr. Van Bryck who guessed where he had gone."

"And I sent you out to the garage," chuckled Dorth, "before I had a chance to read the statement that Van Bryck had written with his notes. It was just as well, Tardon. Both Van Bryck and I agreed that Vincent would stay in the anteroom until after you came through."

Van Bryck had opened the door and was standing beside it. Dorth arose; remembering the wall switch, the professor turned about and dropped the strip of wood that covered it. Then he approached the door.

"Come, Van Bryck," he ordered. "We shall go to the laboratory. You may as well accompany us, Tardon. You can wait in the front hall for Glidden; to tell him that we have gone to the laboratory."

THE trio moved through the anteroom. Tardon stopped suddenly. His eyes gleamed like those of a puma as he stared toward the darkened corner where Harry Vincent had formerly remained hidden.

"Always wary, eh, Tardon?" queried Dorth. "Some day you may uncover a ghost in this old house. If there are ghosts" – Dorth chuckled maliciously – "there should be many haunting these walls."

"One man hid here," reminded Tardon. "Where one hides, another can do the same."

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"Provided there is any one to hide himself," inserted Van Bryck. "If there is such a person, we can trust you to discover him, Tardon."

Professor Dorth nodded in approval of Van Bryck's statement. Both watched Tardon creep closer to the corner, hands extended, like a huge gorilla in search of prey. Tardon stopped less than five feet from the wall.

Satisfied that no one was lurking in the pitch-black space, the huge servant relaxed. Turning about, he followed Dorth and Van Bryck along the passage to the front of the house.

While footfalls still echoed: there was motion in the corner toward which Tardon had glared. Blackness seemed to materialize, to stretch itself forward and assume a living shape. A cloaked figure reached the dim center of the anteroom. A black-sleeved arm lowered itself to reveal burning eyes beneath the brim of a slouch hat. A fist was visible, gripping an automatic pistol.

The Shadow had come to the anteroom. Like Harry, he had tested the door to the study. Finding it locked, he had waited for a short space, intending to attack the barrier if necessary. Then Van Bryck had opened the door.

Instead of attacking the trio in the room, The Shadow had moved away to darkness; for he had seen that the three were coming from the study. Reaching his chosen corner, he had been prepared for battle, but had preferred to let his enemies go unmolested when Tardon failed to discover him.

The Shadow had heard enough to sense that trouble had come to Harry Vincent; and that the study held the secret of the harm that had overtaken his agent.

Dorth, Van Bryck and Tardon were gone from the passage. Quickly, The Shadow opened the study door. He stepped into the room, which was still illuminated, for Dorth had not turned off the lights. Closing the door, The Shadow stepped promptly to the wall between the two rear windows.

From the anteroom, he had gained a slanted view past Van Bryck's shoulders, to see Professor Dorth drop the strip of wood between the window ledges. Finding the little panel, The Shadow probed for the hidden catch that held it. The strip came upward. The Shadow pressed the switch that he saw beneath it.

THE turntable room began its revolution. The motion did not surprise The Shadow. He had expected it. The peculiar eclipse of the front windows, that he had witnessed from the outside, had given him an inkling of the secret which belonged to this strange room.

When he had come from the garage, to find the front door unbolted, The Shadow had immediately picked this portion of the house as the one spot that needed first investigation.

The locked door of the study had indicated events within. The silent revolution of the room substantiated The Shadow's belief that machinery had been in action at the time he had reached the outside anteroom.

As the room turned, The Shadow saw two window spaces pass the opening at the far side. He glimpsed the scintillating flashes of light from the cell wherein Harry Vincent lay. By the time the room had completed its half circuit, The Shadow was standing by the doorway. A puff of hot air greeted him as the doorway came to a stop.

On the floor of the light-filled cell, The Shadow saw Harry Vincent. The prisoner was crumpled, overcome by the glare of the phosphorescent ceiling lamp.

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Springing into the cell, The Shadow raised Harry and carried him out into the study. He placed his helpless agent in an armchair; lowered the adjustable back so that Harry lay almost flat.

Harry's eyes were closed. His skin was reddish and dry. Despite the heat, he had not perspired. The Shadow recognized the power of the light that formed a roof to the death cell. Its horrible, withering rays were capable of sapping all moisture from a human body. A short while longer, and the life-absorbing glow would have completed its mission of destruction.

How soon Harry would recover, was a question that The Shadow could not answer. His rescue, however, had been in time; for the flush was slowly fading from Harry's skin, and drops of perspiration had appeared upon the forehead above the closed eyes.

From beneath his cloak, The Shadow produced a small bottle filled with a purplish liquid. He pressed the elixir to Harry's lips, but the drops of liquid brought no immediate effect.

Minutes passed. The heat from the horror cell had trebled. The Shadow knew that he had saved Harry from its greatest intensity – the period when a dozen seconds beneath the rays could prove as disastrous as the earlier intervals of minutes. Letting Harry rest, The Shadow turned to watch developments within the cell.

The Shadow was not concerned with the possible return of Professor Dorth. This round-walled room, in its present condition, was a suitable haven. Should Dorth return, The Shadow could use it as a fortress. If Dorth did not come back, The Shadow would be prepared to postpone the issue until later.

To The Shadow, present minutes offered opportunity to witness final occurrences within the room where Harry had been placed. He believed that something would occur after a given time-space; for Dorth had not remained to stop the mechanism when it had run its course.

More minutes passed; The Shadow estimated a full ten from the time when he had drawn Harry from the trap.

Then two lingering minutes, slower than the others, while vivid light blazed from the ceiling, hotter than a desert sun. The cell crackled with the torrid blaze. The air before The Shadow's eyes was wavery. It ended when a muffled click came from the floor of the cell. The glow of the ceiling faded; simultaneously, the cell floor moved.

IMPELLED by a hidden mechanism, the floor dropped downward. Below, plain by the dimming ceiling light, The Shadow saw a stone-walled pit. Dropping to the edge of the cell, he peered to the bottom.

In a dungeon space beneath, he saw the whitish phosphorescence of human bones.

Slanted on one side, a leering skull grinned upward. Another skull showed face downward. The Shadow saw other rounded objects of the same size. He knew that the bodies of more than two victims had been dropped into that terrible pit. Flesh had soon departed from the skeletons of dried and withered victims who had suffered the torture of the radioactive light.

The Shadow saw the fate that had been intended for Harry Vincent. But he did not spend his full time in contemplating the gruesome contents of the pit. The Shadow noted the trap that had swung downward in the floor. He saw that it was heavily hinged; but on one side only.

Another click; the floor was coming upward.

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Bending downward, The Shadow looked beneath the side wall toward which the loose end of the trap was moving. There, he saw the shine of metal; two switches, side by side. Next to them, The Shadow distinguished an object that looked like a bar of metal; against it, set in a notch, an arrow indicator.

The Shadow saw this by lowering his shoulders below the normal level of the floor. He was forced to bob upward and swing clear as the trap came into its usual position. The floor locked. The Shadow tested it with a pound of his gloved fist.

A weird laugh, repressed, came from hidden lips as The Shadow emerged from the cell where only feeble light remained. By the last glow, he could see a narrow space, no more than a quarter inch, between the locked end of the floor and the wall above it. The Shadow knew how the trap had been set.

Stepping to Dorth's desk, he searched and found the metal instrument with the hooked end. He knew that Dorth had used this to probe beneath the cell wall – to pull one switch that would start the light; to set the indicator on a time device that would throw back the light switch and release the trap door for immediate burial of a victim's body.

The second switch was there to control the revolving wall of the study. A useful device; for it would enable Dorth to use the cell as a secret room from which he could depart when he chose. By its use, Dorth could hide away and return the study to normal, open to a search by any chance intruders.

THE SHADOW had gained the facts he wanted. He pressed the switch on the wall behind Dorth's desk. The turntable room revolved; while it moved, The Shadow again approached the limp, motionless form of Harry Vincent.

Raising Harry, he laid him over one shoulder. When the room had completed its circuit, The Shadow opened the door to the anteroom.

Gun in his free hand, ready for chance battle, The Shadow advanced along the passage. At the end he stopped; he heard voices in the front hall. Glidden had arrived; Tardon was speaking to him as they walked toward the far wing of the house. Tardon was telling the chauffeur that he was wanted in the laboratory.

The Shadow stepped silently across the great hall; Tardon and Glidden had passed from sight. The Shadow reached the door and opened it while he dangled the automatic with one finger. He swung Harry past; then closed the door. Before The Shadow was clear of the porte-cochere, he heard the grind of bolts. Tardon had returned to lock the front door.

The night air revived Harry. He spoke feebly as The Shadow placed him in the car below the house. The Shadow gave Harry a taste from the little bottle.

As the coupe coasted down the slope, Harry murmured incoherent words. As the motor purred, near the bottom of the hill, the sound aroused Harry to new effort.

In gasping tone, The Shadow's agent voiced the words:

"Farradon – another victim – like Rune! James Farradon – he came today. Dorth told him – to call Jadway – New York apartment house –"

Harry subsided; the effort had overcome him. With his gasped statement, he had managed to deliver belated word of coming crime.

The Shadow had learned that new death threatened.

CHAPTER IX. NEW TRAGEDY

AT the precise time of The Shadow's departure from the mansion on the hill, two men were seated in the living room of a small penthouse in Manhattan. One was James Farradon, attired in the same frock coat that he had worn during the day.

The other was the owner of the penthouse – a long-faced chap who wore a tuxedo and who held a half-filled glass while he lounged in an easy chair.

Whenever James Farradon made friends, he chose persons of wealth. This penthouse owner was a man who had money. His name was Carton Thurleigh; his principal occupation in life was the squandering of a fortune that he had acquired from a rich uncle.

Farradon had met Thurleigh on a Mediterranean cruise; and had received an invitation to stop at the latter's penthouse whenever he happened to come to New York. This was the first time that he had accepted the invitation.

Farradon, though wealthy, was miserly. He cared little for Thurleigh's company; but he had accepted the idler's invitation to stay at the penthouse because it saved him the expense of a hotel. That was a large item, because Farradon liked luxury. Despite his stinginess, he always stopped at the best hotels.

Thurleigh was the opposite of Farradon. The idler spent money freely; made friends wherever he went. He liked to have guests at his penthouse; Farradon was not the first chance acquaintance whom he had invited here. Thurleigh, however, never let guests interfere with his own plans.

"Sorry, I've got to go out tonight," drawled Thurleigh, from his easy chair. "The place is yours, though, Farradon. Make yourself right at home. Plenty of drinks in the refrigerator, any time you want one."

"Thanks," returned Farradon. "You don't mind if I invite another chap here, to talk over some business?"

"You mean that fellow Jadway? The one you've been trying to get in touch with all evening?"

"Yes."

"Invite him here, if you can get hold of him. Maybe you'd better give his apartment another buzz, right now."

Farradon nodded, deciding that the idea was a good one. From the inside pocket at the left of his coat he produced his gold cigarette case. Opening it, he discovered that he had smoked the last cigarette.

Thurleigh noted it; the idler picked up a cigarette box from the table beside him.

"Have one of these, Farradon."

Farradon started to reach for a cigarette; then shook his head. He did not care for the brand that Thurleigh smoked.

"I have another pack in my overcoat," he remarked. "It will fill my cigarette case. The new supply will be sufficient for this evening."

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FARRADON stepped to a little entry, found his overcoat and brought out a package of cigarettes. He opened it, extracted a cigarette and placed it in his holder. He lighted the cigarette; then continued to open the pack farther.

He stowed all the cigarettes in his cigarette case and slipped the latter back into his left inside pocket.

Crumpling the emptied cigarette pack, Farradon tossed it into a metal wastebasket. It landed there with a slight plunk that made Thurleigh stare from his chair.

The idler watched Farradon pick up the telephone and dial Jadway's number. Farradon held a brief, impatient conversation; then hung up the receiver.

"It was that dumb valet again," he told Thurleigh. "He says that when Jadway arrives, he will give him this address. But the fellow doesn't seem to remember it properly."

"Better keep calling," remarked Thurleigh, rising from his chair. "Well, I'll be on my way. Maybe the party won't amount to much. If it doesn't, I'll come back here."

Thurleigh left the penthouse. Farradon strolled about the living room; stopped by the window to study the glitter of Manhattan's lights. This penthouse offered a magnificent vista that terminated with the broad, twinkling expanse of Central Park.

Mumbling to himself, Farradon calculated the amount that he would have had to pay for a suite of rooms in a hotel that was similarly located.

A dozen minutes passed. Farradon strolled across the living room and picked up the telephone. He hesitated a few moments; then decided to make another call to Jadway's apartment.

Though Farradon did not know it, his life was suspended in the balance. That telephone call was to prove a grim mistake.

Farradon turned the dial. He received a busy signal. Impatiently, he hung up; dialed again. This time, he heard the ring of a bell. A jerky voice answered; it was Jadway's Japanese valet.

"Hello!" Farradon spoke snappily. "Any word from Mr. Jadway?... What's that?... You say he called this apartment twice?"

"What was his idea?... Didn't you give him my address the first time?... What is that?... Ah, you say he is coming here, after he puts his car away? Good!... What? You say he told you that after he made his first call?"

"Then why did he call again?... You don't know, eh?... The telephone number? I see. He asked for my telephone number when he made the second call. Then perhaps I shall hear from him before he comes here..."

FARRADON hung up the receiver; walked toward the window. This was to prove his final mistake. As he reached the window, the telephone rang. Someone had been trying to get the penthouse; Farradon's own call had delayed the incoming one.

Had he still been close by the telephone, Farradon would have found no trouble in answering the ring. As it was, he had thirty feet to go; and that space was to prove formidable.

Farradon paused to extinguish a cigarette in an ash tray. He started toward the ringing telephone; then halted.

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A sudden pain had struck him above the heart. It was like a knife thrust. Farradon winced; then continued his pace toward the telephone. As he reached it, another pain staggered him. He doubled; waited a few moments; finally lifted the receiver.

"Hello." Farradon's voice was weak. "Yes, this is Mr. Farradon... What's that?"

Wincing from another pang, Farradon managed to gasp a response to instructions that came across the wire:

"What's that? Get – get rid of my cigarette case? Take – take it from – from my pocket – at once –"

The receiver slipped from Farradon's fingers. Gripped by another pain, the greedy-faced man sagged against the wall. Dominated by a sudden horror, Farradon thrust his right hand to his left inner pocket. He plucked at the metal cigarette case. It slipped from his touch.

Pangs were overpowering; but Farradon kept on with his effort. He managed to pull the cigarette case halfway from his pocket. A thrust of pain made him quiver; his fingers lost their hold and the cigarette case settled back inside his coat.

That was the end of Farradon's attempt. Clawing the air helplessly, he slumped to the floor and writhed there in agony. In his twists, he knocked over the telephone table. His hoarse shrieks sounded in the mouthpiece of the telephone as it lay upon the floor. With a final cry, Farradon rolled upon his back and lay still.

A click answered from the telephone receiver. The speaker at the other end had hung up. The author of the all-important warning knew that James Farradon was dead.

IT was half an hour before a new sound disturbed the secluded penthouse. This noise was scarcely audible. It came from the door outside the entry. The knob turned; the door opened to show a figure clad in black.

The Shadow had come to this spot of death. Closing the door, he stepped forward to survey the body of James Farradon.

Distorted in death, Farradon's face showed the agony that he had undergone. His worst pangs had come immediately after The Shadow's call. Had Farradon managed to heed The Shadow's instructions, his life would have been saved; for deadly burns had then taken no more than a preliminary effect.

It was The Shadow who had called Jadway's apartment the second time; in disguised tone, he had talked to the Japanese valet, who had mistaken The Shadow's call for another from Jadway. From Harry Vincent, The Shadow had learned of Farradon's cigarette case, while they were riding to the nearest telephone.

All this had been futile. The blame was squarely upon Professor Lycurgus Dorth. The Shadow's next task would be to deal with the murderous inventor. To handle Dorth effectively, it would be wise to offset all details of the murderer's schemes.

One of Dorth's plans was to force a trail to Jadway, so hot that the swindler would deem it wise to flee. There were two ways to counteract that portion of Dorth's campaign.

One was to keep Farradon's death a mystery, thus keeping Jadway temporarily secure, to be dealt with later as a swindler who deserved punishment. The other was to turn Jadway over to the law, thus forcing him to confess what he knew about Dorth.

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Of the two plans, The Shadow chose the first. He knew that Jadway's arrest might be quickly learned by Dorth, in which case the murderer could decamp. It was preferable to keep Jadway free from suspicion, since he had played no actual part in murder.

Thus decided, The Shadow raised the overturned telephone table, placed the telephone upon it and hung up the receiver. Stooping above Farradon's twisted body, The Shadow saw the edge of the gold cigarette case, sparkling in the glow from the living room. He drew the case from the dead man's pocket; turning, he shielded it in the folds of his cloak.

The case revealed no glow; but when The Shadow opened it, he saw a strip of phosphorescent light. That luminous stretch was a single cigarette. The Shadow plucked it from among the others. Turning toward the light of the living room, he held the cigarette between his fingers. It glowed no longer.

Tearing open the cigarette, The Shadow found a quantity of grayish powder, that poured into his gloved palm. The ends of the cigarette were stuffed with tobacco, to cover the powdery substances that lay between.

This was another dose of Professor Dorth's actinium compound. It had done its work, like the powder in the fountain pen that Van Bryck had exchanged for the one that Prescott Rune carried.

THE SHADOW folded the actinium powder in a small piece of paper that he found in the wastebasket. There, also, he saw the wadded remains of Farradon's cigarette pack.

Lifting the wad, The Shadow noted that it was unusually heavy. He found the answer. This cigarette pack had been wrapped with special lead foil.

That inner wrapper had served to retain the actinium rays. The radioactive compound had taken no effect upon Farradon until he had opened the cigarette pack and placed the cigarettes in his case. The rays that could not pass through lead were able to penetrate other metals.

Thus Farradon's death had simply been deferred an essential part of Dorth's policy, since the professor wanted Farradon to remain alive until evening.

The Shadow used a portion of the lead foil to wrap the bit of paper in which he had placed the powder. Though the radioactive effect had dwindled, it was best to keep it ineffective.

As he viewed Farradon's body, The Shadow understood how well Dorth had planned the death. The professor had estimated that it would probably be a while before new murder would be uncovered. By that time, his actinium powder would be as traceless as it had been with Rune.

Just as Dorth had known the type of fountain pen that Rune carried, so had he known the brand of cigarettes that Farradon smoked. Van Bryck had made a perfect switch of fountain pens. Similarly, the technician had easily planted a cigarette pack on Farradon, letting the new victim think that the cigarettes were his own.

Harry Vincent had failed to detect Van Bryck's moves. That was not to Harry's discredit; he had not known that Dorth planned murder for either Rune or Farradon.

The Shadow was ready for departure. He halted, however, before stepping through the entry. The Shadow had latched the door of the penthouse; sounds told him that someone had arrived there. A key was rattling in the lock.

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Gliding back into the living room, The Shadow saw a convenient doorway that led to a bedroom. Stationing himself in darkness, he waited. He heard the door of the penthouse open; caught the sound of footsteps, then an excited cry.

A man came into the light of the living room and stood transfixed as he gazed at Farradon's body.

The arrival was Carton Thurleigh; The Shadow recognized that he must be the owner of the penthouse. Thurleigh had seen Farradon's body the moment that he opened the door; he had swung the door half shut and had bounded forward to study the sprawled form.

Thurleigh's observation was sufficient to tell him that Farradon had met a violent death. The murdered man's face bore signs that told a silent story of his horrible end.

THE SHADOW watched Thurleigh look about the living room. Seeing no one, Thurleigh picked up the telephone. He lifted the receiver; with a shaky finger, he dialed the operator. The Shadow heard him speak:

"Get me police headquarters!"

As he called his brief statement, Thurleigh turned to stare through the entry. The Shadow saw him drop the receiver on its hook; let the telephone drop back upon the table.

Thurleigh's hands came up; shakily, the tuxedoed man backed across the living room. Footsteps followed him. A broad-shouldered, bull-faced man came into view, holding a leveled revolver.

It was Ursus Jadway. The swindler had taken time to leave his car in the garage; after some delay, he had come directly to Thurleigh's penthouse, in order to meet James Farradon. Jadway had found the door open; he had overheard the beginning of Thurleigh's call to the police.

There was a glare upon Jadway's face that marked him as a crook who could resort to more desperate tactics than those used by a swindler. The grip that he held upon his gun was proof that murder would be to his liking.

Steadily, The Shadow drew an automatic from beneath his cloak; leveled his own .45 toward Jadway.

So long as the swindler failed to pull the trigger of his revolver, he would live. Should he attempt to riddle Thurleigh, Jadway would die. The Shadow was prepared to deliver halting bullets the instant that Jadway's trigger finger showed a quiver.

CHAPTER X. CROOKS THRUST

"YOUR name is Thurleigh?"

Jadway purred the question as he covered the penthouse owner. The swindler's words were a contrast to his manner. It was one of Jadway's swindle methods, that suave way of talking; but it did not sound effective from a man who brandished a revolver.

Thurleigh, however, had no better choice than to reply. The shock of finding Farradon's body had passed; Thurleigh was calm enough to face Jadway's gun.

"Yes," he announced, "I am Carton Thurleigh."

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"I thought so," remarked Jadway. "So James Farradon was a friend of yours. That's Farradon, I suppose, lying there on the floor."

A sudden gleam came to Thurleigh's eyes. He remembered a reference that Farradon had made to Ursus Jadway. Farradon had stated that he had never met the man who was to come here tonight. Recalling that statement, Thurleigh blurted:

"You are Ursus Jadway?"

Jadway glared. Thurleigh regretted his question. He realized suddenly that it would have been good policy to pretend that he had never heard of Jadway.

"Yes, I'm Ursus Jadway," voiced the swindler. "What else did Farradon tell you?"

"Nothing," stated Thurleigh. "He simply said that he expected you here tonight. That is why he kept calling your apartment. Your Japanese valet was the person who answered."

"Who else did Farradon mention?"

"I told you that he said nothing else. He kept his business to himself."

Jadway considered Thurleigh's statement; decided that the languid man was speaking the truth. After a pause, he questioned:

"Why were you calling the police?"

Thurleigh managed a forced laugh and a shrug of his shoulders.

"After all, Mr. Jadway," he commented, "when a man comes home unexpectedly and finds a guest dead on the premises, he is required to notify the law."

"And just what else," queried Jadway, "did you intend to tell the police?"

This time, Thurleigh thought out a reply.

"I intended to say nothing," he declared, "unless questioned. I suppose, under ordinary circumstances, that I should mention the fact that Farradon telephoned you. If you can offer a good reason why I should not do so _"

"I can do that," inserted Jadway, abruptly. "Frankly, Mr. Thurleigh, my own life has been in danger. That is why I carry a revolver. I had reason to believe that Farradon was in danger; that is the reason for my visit here. Finding Farradon dead – seeing you beside the body – I naturally took you for the murderer."

JADWAY'S statements were jerky; he was thinking them out while he went along. Thurleigh, annoyed by Jadway's charge, made the mistake of a sarcastic remark.

"Naturally, you thought I murdered Farradon," he said. "You found me telephoning the police."

Jadway's heavy brows furrowed angrily. He was maddened by Thurleigh's sarcasm. Fiercely, Jadway queried:

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"You think that I have lied? You think that because I came here, I was responsible for Farradon's death? Perhaps you think that I –"

Jadway stopped short. Thurleigh was moving forward, an eager gleam upon his face. Almost mechanically, the man was uttering the thoughts that had flashed through his brain.

"Murder at the Hotel Moreland!" exclaimed Thurleigh. "Prescott Rune, the dead man who had a visitor! A visitor with bushy eyebrows, the clerk testified – a man with a heavy voice –"

Thurleigh was describing Jadway, and the words made the swindler jittery. Jadway backed away instinctively, despite the fact that he held a gun in his hand. Thurleigh's voice stopped; madly, the languid man leaped for Jadway.

It was a smart move. Thurleigh caught Jadway off guard. Moreover, he showed a speed that Jadway had not expected. Thurleigh was upon the swindler, too quick for Jadway to take new aim. The two locked in a vicious struggle, Thurleigh jabbing Jadway's gun arm toward the ceiling.

As they wrestled, Jadway drove the gun muzzle at Thurleigh's head. Thurleigh dodged; lost his footing. He sprawled to the floor. Leaping away, almost to the center of the room, Jadway aimed toward his sprawled opponent.

A sharp hiss sounded from the side of the room. Looking up before he fired, Jadway saw the rounded mouth of an automatic; above it, burning eyes that viewed him from beneath the brim of a slouch hat.

The swindler was faced by The Shadow. Jadway had heard of that formidable foe. He let his revolver clatter to the floor.

The Shadow stepped forward. His whispered tone was sinister. Jadway shuddered as he raised his arms.

"Speak!" commanded The Shadow. "Tell all you know about James Farradon. State why he was here in New York. Tell where he came from; name the cause of his death."

"I'll – I'll talk!" gulped Jadway. "Only – only, I can't tell much. I never met Farradon while he was alive. I didn't –"

Jadway hesitated. Through his brain flashed the very idea that The Shadow had sought to place there. Jadway suddenly believed that The Shadow knew nothing of Professor Dorth and the mansion on the Westchester hill.

Jadway saw sudden advantage through flight. He wanted to bluff The Shadow; to stage a get-away. That was precisely what The Shadow wanted. His intervention had saved Carton Thurleigh; the sooner that Jadway departed, the better. The Shadow was paving the way for Jadway's flight, even though the crook did not realize it.

JADWAY saw only that the path to the door was clear. He began a sideways shift, blubbing as he tried to edge into the entry.

The Shadow let Jadway get clear of the gun muzzle, knowing that the man would bolt when he saw opportunity. Jadway made a more perceptible shift; tightened for a spring toward the door.

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It was Thurleigh who spoiled the situation. The rescued man had risen from the floor. He had seen The Shadow; then he had looked toward Jadway, to observe that the swindler was unarmed.

As Jadway made a final shift, Thurleigh guessed his move. With a shout, Thurleigh sprang forward, just as Jadway darted for the entry.

Again the enemies locked. They came spinning toward The Shadow; they rolled to the floor. Stepping aside, The Shadow placed himself between them and the entry, for it offered the best vantage point. He was ready to let Jadway by, if the swindler managed to get free; but all the while, The Shadow saw a possible menace.

The two strugglers had rolled close to Jadway's gun. There was a chance that one might grasp it.

Jadway made the first clutch and missed. Thurleigh did better. He grabbed up the gun; juggled it with his fingers. Jadway gave a fierce, wild shout. That bullish bellow could have been directed to the doorway, for Jadway was staring straight toward The Shadow. Jadway's cry was more than one of mere alarm.

The Shadow wheeled – not an instant too soon.

As he faced the doorway, The Shadow saw the door swing inward. Tough faces glared from the hall; past the shoulders of two thugs, The Shadow saw a visage that he recognized. It was the face of a dangerous mob leader: Silk Marron!

Ursus Jadway had contacted his henchmen while en route to the penthouse. The swindler had told the strong-arm squad to follow. Silk and the gorillas had arrived in time to hear Jadway's shout. They were on hand with ready guns. They recognized The Shadow as the adversary who blocked their path.

TONGUES of flame ripped through the entry. Red-hot bullets seared from the blasting guns. But Silk and his squad were not the first to fire. The Shadow had opened proceedings with a spurt from his .45.

As he fired, The Shadow faded. His hand, however, held its aim, booming an unerring barrage.

The Shadow's bullets found the two front thugs. They fired as they fell, those evil fighters; but their shots were wasted. Bullets whined above The Shadow's drooping shoulders; the slugs shivered the windows that fronted on Central Park. Jadway and Thurleigh, rolling on the floor, were below the line of fire.

Silk Marron did not wait for a taste of The Shadow's lead. As his shielding henchmen fell away in front of him, Silk made a dive for the hall. Other thugs stampeded toward the elevator. They knew that death awaited them along the narrow passage that The Shadow guarded.

Before pursuing, The Shadow whirled about, to see how matters stood with Jadway and Thurleigh. Jadway had clutched the muzzle of the revolver; he was tugging the gun from Thurleigh's fingers. The Shadow sprang for Jadway, just as the swindler wrested free and came to his feet.

Savagely, Jadway struck at The Shadow with the reversed revolver. Sidestepping, The Shadow aimed. Jadway sprang for the entry. Thurleigh, coming up, acted in a wild, blind fashion. He grabbed the first person in his path: The Shadow.

Sprawling under Thurleigh's blind attack, The Shadow gave a hard lunge with his shoulders, to send the bewildered man rolling across the floor. Jadway had leaped over Farradon's body. At the door, he managed to reverse the revolver, hoping to aim at The Shadow.

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On, hands and knees, The Shadow tongued an automatic blast that splintered woodwork beside Jadway's ear. It was The Shadow's last bullet; but Jadway did not guess it. The Shadow was cagey enough not to reach for a fresh automatic at the moment.

Still seeing a muzzle pointed toward him, Jadway dived away. He ran for the closing door of an elevator; Silk spied him from within and yanked the door open. An instant later, The Shadow swung out from the penthouse door; but Jadway had already gained the elevator and was sliding the metal door shut.

The Shadow fired parting shots with a fresh gun. They flattened against the closed door of the elevator. The dial showed the elevator in descent.

The Shadow did not return to the doorway of the penthouse. He could hear an excited voice within; it was Thurleigh, recovered but weaponless, calling the police. Two bodies lay on the floor of the hall; the forms of those thugs would support Thurleigh's story of the gun fray.

Jadway had escaped, as The Shadow wanted. Unfortunately, the law would be hard upon the swindler's trail, a situation that The Shadow had hoped could be postponed. To offset that, however, would be the fact that Jadway would not delay in flight. He would be smart enough not to return to his apartment.

Confident that Ursus Jadway would have time to manage a get away, The Shadow knew that matters would rest as he wanted them, so far as Professor Lycurgus Dorth was concerned. That was the vital issue. The murderer came first in The Shadow's plea for action.

FINDING a stairway, The Shadow made a speedy descent. This apartment building was a low one, only eight stories in height. The Shadow reached a rear street; he was moving off through darkness when he heard the whine of an approaching radio car, coming to Thurleigh's call.

Jadway and Silk had made good their flight. Professor Dorth, when he learned the news, would feel confident and secure. All was prepared for The Shadow's next visit to the lonely mansion on the hill.

CHAPTER XI. THRUSTS IN THE DARK

MIDNIGHT was long past. Professor Dorth's lonely mansion stood silent beneath the moonlight, a ghostly edifice despite the solidity of its grim, gray walls. Every light within that mansion had been extinguished. The occupants were asleep.

Beneath the moonlight, a solitary figure viewed the old mansion. Cloaked in black, this visitant seemed as spectral as the house which he so carefully observed. He looked like a ghostly being, come to haunt the mansion of murder.

The Shadow had returned, prepared for a sojourn within Dorth's stronghold. His car lay hidden near a road at the bottom of the hill. The Shadow had crept up the slope on foot. His present pause was made with purpose. The Shadow was studying the old house, looking for the best mode of entry.

Outside walls offered no direct opportunity; for their windows were barred. The Shadow knew, however, that there were inner windows facing the courtyard. They would probably offer a means of entrance, if they could be reached. Therefore, The Shadow's task was to scale the outside wall.

Darkness sheltered the near side of the house, for the moon had passed beyond the grim building. The near side, in which the turret was located, was only two stories in height. It offered the shortest route over the roof.

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When he had picked the spot he wanted, The Shadow advanced. He reached the point where the turret joined the rear annex.

This connection was made to The Shadow's order. The rounded wall ended against a square end of stone. This offered a triangular space, with surfaces on each side. In total darkness, The Shadow began an upward climb.

At the top, The Shadow rested upon the conical surface of the turret roof. To his right was the wall of the annex, a story higher. Straight ahead was the higher wing on the opposite side of the inner court. It did not quite block the light from the descending moon; peering downward, The Shadow could see unbarred windows within the courtyard.

The junction between rounded turret and square-ended annex was the same within the courtyard as on the outside wall. Easing from the turret roof; The Shadow began a steady descent.

His form was only momentarily visible in the moonlight; Once within the triangular wall space, The Shadow became a blotted shape. When he reached the courtyard, he was in a blackened pit, free to move at will.

THE SHADOW chose a basement window at the rear of the building. From statements made by Harry Vincent, he knew that the laboratory was located there. The Shadow found grated windows; but the fastenings were loose. Dorth had evidently deemed it unnecessary to make continued inspection of gratings that were located within the courtyard.

In total darkness, The Shadow silently loosened the bars. The job was perfect; when he pressed the laboratory window inward, he was able to draw the grating shut behind him and jam its rusted fastenings into place. He closed the window; found a shade above it. He drew the blind; then moved about the laboratory and pulled down other shades.

Using a flashlight, The Shadow found a light switch. He pressed it; the laboratory filled with light. The Shadow began an inspection of Dorth's mechanical equipment.

After examining the machines that Harry Vincent had seen, The Shadow came to a workbench. Upon it, he saw a pair of cloth gloves that had once been white; their present color was a dull, silvery gray.

The gloves were dry; they were flexible under The Shadow's touch; but when he lifted them, The Shadow found them heavy.

Van Bryck's talk of a chemical formula had not been mere bluff. The technician had actually given these gloves a protective treatment in a lead solution, so that they could be used in the handling of radioactive substances.

Looking below the workbench, The Shadow saw a rounded jar with a flat glass top half off it. The jar was nearly filled with a dull-colored liquid.

Dipping a black-gloved finger into the solution, The Shadow raised it to the light. The liquid slowly penetrated the thin cloth; it dried while The Shadow watched it. It did no more than give a slightly grayish shimmer to the blackness of The Shadow's glove.

Moving away from the workbench, The Shadow looked along the laboratory shelves. He found labeled bottles, discovered lead containers; but these were empty. He approached the safe in the corner; removed his left-hand glove and tested the combination with long, sensitive fingers.

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This old-fashioned safe was easy to The Shadow's expert touch. It swung open within three minutes.

Inside, The Shadow found the wooden box, no longer sealed. He took out its lead casket, opened it and studied the powder that was inside. Shielding the front of the safe, The Shadow gained enough darkness to view the powder as effectively as with a dark lens. He turned the casket; tilted it, to let the powder shift.

The Shadow laughed softly; his mirth was muffled by the confines of the safe. He noted that the glow of the powder was like a nebula, that shifted every time he jarred the casket. As he closed the casket and replaced it, The Shadow had the complete answer to the methods used by Professor Lycurgus Dorth.

THE old inventor was unquestionably a genius, who had a full knowledge of radioactive compounds and their reactions. He had developed actinium compounds that could kill – as demonstrated in the cases of Rune and Farradon. His light, in the secret room off the study, was also a deadly device; dependent, probably, upon a compound of thorium, a radioactive element more sustained than actinium.

But Professor Dorth had discovered nothing that could compare with radium. His talk of a synthetic powder was pure fake. The contents of the lead casket consisted of a pulverized compound into which Professor Dorth had introduced a mere speck of true radium. The valueless powder absorbed the radium emanations and thus produced a glow that could continue for months or years.

James Farradon had fallen for the game simply because he had thought the entire quantity of powder to be radioactive. He had been wise enough to know that Professor Dorth could not possibly own a quantity of radium equal to the amount of powder in the casket.

Farradon had not guessed the real facts. The Shadow had discovered the truth by his experiments with the casket. He had shifted the minute bit of radium and had seen the center of the glowing powder change.

Dorth had duped Prescott Rune; had swindled him of two hundred thousand dollars. He had bluffed James Farradon to the tune of a quarter million. Both men had thought Dorth honest; they had kept their transactions secret. Dorth had ended their lives to cover up his crookedness.

Since Dorth had swindled two victims, it was quite likely that there could be a third; perhaps even more. That was why the old inventor remained in his secluded mansion. Spider-like, he was waiting for new victims to enter his web. Other dupes would come here, to be sent away to a mysterious death.

Rune and Farradon had arrived on successive days. Tomorrow, a third victim would probably appear. That was the time which The Shadow must await. He wanted to do more than finish Dorth's career of crime.

The Shadow was anxious to learn the identity of a prospective victim whose case resembled these of Rune and Farradon. Such a man, if free to tell his story to the law, would be able to expose Dorth's past. The deaths of Rune and Farradon would be laid to the villain who had contrived the murders.

To remain in this mansion would be a simple task, except for one factor. That was Tardon. The huge, ape-faced servant was a veritable watchdog. He had nearly spotted The Shadow in the darkness of the anteroom, earlier tonight. Chances were that wherever The Shadow prowled, Tardon might appear.

THERE was one hiding place where the apish servant would never look. That was the secret death-room, beyond the wall of Dorth's turntable study. That room, however, was scarcely a suitable hiding place for The Shadow. Once within it, he could never know when Dorth came into the study.

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It would be better to look for other hiding places; to be prepared to move from one to another, outwitting Tardon if the man became suspicious. As preliminary to this policy, The Shadow decided to roam the house; to choose prominent points for his campaign of secrecy. Ready for such procedure, he extinguished the laboratory lights and raised the shades.

Moving from the laboratory, The Shadow stole along the first floor corridor of the three-story wing. He used his flashlight guardedly. He found several spots that offered useful haven. One was a closet beneath an old stairway. Another was a short entry that led to a barred side door.

Reaching the living room, The Shadow found deep recesses at each side of the fireplace. These were excellent hiding places. Even with a fire burning, no glow would reach to those obscure and inconspicuous depths.

Moving through the darkened hallway, The Shadow silently ascended a stairway to the second floor. Feeling his way through darkness, he met closed doors. He discovered one that was partly opened. It led to a long corridor. When opened, the door offered a hiding place behind it. This was a valuable discovery.

Midway along the passage, The Shadow halted. His keen ears had heard the creak of a floor board. The Shadow listened; he caught a closer sound. Ominous silence followed; during it, The Shadow pressed against a wall, found a door and silently opened it.

Probing with one hand, he touched a wall. The space was an empty clothes closet between two rooms. The Shadow closed the door, all but a tiny crack. He listened.

There were no more creaks. Instead, there was a sudden click. Lights came on along the hall, revealing the very spot where The Shadow had so recently been. The Shadow heard a loud grunt from the front of the corridor. Immediately, a door opened from somewhere along the hall. A gruff voice questioned:

"What's up, Tardon?"

There was a reply from the front of the corridor. It came in Tardon's voice; he was the man who had turned on the lights and delivered the warning grunt.

"Somebody's in the house," growled Tardon. "Get the rest of the men while I tell the professor."

THE SHADOW heard footsteps in the corridor; he peered from the clothes closet to see a brawny ruffian in trousers and pajama jacket, pounding upon a door. The man moved along and hammered at another barrier.

The Shadow was learning facts that Harry Vincent had not uncovered. Tardon was not the only servant in this mansion. Dorth had a staff of at least five more.

Mumbled voices sounded from rooms. The pounding man called through a doorway:

"This is Dombrey. Get up, everybody! Tardon thinks some guy is in the house!"

Dombrey's back was toward The Shadow. Chancing a look to the front of the hall, The Shadow saw that Tardon had gone to summon Dorth. Across the hall was a stairway, the same one that The Shadow had seen on the ground floor. It was better than the clothes closet.

The Shadow glided across before Dombrey turned about. He was at the stairs when Dombrey finished pounding on a door.

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The Shadow's first thought was to go downward; but before he could take a single step, a voice called from below. It was Van Bryck. The technician slept on the first floor. Van Bryck was coming up; he had heard Dombrey pounding on the doors above.

Quickly, The Shadow took a stairway that led up to the third floor. He reached a turn and waited.

Many voices babbled. From the confusion finally came a harsh command. It was Dorth's voice; the old inventor had come at Tardon's call. Dorth was overruling objections offered by Van Bryck and Dombrey.

"Tardon may have imagined he heard someone," declared Dorth. "Any trifling noise would arouse him, as you say. But if he heard someone in this corridor, there's only one way the person could have gone. That is to the third floor."

Growls of approval; then Van Bryck's comment:

"This side stairway is the only way up. If any one is there, we can trap him."

"Right!" agreed Dorth. "Let Tardon go first. The rest of you follow."

Quickly, The Shadow moved up to the third floor. He had time for a quick flashlight glow, enough to show him that Van Bryck was correct. This floor had a corridor and several rooms; but it was cut off from the rest of the house.

The Shadow made for a room at the end of the corridor. Moonlight showed a window that opened into the courtyard. Raising it, The Shadow saw a ledge, narrower than the sole of his shoe. Nevertheless, he stepped out. Gripping the top of a little roof above the window, he closed the window itself; then swung to one side.

He was not an instant too soon. Lights came on within the room. Dorth's servants, swarming everywhere, were hard upon The Shadow's trail; though only one of them – Tardon – believed that they were seeking an actual person.

As he clung to the wall that projected from the roof, The Shadow heard the window open. A head and shoulders thrust themselves into view. They were Tardon's. The apish servant was coming out on the roof.

WARNING words came harshly from within the room. Professor Dorth had arrived to witness Tardon's action.

"No need to search farther, Tardon!" called Dorth. "No one would be out there. That ledge is too narrow for safety. Come back here, Tardon!"

The servant did not heed his master's shout. Clear out of the window, Tardon had turned as he gripped the window frame. He had swung straight toward The Shadow. The moonlight showed the black clad intruder against the roof edge.

The Shadow shifted. Tardon saw opportunity. He shot one long arm straight for The Shadow's head; with the other, he grabbed for the beam above the little window. He caught that projection, close beside The Shadow's hand. Odds were with Tardon; his free fist, swinging wide, seemed due to clip The Shadow.

Had The Shadow faded, or tried to duck away, he would have lost his own hold. Instead, he dodged forward, darting his head beneath Tardon's motionless arm, the one that served as pivot for the apish fighter's swing.

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Tardon's clouting fist found emptiness. The Shadow, flattening backward, jabbed his own free hand for the ape-like face. The Shadow, too, was late.

Tardon had put his whole weight into that long, hard thrust. He had counted upon an impact to stop the tremendous stroke. The power of his free arm was too great for the hand that clutched the beam above the window.

Tardon lost his grip; his foot slipped with it. Clawing wildly, he was hurtling outward as The Shadow jabbed.

Luckily, The Shadow had tried a short punch only. Otherwise, he might have overbalanced himself when he missed. He managed to choke his blow; to retain his grip above the window.

As Tardon's squatty body pitched away from the ledge, The Shadow grabbed the window beam with both hands. Disregarding the noise of his scramble, he pulled himself up above the long projection of the window.

Dorth and the others never noticed the scrape of The Shadow's short ascent. All that they heard was a wild yell that trailed down into the courtyard. A terrific clatter sounded as Tardon crashed; with it, a dull, bursting sound: the cracking of the apish man's skull against the cement.

Professor Dorth peered from the window, stared down into the blackened depths where the sprawled shape of Tardon formed a dead mass. Dorth looked along the roof, glanced upward; then pulled his head back into the window. The Shadow heard him speak to his followers.

"The fool!" expostulated Dorth. "You heard me tell Tardon to stay off that ledge. There was no one out there. This is a fine end to a useless chase! Tardon imagined too much; he paid for it."

WITH this epitaph to his murderous servant, Dorth snapped instructions to Dombrey, telling him to go downstairs with the others and bring in Tardon's body. Footsteps departed from the room.

After a brief silence, The Shadow swung down from atop the window roof and slid back through the opening.

Soon there was noise in the courtyard. Voices echoed while Dombrey and his companions were carrying Tardon's dead body indoors. The Shadow waited until the house was stilled, then stole along the third-floor corridor and descended the stairs.

He reached the laboratory; there, he removed his hat and cloak in darkness. Beside them, he laid automatics and other articles that he carried. For a while, there were slight sounds in the laboratory, while The Shadow moved about. Finally, all noise ceased.

The Shadow had chosen a corner where he could take a cat nap until dawn.

Van Bryck, Dombrey, the others in Dorth's employ – none afforded worry to The Shadow. He knew that he could easily remain hidden from those blunderers. Tardon had been the only obstacle to The Shadow's campaign of secret sojourn within this mansion.

Through overzeal, Tardon had obligingly eliminated himself as a menace to The Shadow's plans.

CHAPTER XII. DORTH MAKES PLANS

MORNING dawned cloudy; by mid-afternoon, a drizzle had begun. Professor Dorth's mansion was half obscured by mist; its interior was as gloomy as at night. Rooms and corridors were lighted; but, as usual, the

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glowing lamps were feeble amid the huge expanses of the great house.

Dombrey was stationed in the large front hall. He had taken over the duties of Tardon. There was a contrast, however, between the new servant and the old. Whenever Dombrey walked about, his footsteps clattered and brought back echoes from gloomy walls of massive rooms and corridors.

Only two persons had known the secret of silent motion within this mansion. One was Tardon; he was dead. The other, The Shadow, was a silent dweller in the house.

Secrecy had been as simple as The Shadow had anticipated. Dorth, Van Bryck and Dombrey were the only ones who walked about the house; every one of the three gave advance sounds of approach.

During long intervals, The Shadow calmly reclined in an easy chair, stationed in an obscure corner of the living room. When he heard footsteps, he glided to one of the recesses beside the fireplace.

Professor Dorth had spent most of the day in his study; Van Bryck had been busy in the laboratory. The first important break came after three o'clock, when Van Bryck appeared, passed Dombrey in the hall and took the passage toward Dorth's study.

The Shadow heard this from his corner chair, where he was out of sight from the hall. He wanted to follow Van Bryck, but Dombrey was between. Rising, The Shadow moved silently to the door of the living room, to await any temporary departure that Dombrey might make.

While The Shadow watched the burly servant, there was a knock at the front door. The Shadow remained motionless while Dombrey answered the summons. It was Glidden; the chauffeur delivered some mail and a newspaper that he had brought from town. Dombrey closed the front door and bolted it; then started for Dorth's study.

This was The Shadow's opportunity. Silently, he followed.

Dombrey went through the long passage, crossed the anteroom and knocked on the study door. The Shadow was not far behind. He edged into the anteroom, behind Dombrey's back; he glided to a corner and crouched there as the door opened.

Dombrey delivered the mail and the newspaper to Van Bryck; he started to turn away, when a call from the study stopped him.

"Wait, Dombrey!" Professor Dorth spoke from behind his desk. "I may have a message for Glidden. Wait while I look over the mail."

THE SHADOW could see Dorth behind the desk, for Dombrey stepped just inside the study. As the old inventor was opening his letters, he cackled words to Van Bryck.

"Go on, Van Bryck," he ordered. "What is it you were about to tell me?"

"Nothing very important, professor," returned Van Bryck. "It simply concerns the lead solution. I have discovered that it is subject to rapid evaporation."

"Why not?" demanded Dorth. "It dries almost immediately, when applied to cloth."

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"That would not necessarily signify evaporation," objected Van Bryck. "I thought that in pure liquid state, the solution would retain its full quantity. I was wrong."

"How did you find it out?"

"I forgot to cover the jar properly last night. This afternoon, I found the quantity reduced by about fifteen per cent. I would estimate an evaporation rate of about one per cent an hour –"

Dorth chuckled an interruption.

"Never mind the lead solution," he chortled. "Listen to this, Van Bryck. A letter from Price Wadsford."

"He will arrive tonight?"

"Yes, as he promised. He is coming in from Canada. He will arrive on the Green Mountain Express."

Van Bryck delivered an exclamation.

"That's the train that comes down by the branch lines!" he ejaculated. "It makes a flag stop at our own station, Woodbury, at 10:15."

"At 10:18, to be exact."

"How does Wadsford happen to be taking that jerkwater train?"

Dorth laughed.

"I suggested it to Wadsford, the last time he was here," said the professor. "I said that it would be easy for Glidden to meet him at the Woodbury station. Wadsford will have time for a brief visit; after that, he can take the late local into New York."

"A good idea," commended Van Bryck – "having Wadsford come in at Woodbury. Only one bad feature, though. He may have a Pullman stub in his possession."

"We can manage to coax that from him," returned Dorth. Then, turning to the door: "Dombrey, tell Glidden to be on hand. We shall need him."

DOMBREY departed; Van Bryck came toward the door. Dorth stopped the technician with a sudden exclamation. The professor had picked up the newspaper.

"What's the trouble, professor?" queried Van Bryck, anxiously. "Any slip-up on Farradon?"

"No," returned Dorth. "It's about Jadway. The police are after him!"

"For Farradon's murder?"

"Yes! They found his trail sooner than I expected. Look at this, though, Van Bryck. Here's something we didn't guess about Jadway. The fellow has a mob."

Van Bryck stepped to the desk and seized the newspaper. He scanned the front-page column; then whistled.

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"Silk Marron," he commented. "I've heard of that fellow, professor! I guess that Silk and his crowd have traveled along with Jadway. That makes it all the better. Jadway will be regarded as a public enemy. He will be at large for some time to come. Long enough to be blamed for whatever happens to Wadsford."

Dorth was restlessly drumming the top of his desk. A far-away glint had dominated the professor's shrewd eyes.

"The situation is altered, Van Bryck," decided Dorth. "It is possible that Jadway has guessed how I double-crossed him. He may realize that I have reaped profit from his difficulties; that he is the dupe, not I."

"What of it?" snorted Van Bryck. "He won't be able to blab. The police are hot after him."

"He is more than a mere fugitive," declared Dorth. "Jadway has dangerous henchmen at his disposal."

"Which means more men to keep under cover –"

"Exactly!" Dorth pounded the desk as he delivered his exclamation. "What Jadway needs is a hide-out that is large enough for his band. It must also be a place where the police will not search."

"Where can he find it?"

"Right here. This house would suit him perfectly!"

The Shadow saw Van Bryck gape at Dorth's statement. To The Shadow, it came as no surprise. He had already foreseen such a possibility; he had known what Dorth was leading up to, the moment that the professor began his harangue.

"Jadway will realize," declared Dorth, "that I have been clever enough to keep my deeds covered. He will play the fox. I predict, Van Bryck, that Jadway will come here tonight. He will be mealy-mouthed, pretending that nothing has happened to him."

"I doubt it," began Van Bryck. "Jadway will surely know that you have read the newspapers."

"He may not be sure of it," objected Dorth. "I have always pretended ignorance of outside affairs. At least, Jadway will think that he can bluff me."

"Suppose he does come here?" queried Van Bryck. "Jadway won't risk bringing his mob, unless he thinks that he can intimidate you. He won't be able to do that, unless he has something to pin on you. You covered everything when you did away with Rune and Farradon."

PROFESSOR DORTH arose and paced the area behind his desk. The old man's dryish lips curled in angry fashion. He looked toward the door and scowled.

"That fool Tardon!" he ejaculated. "If he were still alive, I could use him. He would be the proper outside man, to watch for Jadway, to see if the fellow brings his followers when he comes."

Stopping at the desk, Dorth seized pen and paper. He wrote a hurried scrawl; thrust the message in an envelope. He passed the envelope to Van Bryck.

"Give it to Glidden," ordered Dorth. "Tell him to go to town, to call Matt Schedler and repeat what I have written. Glidden can contact Matt after he and his men arrive."

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The name of Matt Schedler was known to The Shadow, quite as well as that of Silk Marron. Matt, like Silk, was commander of a gorilla crew; but he had been quite passive during recent months.

The reason for Matt's idleness was explained. He was in the pay of Professor Dorth, sitting back with his crew, waiting for an emergency call.

"This house is secure," announced Dorth, to Van Bryck, "as long as we have Dombrey and the other servants in readiness. But we want no trouble here, particularly from Jadway. If Jadway gets into trouble elsewhere" – Dorth chuckled, gleefully – "it will not injure us."

"I understand," smiled Van Bryck. "Matt and his bunch will pick a battle with Silk's crew."

"Perhaps," modified Dorth. "The instructions tell Matt what he is to do. When Glidden contacts him, he will receive his final orders. Go, Van Bryck. Give the message to Glidden."

Van Bryck walked through the anteroom. Dorth paced the study; then left the circular room and followed the passage that the technician had taken.

Dorth had left the lights on in the study; an indication that he intended a prompt return. Nevertheless, The Shadow entered. He had time for a brief inspection.

From Dorth's desk drawer, The Shadow removed the flat metal tool with the hooked end. From beneath his cloak, he produced a device that resembled it. The Shadow had prepared an instrument of his own, during the time that he had spent in New York, after the encounter with Jadway. He wanted to make a final comparison.

In length and thickness, The Shadow's strip of metal was identical with Dorth's. The Shadow replaced the original in the desk drawer. He moved from the study; glided rapidly along the passage. As he neared the outer end, he heard footsteps.

Each side of the passage entrance had a rounded half-post as an ornament. The Shadow took the one on the right, for Dorth was coming from that direction. Behind the half-pillar, The Shadow formed a tall blot, like an extension of the darkness that was normally there.

Dorth, chuckling to himself, walked past; his shoulder almost grazed The Shadow's sleeve. Oblivious to the presence of a living watcher, Dorth walked along the passage, reached the study and closed the door behind him.

THE front hall was temporarily deserted; for Van Bryck had sent Dombrey out to Glidden, with the message. Van Bryck was in the living room, warming himself before a fire that Dombrey had started. The Shadow took to the main staircase.

He reached the top; there, he turned to the right and entered the second-floor passage of the lower wing. This, The Shadow had discovered, consisted of a corridor with empty rooms.

Secluded in the upper darkness, The Shadow pondered on the matter of Dorth's message to Matt Schedler. He analyzed Dorth's situation, critically. He knew that Dorth preferred to have Jadway at large; hence there would be no encounter between rival bands unless Jadway ventured in this direction, followed by Silk Marron and an outfit of thugs.

Then there would be battle, on the lower ground below this house. A running fight, with Matt Schedler seeking to draw Silk Marron from the vicinity. The law, should it intervene, would never suspect that the

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mob warfare concerned the old mansion.

There was another possibility, and The Shadow was confident that Dorth had foreseen it. That possibility concerned Ursus Jadway alone. There was a chance that the swindler would come to his house in his usual fashion, unprotected by Silk Marron and the thugs.

Jadway did not know that Dorth's house was a trap. Both Rune and Farradon had died outside. Jadway knew nothing of the torment cell in which Dorth had murdered various victims, prior to his imprisonment of Harry Vincent.

If Jadway came alone, would Dorth have Matt Schedler stop him?

The Shadow received the answer to the question. It came from something that he had heard Dorth say to Van Bryck. Dorth had mentioned that Glidden would be used as contact. That meant that Jadway, if he came alone, would be unmolested.

Glidden would contact Matt Schedler while Jadway was present in the mansion. Harm would come to Ursus Jadway after he had left Dorth's; not before. The reason for such policy was plain to The Shadow.

Dorth, ever canny, could see value in a visit from Jadway; the old professor was looking forward to a meeting with the swindler, to learn Jadway's latest impressions concerning the deaths of Rune and Farradon.

Like Dorth, The Shadow believed that Jadway would arrive tonight. He was ready, moreover, to gauge the exact time of the visit. It would come soon after eight o'clock, when darkness had fully settled. That time pleased The Shadow.

For in his calculations, The Shadow had not forgotten the most important fact that he had learned by listening in on Dorth and Van Bryck. More vital than Jadway or rival crews of thugs, was one man whose name and whereabouts had been mentioned.

That man was Price Wadsford, due to arrive at 10:18, on the Green Mountain Express.

In Price Wadsford, The Shadow saw a man whose case was identical with those of Prescott Rune and James Farradon; a potential victim who had already been swindled of wealth by Professor Dorth, and who was scheduled to die on that account. Tonight, The Shadow had gotten a forewarning of crime.

Whatever else might be required in way of strategy or action, The Shadow would keep careful check on his most important plan. That plan was to pluck Price Wadsford, the scheduled victim, from the threatening toils of Professor Dorth.

CHAPTER XIII. JADWAY TAKES THE BAIT

EIGHT o'clock had passed. Only a few minutes had ticked by since the hour at which The Shadow expected Ursus Jadway to arrive. From a corner at the head of the stairs, The Shadow could discern a single, obscure figure in the great hall.

It was Dombrey, stationed there in case a visitor should arrive. The man seemed alert, as if listening for something. The Shadow knew that Professor Dorth had also guessed eight o'clock as the time for Jadway to appear, and had told Dombrey to be ready.

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The Shadow had given thought to Jadway's probable action; he had decided that Jadway would come here alone. Even though he might plan a capture of the mansion, as a hide-out for Silk Marron and the crew, Jadway would first require knowledge of how matters stood at the mansion.

He could gain that best by a usual sort of visit, with a friendly chat between himself and Professor Dorth.

A distant sound reached The Shadow's ears. It was the purr of a car motor, on the hill. Dombrey heard it; he strained to listen.

With a grunted laugh, Dombrey went to the front door. He stood there waiting. Dombrey intended to lose no time when he admitted Ursus Jadway.

The Shadow moved downward on the stairs. He reached the bottom, undetected by Dombrey, who was listening at the door. A rumble sounded outside; a motor stopped.

As The Shadow reached the passage to Dorth's study, there was a pounding at the front door. Bolts screeched as Dombrey drew them.

The Shadow was in a corner of the anteroom when footsteps sounded along the passage. Dombrey appeared, accompanied by the man whom The Shadow expected: Ursus Jadway.

When Dombrey rapped on the study door, it promptly popped open. Professor Dorth bowed and waved a hand in greeting as he admitted his visitor.

Dombrey departed along the passage; but The Shadow did not stir. He expected another arrival; the man appeared almost immediately. It was Van Bryck. He knocked at the study door and Dorth admitted him. The Shadow had expected Dorth to call Van Bryck into this important conference.

Moving forward, The Shadow reached the study door; turned the knob and pressed for an opening. Through a quarter-inch crack, he eyed Dorth and Jadway at the desk. He heard the dry tones of the professor.

"THIS is terrible, Jadway!" exclaimed Dorth. "To think that Farradon should have been as stupid as Rune. I cannot understand this double ignorance."

"It was bad enough for them, professor," declared Jadway. "But it is tough for me, also. You say you haven't read the newspapers; well – they garbled everything. It seems that Farradon was stopping at a penthouse owned by a man named Thurleigh.

"I went there and found Farradon dead! Thurleigh had heard Farradon call my apartment. He wanted to know if my name was Jadway. When I told him yes, he started to call the police. He actually accused me of murdering Farradon!

"I might have stayed to explain matters; but Thurleigh pitched himself on me. I lost my head; when I managed to bowl over Thurleigh, I left in a hurry. Called my Jap valet; but it was too late. The police were already at the apartment."

Sinking back in his chair, Jadway mopped his forehead in hopeless fashion. Plaintively, he added:

"They haven't traced me yet, professor; but I'm in a terrible jam! You've got to get me out of it, somehow. After all, maybe you can explain these deaths. If there was only some way to make the whole mess clear –"

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"Be calm, Mr. Jadway," interposed Dorth, soothingly. "Van Bryck and I can aid you. There is another man, however, who can do even more. He will be here tonight."

"Who is he?"

"A man like Rune and Farradon," replied Dorth. "One who was to be a prospective customer for your stock promotion campaign. He actually handled my synthetic radium, like Rune and Farradon. But I know that he used proper precautions."

"Then he could testify –"

"That the deaths of Rune and Farradon were accidental? Most surely! I think he would be glad to do so. Do you agree, Van Bryck?"

The technician nodded.

"This man is a wealthy Canadian," declared Dorth. "His name is Price Wadsford. He will arrive at Woodbury station at 10:18. He is coming in on the Green Mountain Express."

"Woodbury station?" queried Jadway, quickly. "That is on this branch line, isn't it?"

"Yes," nodded Dorth. "You can only reach the station by taking the back road that leads over the hill. It is about twenty–five minutes' ride from here, for the road is a poor one."

Turning to Van Bryck, Dorth added:

"Remind me, Van Bryck, to have Glidden called at quarter of ten, so that he will have ample time to reach the station."

"Shall I tell him now, professor?"

"Yes." Dorth picked up pen and paper. He scrawled a brief note. "Give this to Glidden. He will then have no excuse if he forgets the exact train time."

THE SHADOW moved back to darkness, to let Van Bryck pass through the anteroom. The technician was reading the note; The Shadow saw a smile upon his solemn lips.

That note was an order to Glidden, to contact Matt Schedler near the bottom of the hill. Matt and his crew were to wait for Jadway, who had obviously come without Silk Marron and his band. But the note – so The Shadow divined – told more.

Jadway's eagerness when he heard of Price Wadsford; Dorth's cunning mention of the back road to Woodbury station these told The Shadow where the ambush would be.

Dorth was giving Jadway an opportunity to meet Wadsford before the Canadian arrived at the house on the hill. Jadway had swallowed the bait. He had shown it by his eagerness.

The Shadow did not move back to the study door. Instead, he waited for Van Bryck's return. The Shadow knew that nothing more of consequence would pass between Dorth and Jadway. The professor would continue to soothe his visitor; Jadway would play his part of apprehension.

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As before, the pair were matched in a battle of wits; and Dorth was still outshining Jadway, despite the fact that the swindler had guessed that the professor was a man capable of crime.

The sound of a departing car told that Glidden had gone with Dorth's message. Soon, Van Bryck reappeared and entered the study without knocking. A while later, there was a muffled sound of Glidden's return. Soon, the door of the study opened and Dorth came out, clapping Jadway upon the shoulder.

"Tardon will show you out," declared the professor. Then: "Ah! I forgot! Tardon has taken his first night off in many months. I have a man named Dombrey, serving in his place. Where is Dombrey? Not here? Van Bryck, suppose you usher Mr. Jadway to the door."

As Jadway started, Dorth reminded:

"Remember, Mr. Jadway, you can stay here as I suggested. We can chat until Mr. Wadsford arrives."

"I must make a long-distance call," returned Jadway, smoothly. "It will be safe from the village. No one knows me there. I shall be back before eleven, professor."

Eyes glittering, Dorth watched Jadway depart with Van Bryck. When they had gone from the passage, Dorth uttered a contemptuous laugh; he stepped back into his study. The moment that the door closed, The Shadow took the passage to the hall.

WHEN he reached the front of the house, The Shadow discovered that Jadway had not yet gone. The swindler was standing at the front door, chatting with Van Bryck. The door itself was open; since Dombrey was not in sight, The Shadow assumed that the servant had stepped out doors.

Since both Jadway and Van Bryck were occupied, The Shadow had excellent opportunity to glide, unseen, past the darkness of the big stairway. In this fashion, he reached the living room; he moved to the front edge of its wide doorway.

The Shadow was close enough to catch the conversation between Jadway and Van Bryck. Their words were simply a repetition of the chat in the study. Jadway was expressing concern; Van Bryck was trying to allay his worries. To The Shadow, it seemed to be a stall on the part of Van Bryck. The reason was explained a few moments later.

Dombrey appeared at the front door, followed by Glidden. Unnoticed by Jadway, the chauffeur gave a quick-nod to Van Bryck. More expressive than words, that nod meant that Glidden had contacted Matt Schedler. The trap was set for Jadway.

"Show Glidden to the study, Dombrey," ordered Van Bryck. "Professor Dorth may wish to see him. You understand about meeting the 10:18 tonight, don't you, Glidden?"

"Yes, Mr. Van Bryck."

With these words, Glidden followed Dombrey toward the passage to the study. Van Bryck shook hands with Jadway; then ushered the swindler through the door. When Jadway had descended the outside steps, Van Bryck stepped back into the hall and closed the big door.

For a moment, it seemed that Van Bryck intended to throw the bolts. Then he changed his mind. The chauffeur would have to leave the house; hence there was no use locking the door until after his departure.

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Van Bryck strolled into the living room, passing The Shadow en route. Going to the deepest wall, the technician threw a lamplight on the large stretch of bookshelves. He began to pick out certain reference volumes. Thus engaged, he failed to observe the motion that occurred at the doorway of the living room.

Emerging from his latest hiding place, The Shadow crossed the hall. He reached the front door; opened it far enough to admit the passage of his tall, wiry form. The door closed with The Shadow's departure. It shut so silently that Van Bryck heard no sound whatever.

Pressed against the blackness of the wall, The Shadow looked down the steps. He saw Jadway's roadster beneath the roof of the porte-cochere. Jadway had not yet started the motor; nor had he turned on the lights. In fact, there was no sign that Jadway was even in his car.

IN back of Jadway's roadster was a sedan. That car belonged to Professor Dorth; it was the one in which Glidden had driven to contact Matt Schedler. Returning from his trip down the hill, Glidden had been forced to halt when he reached the porte-cochere, for Jadway's roadster blocked his route.

The chauffeur could have reached the garage by going leftward around the drive; but since he had intended to enter the house, he had pulled up in back of Jadway's car.

Glidden had left the cowl lights on, but their glow was feeble. Drizzly rain formed a mist that shrouded the sedan. As The Shadow moved along beside Jadway's car, he heard scraping sounds beyond the sedan. Reaching the second car, he passed it and peered to the right.

By the glow of the ruddy tail-light, The Shadow saw Ursus Jadway.

The swindler was crouched by the back of Glidden's sedan. He had taken the cover from the gasoline tank, to insert a length of rubber tube that he had brought from his own car.

Jadway had drawn a mouthful of gasoline through the tube; he was wiping this lips with a handkerchief, to rid them of the taste. The tube was acting as a siphon, draining off gasoline from the sedan's tank.

The Shadow saw Jadway's game. The swindler had planned to drive to the Woodbury station, to intercept Price Wadsford, which was exactly what Professor Dorth had expected. But Jadway had seen another opportunity.

By draining the sedan's tank, he intended to cut its gasoline supply to a mere dribble; enough to start Glidden from the house, but insufficient to last as far as the Woodbury station. There was still nearly two hours before the train would be due. Jadway was staging a smart trick before he started.

Oddly, Jadway's action served The Shadow also. The Shadow had not hoped to reach his car before Jadway drove from the mansion. At best, he had counted upon hurrying down the hill to his coupe and following in time to overtake Jadway after the unsuspecting swindler had been blocked by Matt Schedler.

Jadway's siphon job, if it took five minutes longer, would enable The Shadow to race for Woodbury station ahead of Jadway.

REACHING soft turf, The Shadow found a rough path and hurried down the slope. It was a short-cut, this path; The Shadow reached his hidden coupe in four minutes flat.

Starting the car, he swung to the muddy road that led to the station.

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Hitting thirty miles an hour, The Shadow reached the top speed that this precarious road allowed. He knew that he was gaining more distance than Jadway, for the swindler would be in no haste, particularly on a bad road.

Somewhere ahead lay danger. Matt Schedler and a crew of thugs would be ready for the first car that came this way, believing it to be Jadway's.

Though prepared for action, they would not be over wary. They were waiting for a man whom they believed to be a dupe. Instead, they would find an opponent prepared to offset their measures. A surprise was in store for those lurkers that served Professor Dorth.

At the wheel of his coupe, as capably as when afoot, The Shadow could take a speedy, elusive course that would throw attackers into confusion. Out guessing a crew of thugs was something that he had done before; yet there was always a chance that some unexpected hazard might arrive.

How great that chance hazard; how close to death it was to come, The Shadow did not know. Nor had he any inkling of the horrible climax that was to follow his encounter with Matt Schedler and the thuggish guardians of this lonely road.

CHAPTER XIV. DEATH RIDES THE DARK

A FEW miles along the muddy road, The Shadow came to a sharp turn. His headlights showed a railroad embankment; he had reached the branch line on which the Woodbury station was located. The road followed beside the railroad.

The Shadow knew that this particular branch was double-tracked only to the second station farther out than Woodbury; for there, commuter traffic ended. After that, it became a single-tracked division to New England, with only a few through passenger trains a day.

As he slowed his coupe to avoid skids on the muddy road, The Shadow heard a roar above him. A brilliant searchlight cleaved the misty drizzle; a fast freight, outbound, overtook The Shadow's car. The freight was traveling at more than thirty miles an hour, which had previously been the limit of The Shadow's speed.

The road improved as The Shadow passed a muddy stretch. He pressed the accelerator, increased his speed to nearly forty miles. He was keeping pace with the locomotive of the freight train; he pulled slightly ahead of the big engine in the course of the next mile.

This was to The Shadow's advantage. Every curve of the railroad track was matched by the dirt highway. The locomotive's searchlight sent a glare far more powerful than that of The Shadow's car. It flooded the road as well as the tracks.

Far ahead, The Shadow saw a narrow bridge beside the railroad embankment. It was where the highway crossed a small creek. The searchlight showed two men standing by the bridge; one was holding a red lantern, that seemed unlighted against the brilliance of the locomotive's headlight.

On the near side of the bridge, pulled beneath a tree, was a parked touring car. The lamps of an automobile could not have shown that machine; but the locomotive's searchlight did. In an instant, The Shadow was fully aware of the trap that had been set for Jadway.

The men at the bridge intended to stop Jadway with the red lantern. While they held him in conversation, others would arrive from the parked touring car. The Shadow saw a way to beat that game.

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He slackened speed; let the locomotive draw ahead of him. As the searchlight went past the line of the bridge, The Shadow saw the red lantern plainly.

No longer facing the locomotive's glare, the two men spotted The Shadow's approaching car. One was swinging the red lantern, to halt the coupe.

THE SHADOW pulled up to the right of the road. As he stopped, he slid his left hand beneath his cloak.

The man with the lantern thrust his face into the opened window on The Shadow's side of the coupe. He shouted loudly, so that his voice could be heard above the rattle of freight cars that were passing along the embankment.

"Can't go through this road, bud!" informed the thug. "The bridge ain't safe! You'll have to turn around –"

As he shouted, the hoodlum came up with his free hand, to plunk a revolver muzzle on the ledge of the car window. The Shadow had already gripped the handle of an automatic; as the thug made the move, The Shadow whipped his left hand from beneath his cloak, with a terrific, short–snapped backswing.

The back of The Shadow's gloved hand clipped the hoodlum's chin. Carrying the full weight of a .45, The Shadow's fist had the power of a mule's kick. The blow lifted the thug clear from his feet; sprawled him to the far side of the road, while the lantern scaled away and clattered into the ditch, where it smashed.

His hand stopped short, The Shadow twisted, aimed his automatic through the window on the right, which was also open. Just as he turned about, a flashlight glared full in his face. It was flashed by the other thug who had been at the bridge. This attacker had come up to the right side of the car.

The Shadow fired squarely into the glare of the flash.

The burst of the .45 was confined to the interior of the coupe. Outside, its report was drowned by the heavy rattle of the clanking freight cars. So was the yell that came from the man who had flashed the light. But Matt Schedler and the thugs in the touring car knew exactly what had happened.

As The Shadow jammed his coupe in gear and shot the trim car whining across the bridge, rapid jabs of flame came from the darkness. The tat–tat of a submachine gun was loud enough to be heard above the clatter of the freight train. The quick fire was too late. The Shadow was away before it began.

In the rear–view mirror of the coupe, The Shadow saw headlights flash from the touring car. The car started forward; halted a moment while The Shadow increased the distance. Matt Schedler was picking up the thug whom The Shadow had knocked out, along with the hoodlum who had been wounded by The Shadow's bullet.

The short delay was to The Shadow's liking. It determined his policy.

With a good head start, The Shadow could lead Matt's band a wild chase for many miles. They would travel farther and farther from Dorth's; yet, all the while, the course would be northward, toward the inbound express which carried Price Wadsford.

Somewhere along the line, The Shadow would have to give his pursuers the slip; perhaps meet them in brief combat.

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For his plan was to meet the train on which Price Wadsford was riding, and accompany the Canadian southward to Woodbury. Thus was The Shadow accomplishing two deeds at once: drawing Matt Schedler on a false trail which he thought was Jadway's; also, arranging to meet and warn Price Wadsford of impending danger.

AS he sped the coupe forward, The Shadow caught up with the freight locomotive. He saw the glaring searchlight shine upon a small railroad station. The Shadow knew that this was Woodbury.

There, the road curved away from the tracks; but came back to them again. Once more, The Shadow was beside the thundering locomotive.

Instead of passing the big engine, The Shadow stayed beside it. The locomotive's searchlight enabled him to pick a better course along the muddy road.

The freight train slackened speed near a station that was perched on the edge of the embankment. It had reached the end of the double tracks; the crew had to await orders before running over the single-tracked section of this line. That forced The Shadow ahead of the stopping locomotive.

Rain had increased; the road was a mass of muck. Without the aiding searchlight, The Shadow was running into trouble. Only through expert handling did he keep his car from the ditch. With the treacherous road, he could average no better than thirty miles an hour.

Matt Schedler, however, was gaining with every mile. From the wheel of the touring car, he used the lights of The Shadow's coupe as a beacon. Each time the coupe floundered, Matt knew that it had hit a bad spot. Matt was ready for the muddiest stretches.

Within twenty minutes, the touring car had the coupe within range of machine-gun fire. Matt was restraining his eager sharpshooters. A little closer, they could riddle the coupe with certainty.

From a view in the rear-vision mirror, The Shadow gauged the distance and recognized Matt's plan.

Grimly, The Shadow laughed; his fierce mirth betokened change of action. There was only one way to deal with these pursuers who still believed that they were after Ursus Jadway. That was to turn the chase into an ambush

There was a turn in the road, a hundred feet ahead. The road was higher here; it had come up to the level of the railroad tracks.

Once he made the turn, The Shadow intended to drive his coupe off the road, skidding it about as he extinguished the lights. A reckless feat; but if it succeeded, The Shadow would be the first to open fire. With two automatics blazing from darkness, The Shadow would have a chance to stop the touring car as it rounded the turn.

THE SHADOW pressed the accelerator. The coupe leaped for the turn ahead. Simultaneously, the touring car roared from in back. Matt was giving it the gas, thinking that the coupe was seeking a get-away.

Watching the sharp curve ahead, The Shadow drew an automatic with his right hand. He kept his left hand on the wheel; for the curve was to the left, in the direction of the railroad tracks.

As he took the curve at top speed, The Shadow suddenly left the shelter of trees. He saw a clear stretch outlined in a blinding glare, that came with a roaring sound from beyond the right side of the car. A puny

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warning sign was outlined beside the road; beyond it, the glisten of wet steel rails, bathed in that terrific light.

The road had struck a grade crossing. From the north was speeding a huge locomotive, bearing down upon The Shadow's car; the only warning was the mammoth beam from the searchlight, which The Shadow did not see until the edge of the crossing.

It was a southbound freight, for which the other train waited. Gobbling the last fifty feet of track, it seemed intent to crush the coupe.

The Shadow's foot never left the accelerator. He held to his speed; the coupe bounded across the track and wallowed through mud beyond. Safe by forty feet, The Shadow pressed the brakes.

The coupe did a partial spin. At the right window, The Shadow was ready with automatics, to blast the touring car if it made the crossing. If Matt halted to let the train go by, The Shadow would have time to prepare a better ambush.

As he gazed toward the grade crossing, The Shadow witnessed a climax that made his plans unnecessary.

From the bend whizzed the touring car; the faces of its murderous crew were shown in glaring detail, for the freight locomotive had thundered to the crossing. Matt Schedler had sped into far greater danger than The Shadow. His only chance was to skid the touring car away from the locomotive's path.

Matt's foot must have frozen on the brake pedal. His car did not lose its speed. It leaped like a hound upon the edge of the tracks. From that bounce, it seemed to climb the huge front of the locomotive. The thug-laden car telescoped like a cardboard toy.

Clawing figures were hurled high from the engine's pilot. Shrieks were lost amid the road. The demolished touring car vanished in fragments. Its occupants were gone when the locomotive's bulk blotted the crossing from The Shadow's gaze.

Freight cars rushed by, their speed decreasing. The Shadow had no need to remain upon the scene. He knew that the train crew would find no survivors.

A band of murderers had been wiped to nothingness. Professor Dorth's outside crew was gone. The Shadow was relieved of a necessary task that had formed a prelude to his principal objective. Need of chase or ambush were both eliminated.

The coupe had stalled with its skid. The Shadow started the motor; turned the car in the road. He resumed his northward route, swinging a bend and coming parallel to the tracks on this side of the railroad.

Eight miles would bring him to a station where the Green Mountain Express made a regular stop. The Shadow had half an hour to reach that point before Price Wadsford's train arrived.

CHAPTER XV. THE SHADOW'S RETURN

IT was quarter of ten; lights were dim upon the station platform in the town of Brewling, twenty-two miles north of Woodbury. The station agent, stepping from the waiting room, paused to speak to a prospective passenger who was standing under the shelter of the platform roof.

"The express is due in a couple of minutes," informed the station agent. "She's a little late, on account of the weather; but maybe she'll make it up getting into New York."

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In a quiet tone, the prospective passenger thanked the station agent for the information. Thus encouraged, the agent offered further facts.

"No. 6 got held up down the line, so I hear," he said. "Hit an automobile at a grade crossing. She's pulled ahead, though, and the pike's clear. They had to hold up No. 11 – she's another freight – so's the express can go through. No. 11 usually meets the express here –"

The agent broke off as a searchlight shot its beam from a curve above the station. He hurried along the platform, while the stranger watched the slackening approach of the incoming locomotive. The train was the Green Mountain Express.

Baggage cars and day coaches formed the foremost portion of the train. Then came a club–diner; after that, a parlor car. The waiting passenger boarded the diner–lounge and took a seat in the lounge section. He tendered a ticket to New York and paid a Pullman fare.

There were no passengers in the diner section of the car, for the hour was too late for meals. The only ones aboard the lounge section were three chatting youths who were returning from a vacation.

Soon after the train had pulled away from Brewling, the new passenger arose and walked back into the parlor car.

This passenger was tall and leisurely of manner. His features had a hawkish aspect; they looked almost masklike. His eyes were keen; but they had a faculty for covering a natural sharpness that would have excited attention from observers.

Over his arm, the passenger from Brewling was carrying what appeared to be a light raincoat, black in color. The coat was moist with rain; that could have been accounted for a faint, grayish tinge.

The brim of a dark hat projected from beneath a fold of the supposed raincoat; there were other objects, bulky ones, but their shape was hardly noticeable.

The Shadow had simply adopted a nameless role. He looked like neither Lamont Cranston nor Henry Arnaud, another of his disguises, although he bore considerable resemblance to the former. Cranston's features were the type that The Shadow ordinarily preferred; a few adept touches would always suffice to make his present countenance become that of the millionaire.

The parlor car had few occupants. There were two men who could be Price Wadsford. The Shadow noticed a suitcase beside one man's chair; the bag bore a customs sticker. That identified the Canadian. The Shadow approached and sat down in the next seat.

PRICE WADSFORD was a middle–aged man, with square–jawed face and gray–tinged hair. His long–fingered hands were restless as they gripped a magazine; his eyes blinked nervously as they glanced up.

Wadsford noted that he was under observation by The Shadow. The fact annoyed him. He eyed the stranger suspiciously.

With a slight smile, The Shadow spoke a quiet question:

"You are Price Wadsford?"

Wadsford hesitated; then nodded.

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"I thought so," remarked The Shadow, his tone scarcely more than a whisper. "You answer the description given me by Professor Dorth. I have something important to tell you, Mr. Wadsford."

Wadsford's eyes were quizzical. The Shadow looked beyond him and pointed to an open door.

"The drawing-room is empty," he said. "Suppose we step inside, where no one will disturb us."

Wadsford nodded his agreement. Carrying his cloak, The Shadow entered the drawing-room and closed the door. Wadsford had followed close behind him. He was prompt with a question.

"What has happened?" he asked. "Nothing about the invention – I mean, nothing has happened to Professor Dorth?"

"Nothing," replied The Shadow, "except that there will be danger if you visit him. There is no time for lengthy discussion, Mr. Wadsford. I need your full confidence!"

"Concerning what?"

"The visit to Dorth's. I intend to go in your place!"

Wadsford came to his feet, glaring at The Shadow, who was seated in the chair nearest the door.

"Professor Dorth warned me of this!" exclaimed Wadsford. "He told me to beware of strangers who might seek facts concerning his invention. If –"

"Calm yourself, Mr. Wadsford," interposed The Shadow, his eyes fixed upon the man. "I said before that time was limited. I intend to give instructions, your part is to follow them!"

Wadsford's teeth gritted. Angrily, the man reached for the doorknob. The Shadow extended an intervening hand. He caught Wadsford's forearm in a rigid grip.

"Remain here," ordered The Shadow, "until we have made our arrangements concerning –"

Wadsford interrupted with a sudden action. Twisting, he lunged for The Shadow, trying to thrust back the arm that held him at length. Wadsford's thrust was powerful; he started a shout as he came. The Shadow stopped him short.

The gripping hand tightened; it twisted. Wadsford writhed; The Shadow's free hand clapped upon his lips. With a shove, The Shadow sent his attacker half across the drawing-room, then used Wadsford's own weight to pull himself to his feet.

Clamping his forearm about the man's neck, The Shadow added a quick choke that dropped the fellow limply into a chair.

WADSFORD gasped helplessly; he was dazed by the jujitsu thrust. The Shadow clamped the man's hands behind him; bound them with a leather thong, that he had carried on this expedition in case of trouble with Dorth's dead servant, Tardon. He used Wadsford's handkerchief to gag the man. Another strip of leather took care of Wadsford's ankles.

It was swift work; and with double reason. Wadsford was recovering by the time The Shadow completed the task; moreover, The Shadow had much to do within the coming minutes.

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The Shadow had dropped his cloak upon a chair, with the bulky objects beneath it. Staring with wide-opened eyes, Wadsford saw him lift the cloak and lay aside a brace of automatics. He watched The Shadow pick up a flat box, which proved to be a make-up kit.

Propping Wadsford back against a chair, The Shadow rested the make-up box in his own lap. Eyeing a mirror, looking beyond it, he began a facial transformation.

Steadily, carefully, he bulged the contour of his forehead; squared his jaw; added a putty-like substance to his cheeks. It required longer for The Shadow to shape his nose like Wadsford's. Then, with a warning whisper, he leaned across and pulled the gag from Wadsford's teeth.

The prisoner made no outcry. He was as awed as he was helpless. The Shadow studied Wadsford's lips; tightened the gag between the man's teeth; went on to complete his make-up.

As a final touch, he took a shell-gold tooth from his make-up kit and fitted it over one of his own bicuspid, to match a gold tooth that glittered from Wadsford's own mouth.

Packing his make-up kit, The Shadow followed with a careful search of Wadsford's pockets. He found various items that he wanted, including Wadsford's Pullman ticket stub. Rising, The Shadow picked up his various belongings, turned out the drawing-room lights and opened the door.

He saw the porter sitting idly at the front of the car; the attendant was the only person faced in The Shadow's direction. A moment later, the porter dozed. The Shadow stepped from the drawing-room and closed the door behind him.

Reaching Wadsford's Pullman seat, The Shadow found a briefcase beside the suitcase. He opened it, drew out a sheaf of papers and packed his own belongings – cloak, guns and make-up kit – instead. Wadsford's suitcase was not full. The Shadow added the papers that he had taken from the briefcase.

THE porter was coming along the aisle. The Shadow saw him look toward the drawing-room; the porter chanced to notice that the door was closed. He stepped toward the door, as if to open it. The Shadow called to him, in a querulous tone that resembled Wadsford's:

"Porter! Come here!"

"Yes, sah!" The porter bowed, eyeing The Shadow and taking him for Wadsford. "What is it, sah?"

"I am getting off at Woodbury."

"I know, sah. Pretty near ten minutes to Woodbury, yet. The conductor will be in here –"

"Never mind the conductor. Take my bags to the platform. Then go look for the conductor."

The porter hesitated, puzzled. The Shadow added:

"I want to make sure that the train will be stopped at Woodbury. Sometimes there is a slip-up with these flag stops."

The porter bowed, picked up the two bags and carried them to the platform. Soon he returned with the conductor, who smilingly announced that the train would surely stop at Woodbury.

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The Shadow motioned to a rack overhead; the porter brought down Wadsford's hat and overcoat, to help The Shadow don them.

In the commotion, the porter had forgotten all about the drawing-room door. Moreover, the train was much closer to Woodbury. Since The Shadow insisted that he must be on the platform when the train stopped, the porter followed him out.

The Shadow gave the man a dollar tip; they waited for the few minutes that remained. The train slowed; the porter opened the door.

The Shadow alighted the instant that the express stopped. He received his bags from the porter, who scrambled back aboard. The train pulled out immediately; and The Shadow calmly watched its departure.

He doubted that the porter would bother about opening the door of the drawing-room. Even if he did discover Wadsford before the train reached New York, it would be unlikely that the prisoner would mention Professor Dorth until he talked with the police.

By the light of the station platform, The Shadow examined a letter that he had taken from Wadsford's pocket. It proved to be word from a hotel, that a room was reserved for Wadsford. The Shadow would be able to communicate with Wadsford later.

A voice questioned The Shadow:

"Are you Price Wadsford?"

It was Jadway. The Shadow faked a facial twitch that resembled Wadsford's manner. He nodded.

"My name is Ursus Jadway," informed the swindler. "Professor Dorth asked me to meet you, as his chauffeur was delayed at a garage. Let me have your bags, Mr. Wadsford. You can wait in my car, while I telephone the garage to tell the chauffeur that I have met you."

The Shadow watched through the station windows, while Jadway made the telephone call. He easily divined Jadway's actual purpose. The swindler was summoning Silk Marron and the crew from some near-by hide-out.

COMING from the waiting room, Jadway climbed behind the wheel of the roadster and started for Dorth's. He made no comments to his passenger, except to express annoyance at the disagreeable weather.

Jadway was canny. He had probably intended to talk to Wadsford during the ride to Dorth's; but had changed that plan. Coming in with Wadsford would give Jadway sufficient advantage when he dealt with Dorth.

Driving slowly, Jadway stopped when he saw a car stalled on the road.

"Hello, Glidden!" he exclaimed. "What's the trouble?"

The Shadow saw Glidden gape. The chauffeur blinked at Jadway as though viewing a ghost. Finally, he gulped:

"I'm out of gas."

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"Get in the rumble seat," ordered Jadway. "I have Mr. Wadsford here with me. We'll take you up to the house."

Glidden obeyed, dumfounded. He had supposed that Matt Schedler and company had long since handled Ursus Jadway.

Reaching the house, Jadway told Glidden to carry the bags inside.

Glidden was still too stupefied to make objection. The Shadow knew why Jadway wanted the chauffeur inside. Silk Marron and his men would soon be coming up the hill. Jadway wanted their approach to pass undetected. Glidden was the only man who might see the invaders in time to give the alarm.

While Glidden held the bags, Jadway pounded at the door. Dombrey opened it; stepped back with goggle-eyes when he saw Jadway. The Shadow entered along with Jadway; and Glidden followed, shaking his head behind their backs, so Dombrey could see.

Van Bryck appeared from the living room. The technician paused at sight of Jadway; then smoothly covered his surprise.

"So you are back, Mr. Jadway?" he inquired. "Ah, good evening, Mr. Wadsford. Professor Dorth expects both of you in the study."

Van Bryck led the way, leaving Glidden in the hall with Dombrey. The Shadow spoke to the chauffeur and asked for his briefcase. Glidden handed it to him; The Shadow followed Van Bryck and Jadway.

This time, The Shadow's footsteps echoed with the others as they walked along the passage to the study. The Shadow was no longer a shrouded watcher within the confines of this mansion. He had come openly, playing the role of Price Wadsford.

Professor Lycurgus Dorth was due for a surprise, like the others who had been astonished to see Ursus Jadway alive. From his knowledge of Dorth's ingenious ways, The Shadow was confident that the professor would have a counterthrust; one that would surprise Jadway when the pinch arrived.

It would be The Shadow's turn to introduce the final element in the coming sequence; a surprise of his own that would do for both of these participants in crime. That might be difficult, while he passed himself as Price Wadsford.

One point, however, remained in The Shadow's favor. It had not taken him long to assume the appearance of Price Wadsford; it would require him but a fraction of that time to again become The Shadow.

CHAPTER XVI. CROOKS CONCUR

WHATEVER wonderment Professor Lycurgus Dorth may have felt at witnessing the double arrival of Ursus Jadway and Price Wadsford, nothing expressed itself upon the old inventor's features.

Van Bryck, leading the way to the round-walled study, did not have opportunity to speak to Dorth before the others entered. Hence the professor's first inkling of what had happened came when he saw the faces of Jadway and Wadsford, side by side.

Rising behind his desk, Dorth chuckled an immediate greeting, holding out his hand to The Shadow, whom he took for Price Wadsford.

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"Welcome!" exclaimed Dorth. "I am glad to see you again, Mr. Wadsford." Turning to Jadway, he added: "Your arrival is most timely, Mr. Jadway, Since you came in with Mr. Wadsford, I suppose that Van Bryck has already introduced you to him."

"I introduced myself," returned Jadway, his tone suave. "I happened to meet Mr. Wadsford at the Woodbury station. I brought him here in my car."

"Indeed!" Dorth smiled as he made exclamation. Then, in puzzled tone: "Where was Glidden? I thought that he had gone to the station to meet Mr. Wadsford."

"It was something of a coincidence," explained Jadway, smoothly. "I was headed this way, professor, returning as you suggested. I recalled that the express was due; and I drove over to the station. Glidden was not there; so I met Mr. Wadsford when he stepped from the train. On our way here, we met Glidden. He had run short of gasoline."

The Shadow saw a sharp glitter from Dorth's eyes. It faded quickly. The professor had caught the inference; had guessed that Jadway was responsible for Glidden's trouble on the road.

Other thoughts were in Dorth's mind, and The Shadow divined them. Dorth supposed that Jadway had met the coming guest in order to talk with him while riding from the station. Logically, Dorth thought that Jadway would have induced The Shadow – presumably Wadsford – to go elsewhere than the mansion.

The fact that Jadway had actually brought Wadsford here made Dorth believe that the two had exchanged important comments on the road; had leagued themselves and come here together, to demand a showdown from Dorth.

That was where Jadway, for once, had outsmarted the old professor. Jadway had discreetly avoided questioning the arrival whom he thought was Wadsford. Jadway knew, however, that Dorth would believe otherwise. Jadway had put Dorth on the defensive; the old professor would be forced to hedge, in order to learn how matters stood between Jadway and Wadsford.

That delay was exactly what Jadway wanted; for it would allow time for Silk Marron and his henchmen to reach the mansion.

Jadway had also guessed that if he talked too much to Wadsford, he might raise doubts in the visitor's mind. Jadway had been wise with that decision.

The Shadow remembered how suspiciously he himself had been received by Wadsford, aboard the Green Mountain Express. Unquestionably, Jadway was starting well in this game of wits, although he was working entirely upon bluff.

THE SHADOW was ready to help Jadway's bluff. He felt that the swindler deserved a chance to aid in bringing Dorth to justice; for Jadway, himself, was a victim of Dorth's intrigues.

True, Jadway was a swindler who deserved punishment, and he had showed murderous intent against Carton Thurleigh in the latter's penthouse; but that score was one that could be settled later. The Shadow would attend to it when the time was right.

Both Jadway and The Shadow were facing Dorth across the latter's desk. Van Bryck was standing just within the study door, which he had closed. Jadway, nevertheless, seemed confident. He began the opening discussion in smooth fashion.

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"I have not yet explained matters to Mr. Wadsford," stated Jadway, with a quick glance toward The Shadow. Turning toward Dorth, he added: "I thought that you would prefer to introduce the subject, professor."

Jadway's glance, his suave tone convinced Dorth that the swindler had lied. Dorth was sure that Jadway had gained facts from Wadsford during the ride from the station. The professor rested his elbow on the desk; set his smooth chin in his clawish hand.

"Of course," declared Dorth. "It would be best for me to explain. You see, Mr. Wadsford, Mr. Jadway came here with a promotion plan. He wanted to interest others, besides yourself, in my synthetic radium."

The Shadow blinked in Wadsford's fashion. Spluttering, he began:

"But that was not our plan, professor! I – I understood that you –"

"I know," nodded Dorth. "You understood that you were to have sole rights to my invention. My negotiations with Mr. Jadway did not disturb that arrangement. They were intended for your advantage, Mr. Wadsford. You see, Mr. Jadway learned of certain men who had money to invest. That is correct, is it not, Mr. Jadway?"

"Of course," agreed Jadway. "They were men who already knew about the invention –"

"Not precisely," interposed Dorth, quickly. For the first time, his face expressed anxiety. "Rune and Farradon were men who had studied the possibilities of radioactive substances. That was all."

A hard smile fitted itself to Jadway's lips. The swindler had his opportunity, and took it before Dorth could intervene.

"Any friend of yours would be interested in radioactivity," asserted Jadway, facing Dorth. "That is why I knew that Rune and Farradon would be good prospects."

DORTH looked anxiously toward The Shadow, hoping that Jadway's inference would slip by. Jadway, too, was sharp with a glance at the personage whom he thought was Wadsford. The Shadow displayed a troubled look.

"I do not understand this!" he exclaimed. "Do I understand you correctly, Mr. Jadway, when you state that your prospects were friends of Professor Dorth?"

"Ask the professor," returned Jadway. "He can tell you."

The Shadow turned to Dorth. Slowly, the inventor nodded.

"Rune and Farradon were friends of mine," he admitted. Thinking quickly, Dorth was sure that this fact had already been discussed by Jadway and Wadsford. "They were men of discretion. I felt that you might like to deal with them, Mr. Wadsford."

"You never mentioned them to me!" expostulated The Shadow. "You told me that I was the only person who knew of your synthetic radium."

"So you were," bluffed Dorth. "I can explain all this later, Mr. Wadsford. For the present, let us –"

"Wait a minute!" The grated words came from Jadway. The swindler was on his feet, glaring straight toward Dorth. "You told me differently, professor. We're going to get to the bottom of this!"

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Jadway faced The Shadow.

"Let's hear your story, Wadsford," added Jadway. "We'll listen to it without interruptions. Just what kind of a deal did Dorth make with you on this invention of his?"

The Shadow had the answer. He knew that Dorth must have sold Wadsford false rights to the invention, just as he had with Rune and Farradon. Calmly, The Shadow replied:

"Professor Dorth sold me exclusive rights to his synthetic radium. The invention belongs to me. I have proof of that fact, among the papers in my briefcase. Let me show you, Mr. Jadway."

Reaching for the briefcase, The Shadow opened the top; slipped his hand within, as if to draw out a stack of papers. Pausing a moment, he added:

"Perhaps you would be interested in knowing the amount that I paid for those exclusive rights."

"I would," retorted Jadway. "Spill it, Wadsford!"

Before The Shadow needed to fake a reply, Professor Dorth spoke from across the desk. His chin still in his palm, the old man clucked:

"Wadsford paid three hundred thousand dollars."

"So that was it," jeered Jadway. "I guessed pretty close to your game, Dorth! Rune and Farradon coughed up dough, too, didn't they? That's why you had to croak them, wasn't it?"

THE SHADOW had gripped an automatic. He saw something which Jadway had not noted. While Dorth was eyeing the swindler, Van Bryck was creeping forward from the door. The technician's hands were extended, ready to grip the back of Jadway's neck.

Dorth, too, was on the move. While his left hand remained motionless, supporting his chin, his right was creeping slowly for a desk drawer. The Shadow knew that Dorth was going for a gun.

Two seconds more, and The Shadow would have whipped forth a .45, to take command of the scene. It was Jadway who changed the situation. The bull-faced swindler detected the creep of Dorth's right claw.

With a sudden bellow, Jadway sprang to the center of the room, swinging away from Van Bryck's path. With a quick jerk, Jadway whipped a revolver from his pocket. His position gave him instant opportunity to cover both Dorth and Van Bryck.

"Up with them!" snapped Jadway. Then, as Dorth and Van Bryck obeyed, he added: "Just stay as you are, Mr. Wadsford. I'll look out for you."

The Shadow remained motionless. With disdainful snort, Jadway concentrated upon Dorth, who sat pitifully with his hands upraised.

"So you grabbed off sucker money," jeered Jadway. "Made a goat of me, while you pulled a con game of your own! How much did you tap the others for?"

"Rune paid two hundred thousand," admitted Dorth. "Farradon delivered two hundred and fifty thousand."

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"Which makes seven hundred and fifty grand," totaled Jadway, adding Wadsford's three hundred thousand. "One more sucker and you'd have been a millionaire! Say – maybe you did have more coming. How about it?"

Dorth smiled dryly.

"Perhaps," he replied. "The game is still good, Jadway. It may interest you to know that Rune and Farradon came here before they died, just like Wadsford came tonight."

"You planted something on them?"

"An actinium compound," returned Dorth, calmly. "It finished them and faded, to leave no evidence. Van Bryck switched Rune's fountain pen, to give him one that contained the powder. He handed Farradon a fixed package of cigarettes."

"That's right," put in Van Bryck, stolidly. "Tonight, I have a special watch, prepared for Wadsford."

Jadway darted a look toward The Shadow. He saw that he was wearing a heavy gold watch chain running from one top vest pocket to the other. The stem of a large watch was projecting from the pocket on the left. The Shadow had taken these items from Wadsford.

"Let's see you make the switch," suggested Jadway. "No monkey business, Van Bryck. Remember, I'm quick with a trigger when I have to be!"

VAN BRYCK looked toward Dorth, who nodded. Solemnly, the technician approached The Shadow, who arose in nervous fashion, still clutching his briefcase. He shifted toward the door. Jadway stopped him with smooth tone:

"Stay as you are, Mr. Wadsford. We both want to see this."

Van Bryck stepped behind The Shadow, who was facing Jadway. The technician remarked:

"I intended to help Wadsford on with his coat. Like this –"

Sliding his left hand to the front of The Shadow's vest, Van Bryck smoothly plucked the watch from the pocket; detached it from the swivel–catch at the end of the chain. He did the whole move with finger and thumb of his left hand and let the watch chain dangle.

Jadway saw Van Bryck swing his hand to his own pocket, drop Wadsford's watch and bring out another that looked identical. With a smoothing motion against The Shadow's coat lapel, Van Bryck attached the duplicate watch and let it drop in The Shadow's vest pocket.

A smile of admiration spread upon Jadway's thick lips. In alarmed fashion, The Shadow pulled out the watch that Van Bryck had planted upon him; tore it from the chain and flung it to the floor. Jadway's grin increased. Dorth saw it and remarked:

"Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars! Too bad, Jadway, that you spoiled the game."

The professor shook his head sadly.

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"We should have arranged it differently," he said. "I was afraid of you, Jadway, for I guessed that you were a swindler. I hesitated about proposing a plan that I had in mind."

"What was that?"

"To have you provide me with prospects," returned Dorth. "More wealthy men like Rune, Farradon and Wadsford. You could roam at large; gain their confidence; send them to me. With such contacts, I could gain the million that you mentioned. You could acquire the same amount for yourself."

An avaricious gleam showed in Jadway's eyes. Slowly, the swindler nodded. In speculative fashion, he spoke:

"It would still work. I could use an alias out West. The police would never bag me."

"The deal is still open," said Dorth. "On a fifty-fifty basis, Jadway."

"What about this guy Wadsford?" demanded Jadway, nudging his free thumb toward The Shadow. "You can't plant anything on him, Dorth. He's wise."

"Would you care to have me dispose of him?" clucked Dorth. "As the first move in our partnership?"

"Go to it," ordered Jadway. "If you've got a method, it suits me. Of course, I can plug him right now."

"That will be unnecessary."

WITH this dry rejoinder, Dorth turned about in his swivel chair. He raised the wooden strip between the windows; pressed the switch beneath. The door locked with a click; the room began to revolve.

New admiration showed on Jadway's face; the swindler's smile was both evil and conniving. Jadway leveled his revolver toward The Shadow.

"Hold that pose, Wadsford," snorted Jadway. "One funny move and I'll plug you! We're going to see what the professor has for you."

"It will please you, Jadway," chuckled Dorth, standing behind his desk. "In a moment, you will realize the full opportunities that our partnership offers."

Jadway laughed harshly. He had proven himself as deep-dyed as Dorth. Crooks had concurred; they had decided upon the death of Price Wadsford. Before them stood the cringing victim, his face twitching in a manner that seemed to denote real terror.

Neither Dorth nor Jadway realized that those facial contortions could be feigned. They never could have guessed that their intended victim was The Shadow.

CHAPTER XVII. TURN ABOUT

THE circular study finished its half revolution. The Shadow was huddled, almost against the open space that had once marked the door; but which had become the entrance to Dorth's horror cell. His left hand still clutched the handle of the briefcase. His right was again inside the bag.

Jadway thought that it was still frozen to the papers that The Shadow had intended to bring out.

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The briefcase was turned end toward Jadway. All the while, The Shadow was gripping an automatic, his finger on the trigger. At any instant, he could have ended this farce; sudden blasts through the leather would have dropped Jadway before the plotter could fire.

Such action would have left Dorth and Van Bryck dumbfounded, easy prey for The Shadow. Nevertheless, The Shadow desisted from the move. He was willing to continue his part as Price Wadsford for a while longer. The Shadow had given Jadway a chance to play square. The crook had not taken it. Therefore, Jadway deserved the same fate as Dorth and Van Bryck.

Yet The Shadow was giving him the absolute limit, to see if he wavered at the sight of an innocent man going to doom. It was only one chance in a thousand that Jadway would do so; yet until the swindler had actually participated in a move of murder, The Shadow intended to let him live.

Standing in front of the death cell, The Shadow was framed in a glare of flickering light. Professor Dorth's thorium lamp was burning downward from the ceiling. Jadway grinned as he saw the glow. He knew that it must indicate a death device.

"No man can live five minutes in that cell," remarked Dorth, as he stood behind his desk. "I always set the light before certain guests arrive. It has had time to gain full intensity."

"What'll it do to Wadsford?" queried Jadway. "Burn him to a crisp?"

"It will wither him," chortled Dorth, "as it has done with previous victims!" Jadway leered viciously, jabbing his revolver toward The Shadow.

"Back up!" snapped Jadway.

Mechanically, his lips wavering piteously, The Shadow moved back into the horror cell, still clutching his briefcase and the gun within it. Jadway snapped an order to Dorth:

"Close him in!"

It was the verdict for death. It marked Jadway as a murderer. Dorth pressed the switch; the wall turned and the opening was closed.

As the window holes went by, Jadway saw the terrified face of Wadsford; the victim appeared too scared to move. Jadway laughed gloatingly at the view.

THE room finished its turn. Jadway lowered his revolver and swung toward the desk. He questioned:

"No chance of that light shutting off?"

Dorth pointed to a lamp near the door of the room. It was on a tiny table; it was the only lamp that was not lighted.

"When the thorium light is extinguished," remarked Dorth, "that light will become illuminated. It is attached to the circuit."

"If it burns five minutes longer, Wadsford will be dead?"

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"He will die in about four minutes," stated Dorth, "but the thorium glare has about twelve minutes to run. Wadsford has been in the cell for exactly one minute."

Van Bryck nodded agreement. The white-coated technician knew all the details of Dorth's devices.

"We can talk terms, in the meantime," decided Jadway. "By the way, we won't be disturbed here, will we?"

"The door is again unlocked," replied Dorth, "but Dombrey will not come here unless I send for him."

"Good," stated Jadway. "It will be all right for Van Bryck to listen in on this?"

"Of course," chuckled Dorth. "He shares my full confidence."

Jadway swaggered across the room, juggling his revolver by the trigger guard. He finally stopped to face the desk.

"You put me in a jam, professor," he declared, "but I can crawl out of it. Figuring that I'll make a million bucks on the deal, it's worth it. I can wind up in South America, when I get my load of kale. There's one point, though, that we've got to settle."

Dorth seated himself; nodded to Van Bryck to take a chair. Jadway came to the point in question.

"The split ought to start from scratch," affirmed Jadway. "You've already made a haul of seven hundred and fifty grand. That dough is part of the deal."

"Part of the two million," agreed Dorth. "We can settle that later."

"I'll give you a good proposition," suggested Jadway. "I'll bring in one sucker, to run the total over a million. We'll split fifty-fifty and keep on from there."

Dorth considered the plan; nodded his approval.

"One thing, though," added Jadway. "What about that swag you've taken in, up to date. Do you still have all of it?"

"I have the entire amount," returned Dorth. "I financed this whole plan on my own capital. I have not been forced to draw a single dollar from the profits."

"Good! Can you show me the cash?"

Jadway put away his revolver as he asked the question. He strolled toward the door; waited there, as if expecting Dorth to rise and lead him somewhere in the house. Instead Dorth simply motioned to the front of the desk and ordered:

"Open it, Van Bryck."

THE technician stooped and pressed the center panel at the front of the desk. The panel eased inward; slid beneath another, Jadway saw that the panel was of steel; its release showed a shallow strong box, that was wide and high, to make up for its lack of depth.

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Stacked in tight packs were bundles of currency that almost completely filled the secret strong box. Jadway saw that the bills were of high denominations. A quick estimate told him that the full amount was present. Jadway nodded in pleased fashion. Dorth pointed toward the lamp on the little table.

"The glow still operates," remarked the professor. "Four minutes are gone. Wadsford is dead!"

With this announcement, Dorth looked toward the door. His eyes showed sudden alarm as they spotted Jadway's hand creeping toward the swindler's coat pocket. With a harsh shout, Dorth shot a claw for the desk drawer that contained his own gun.

Van Bryck heard Dorth's cry. The technician pounced toward Jadway, too late. As he whipped out his gun, Jadway used his other hand to yank the door inward. A long-nosed man-bounded through, flashing a .38; behind him were four others.

Silk Marron had arrived with his crew.

Van Bryck stopped short; Dorth sank back helplessly. The flash of brandished guns told them that fight was useless. With his band inside the room, Jadway closed the door. He pointed to the open front of the desk.

"That's ours," Jadway told Silk. "I get my half of the dough; you fellows split the rest. I told you that there would be gravy here."

"We'll all take it on the lam," rejoined Silk, looking toward his thugs. "I told you mugs that this guy Jadway was tops."

Nudging back toward the passage, Silk added:

"We bagged the chauffeur and the flunky when we was coming in. Tapped 'em on the konks, without making no noise about it. They was a cinch, like you figured, Jadway."

Jadway nodded. His glare was fixed on Dorth. Jeeringly, the murderous swindler predicted the professor's future.

"You tried to pass a rap to me," sneered Jadway. "When it didn't work, you figured a way to make more dough, going halves with me. That's one time you turned out to be a sucker. Showed me your swag; well, it's enough. It's easier to grab what's here than to go after more, especially with a double-crosser like you –"

A click from the door made Jadway turn. As he looked, the room began to revolve. Wheeling toward the professor, Jadway shouted:

"What are you pulling here? Starting this trick room around again?"

"I didn't touch the switch," began Dorth. "It's in back of me – on the wall –"

"Press it right now! Stop this turntable!"

"I can't, until it's finished its turn. Listen to me, Jadway" – Dorth was rising, his expression anxious "there's only one person who could have managed to make this room revolve. And that's –"

"That's you, you double-crosser!"

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BAWLING the accusation, Jadway jabbed his revolver toward Dorth. A white shape leaped from beside the wall, to grab for Jadway's gun. It was Van Bryck; the technician knocked Jadway's arm aside as the swindler fired. Dorth did a dive behind the desk.

Revolvers coughed. A fusillade from Silk and his thugs riddled Van Bryck as Jadway warded off the attacker. Van Bryck fell; the thugs jabbed shots at the desk, hoping to shoot through the woodwork and clip Dorth, who lay beyond. The bullets were stopped by the steel panels that formed the front of the desk. Those surfaces were merely painted to look like mahogany.

"Get around the desk!" shouted Jadway, in the center of the revolving room. "Plug Dorth! Give it to the cursed old faker –"

Jadway's command ended abruptly. The room had completed its half turn; the glow from the death cell was shining through the opening that had reached the far wall. Like Jadway, Silk and the four thugs were turned away from that spot; but all heard the chilling sound that issued from the secret room.

They wheeled about, those rogues, to face a new opponent – one whom they had not expected here, yet whose mirthless laugh had warned them of his strength. They had heard the laugh of The Shadow; upon the threshold of the torture room they saw the dread being, himself.

Cloaked in black, with slouch hat on his head, The Shadow was standing with ready automatics. Those gun muzzles, projecting from gloved fists, betokened doom to men who deserved to die.

The Shadow had dropped the part of Price Wadsford; imprisoned in the cell of doom, he had donned his chosen garb.

It was The Shadow who had made the room revolve, by jabbing a hooked strip of steel beneath the end wall of the cell. Through that tiny crevice, The Shadow had engaged the hidden switch that Dorth had installed in case he chose to use the cell as a place for his own concealment.

Regardless of whether Dorth and Jadway strengthened or dissolved their partnership, The Shadow had waited until they would believe him dead. He knew that his return would then bring consternation to his foemen.

The Shadow had turned the tables upon men of crime; but by revolving the room so he could again enter it, he had come face to face with a full squad of desperate killers.

CHAPTER XVIII,. DOUBLE BATTLE

THE SHADOW'S challenging laugh was the best of opening moves. It brought a unified response from the killers whom he was set to battle; but that was to The Shadow's advantage. He wanted his enemies to act alike, not singly. There was always greater hazard when some lone foe showed unexpected initiative.

Silk was the quickest of those who spun about; beside him was a thug who showed almost equal speed. Both fired as they wheeled; their shots were too hasty. The bullets thudded the walls beside the opening; neither marksman had time for a new jerk of a revolver trigger.

The Shadow's automatics blasted amid the echoes of his laugh. They were thunderous, those reports, for their sounds were amplified by the confines of the death cell. The effect of those long-tongued stabs was immediate. Silk and his fellow killer sprawled side by side, close to Van Bryck's body.

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The Shadow shifted forward; then back; he was past the edge of the cell, away from view when new thugs fired. He poked the muzzle of a .45 out from the cell, picked off another killer with a single blast.

It was too much for Jadway. The swindler bellowed a command to the two thugs who remained.

Both launched forward, intent upon trapping The Shadow. As they sprang, their black-clad foe leaped suddenly in view, stabbing quick shots at the comers. The foremost thug fell headlong; the other, lurching across his sprawling pal, fell upon The Shadow and began a frenzied grapple.

This was the one form of attack that The Shadow had sought to forestall. Once thugs discarded guns to clinch, they could make trouble; for such wild tactics ruined The Shadow's aim. His only course was to beat down his foeman, keeping the thug's body between himself and Jadway.

The swindler was in front of Dorth's big desk, standing above the body of Van Bryck, which made a gory sight, its white coat splotched with crimson.

Jadway did not realize the spot that he was in. Half a minute more, The Shadow would be free to deal with him, to catch him flat-footed, from within the cell. At that instant, however, another man acted to prolong Jadway's life.

The man who made the move was Dorth; he performed the deed for his own benefit, not for Jadway's. Coming up from behind the desk, Dorth snapped the wall switch, which was once more capable of making the room revolve. Dorth thought to trap The Shadow in the cell.

AS the room started to revolve, The Shadow saw it. From the threshold of the cell, he made a huge forward lunge; sent the grappling thug rolling to the floor. Arms wide, The Shadow had no chance to aim for Jadway; instead, he hurtled forward and dived for Jadway as the big man fired.

A bullet singed The Shadow's shoulder; the flesh wound did not stop him. He drove a bashing blow with one automatic. As Jadway ducked, The Shadow fell upon him. The two rolled to the floor; Jadway came on top. He gave a triumphant shout.

Dorth, crouched over the top of the desk, realized all that Jadway failed to guess. He saw why The Shadow had let Jadway come above him. It was because of the thug whom The Shadow had propelled across the room.

That killer was rising, looking for a revolver. He would be back again in the fray; The Shadow was using Jadway as a shield against him.

Dorth pressed a button at the side of the desk. It was a summons to his hidden servants, in their upstairs quarters. They had failed to learn of Silk Marron's entry, for Silk and his thugs had quietly handled Glidden and Dombrey. However, Dorth's servants would now know that an emergency existed.

From his desk drawer, Dorth drew his revolver. Gloating, he watched the fray upon the floor, while the circular room completed its revolution.

As The Shadow rolled, Dorth saw a peculiar glisten to the garb that he was wearing. The black garments – cloak, gloves and hat – all carried a slight grayish tinge. It told why The Shadow had dared the glow of the horror cell. Dorth remembered Van Bryck's report of the evaporated lead solution. He had regarded it as inconsequential at the time. He knew, at last, that it had been important.

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Dorth realized that The Shadow had visited the laboratory; soaked his black garments in the protective liquid. Garbed in his own cloak and hat, The Shadow had become immune to the penetrating effect of the deadly thorium rays.

THE room had stopped its half circuit. Dorth leaped to the door and grabbed the knob, ready to admit his servants when they arrived. He was counting upon Jadway holding out against The Shadow, so that both would be victims when the reserves arrived.

Dorth had by this time realized that some ill fate must have overwhelmed Matt Schedler and the outside crew.

Just as Dorth opened the door, a muffled shot came from the floor. Dorth saw the last thug topple. The fellow had found a revolver; had been waiting for a chance to clip The Shadow. Spotting the crouching thug, The Shadow had managed to twist his right-hand automatic and thrust it beneath Jadway's arm, to down the menacing thug.

The door was open; there were shouts and footfalls at the far end of the passage. Another muffled shot came from the floor. It sounded just as Jadway, half rising, tried to sledge The Shadow with a stroke of his revolver.

Jadway's blow never fell. Instead, the murderous swindler did a sideslip and rolled dead upon the floor. The Shadow had pressed his automatic to Jadway's heart, and had yanked the trigger simultaneously.

Dorth's servants were surging through the anteroom. Flat on the floor, The Shadow used his one good arm to pump two final bullets from his automatic. One man sprawled dead; a second staggered, clutching his right shoulder, while his revolver fell to the floor.

There were two more servants; Dorth snarled for them to come ahead. They paused too long.

Snatching up his other automatic, which lay less than two feet away, The Shadow was ready for the last pair of servants when they aimed. He sprayed three bullets straight for the door. Dorth's last henchmen slumped.

Dorth, himself, was springing back to the desk. He wanted its protection. Across the top, he aimed for The Shadow; fired one wild shot and ducked. The Shadow had dropped his second automatic, to pick up Jadway's revolver.

From the anteroom, Dorth's wounded servant managed to grasp the doorknob with his left hand. Sagging outward, he pulled the door shut after him; he wanted no more battle. Weakened by his shoulder wound, the man had barely enough strength to make his one protective move.

Dorth heard the door slam. With a canny chuckle, the old professor pressed the wall switch. The room began to revolve. Peering from the side of the desk, Dorth saw The Shadow, half risen on the floor. Dorth ducked as the revolver muzzle turned toward him. He was prepared to play a waiting game.

The Shadow, wounded, would seek refuge. His only place would be the horror cell. That would afford him as good a barrier as the desk which served Dorth. If The Shadow entered the cell again, there would be a chance to trick him – so Dorth reasoned.

EVEN while the room revolved, The Shadow acted in a manner that made Dorth chuckle. He seemed to be taking the bait; with backward crawl, he was moving toward the opening that would soon be the entrance to the cell of doom.

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When the room stopped, The Shadow was but a few feet from the opening. He made a final effort; then slumped and flattened on the floor.

Dorth saw the black cloak outspread. The grayish tinge was clearly visible against the vivid flicker that still came from the ceiling of the death cell. The thorium light had gained its highest intensity; the cell walls were crackling with the heat.

The Shadow lay silent, his arms obscured beneath his cloak. Dorth thought that he lacked effort to move farther. With fiendish chuckle, Dorth pounced out from the desk; bounded forward, aiming as he came. He intended to riddle The Shadow with every bullet in his gun, delivering the six shots from close range.

As Dorth pressed the trigger for the first, a report sounded from the folds of The Shadow's cloak. A flash from a revolver muzzle ripped straight for Dorth's body. Dorth had taken the bait; not The Shadow. Feigning complete collapse, The Shadow had drawn the murderer from his place of safety beyond the steel-fronted desk.

Dorth bounded upward as the bullet clipped him. His own gun barked; its bullet ricocheted from the unbreakable glass in the roof of the death cell. Dorth's arm had joggled with his body; he had fired upward.

Staggering wildly, Dorth lost his gun; he clamped both hands to his body and reeled forward, blindly. He stumbled upon The Shadow; lost his footing and pitched headlong, straight through the opening into the crackling cell.

As he writhed upon the floor, Dorth realized where he was. Screaming, he tried to gain his feet; he failed.

The Shadow was rising; he steadied and turned toward the cell. He saw Dorth claw the sides of the cell; then sag. The murderer was withering under the devastating rays of his own death device.

The cell had reached its fury point, wherein a single minute would suffice for death to overwhelm an unfortunate occupant. Though Dorth deserved death, The Shadow had no desire to see him suffer so horrible a fate, even though it was the sort of retribution that belonged to the old professor.

The Shadow stepped toward the cell; then wavered. His wound had brought a loss of blood; he was too weak for heavy effort.

Clutching the wall of the room, The Shadow tried to steady. He heard Dorth utter a last gasped scream; saw the murderer stretch upon the floor of the cell. Hardly had Dorth's fate been settled before a click sounded; the glaring ceiling light faded; the floor sagged downward.

Dorth's body slid through the trap; passing from The Shadow's view, it dropped to its final resting place. A crash told that the old professor had landed among the bones of his own victims.

AS the floor came up, The Shadow steadied. He crossed the room, pressed the switch behind the desk. The turntable revolved, the opening closed to blot out the fading glow of the cell that had swallowed its own creator.

Ripping away his cloak and garments beneath it, The Shadow uncovered his wounded shoulder. He wadded a handkerchief in place, to stanch the flow of blood. His dizziness lessened as the room ceased to revolve. Carrying Jadway's gun, The Shadow opened the door to the anteroom.

THE RADIUM MURDERS

The wounded servant had crawled to a corner; he was lying there unconscious. The Shadow continued through the passage; crossed the huge front hall and found the front door unbolted. He descended through the porte-cochere; felt the welcome spray of cold rain.

The fresh air revived The Shadow. With steadier stride, he continued to the garage and managed to open the sliding door.

Entering Harry Vincent's coupe, The Shadow backed the car from the garage. He headed down the hill; near the bottom, he swung into a muddy side road and turned off the lights.

The Shadow had heard the approach of other motors. He watched while three cars passed, picking the road up the hill.

Wheeling out into the road, The Shadow drove ahead. He was bound for better highways, that would lead him to New York. He knew what those arriving cars had signified. Price Wadsford, discovered aboard the express, had decided to inform the law that there might be trouble at Professor Dorth's.

Murder was ended at the mansion on the hill. Killers had met the doom that they deserved. Professor Dorth's fake invention would be uncovered with his death devices. Ill-gained swag would be reclaimed.

A strange laugh sounded from the speeding coupe. The moist air throbbled its eerie echoes of that mirth. The strident, mirthless tone faded; only the patter of the beating raindrops remained, to tattoo their quiver on the roof of the departing car.

The Shadow's triumphant laugh had ended. It was a knell for men of crime; a token that told of justice delivered. The schemes of Professor Lycurgus Dorth were ended; so were those of Ursus Jadway, who had shown himself a murderer of equal caliber.

Those crooks who had matched their wits against each other had found an end to their thirst for ill-gotten wealth. Dorth and Jadway alike, had been outmatched by The Shadow.

THE END