

THE GHOST MAKERS

by Maxwell Grant

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Gangsters, crooks and spirits combine in their wickedness and join against the power of The Shadow, avenger of crime.

CHAPTER I

THE LAUGH OF A GHOST

"I AM Little Flower!"

A thin, piping voice was babbling amid the eerie darkness. As the shrill tones ended, a spectral silence prevailed.

"I am Little Flower!"

The repeated cry was like a weird echo of the first ghostly call. Then, when the call was no longer uttered, a low, quavering question came from among the sitters in the darkened circle. "Have you a message for me?"

It was a woman who made the query. Her tone was one that denoted a sincere believer. The listeners waited. The voice of Little Flower broke the gloom.

"I have message from J.H.," it said. "He wish to speak to some one that is here. Some one he cannot see. Some one who love him on the earthly plane. He say he is J.H. He say the one who love him will know -"

"I recognize J.H.," came the woman's voice. "I am the one to whom he would speak. Please, Little Flower, please bring me his message -"

The beseeching voice ended with a choking sob. The woman in the circle could speak no more. She was overcome with emotion.

The tenseness of the group continued. The low sobbing of the woman who had spoken was the only sign that people were in this darkened room - waiting - listening.

"He say he will try to speak," babbled Little Flower. "He say he will try, because she wish. He say he feel that she is worry. That she need him to tell -"

"I do need him, Little Flower," pleaded the woman. "Tell him that since he went to the spirit world I have been alone. I need his advice."

"He is talking now," piped Little Flower. "He tell me more now. He say his name is J - J - it is like John, he say -"

"That is right, Little Flower!" exclaimed the woman. "He has told you right. Oh, my dear Jonathan! He knew so much about the world - he was so successful - and now, without him to tell me what to do -"

"He see your trouble," pattered Little Flower. "He say his name is Jonathan. He see you worry about the money that you have. You are afraid you are not wise -"

"Jonathan knows!" bemoaned the woman. "He is speaking from the dead - from the spirit plane. Tell him that I sold - that I did what he advised - but that now -"

The speaker paused, for the voice of Little Flower was commencing to talk again.

"Jonathan he speak to me," came the shrill utterance. "He say he understand. He tell you all through me. He say you do well to sell the stock he say to sell."

"That is true, Little Flower!" gasped the sitter. "Only Jonathan could know about it. Speak to him again, Little Flower. I know it is my Jonathan!"

"He say that you have sold, but you worry about how to buy. You are afraid without him to tell. You wish to know what you must buy to be sure."

"That is true! That is true!" the woman exclaimed.

"He is on the spirit plane," continued Little Flower's voice, "but he can see earthly plane, too. He see something that you must buy.

"Yes, he tell me you must buy. It will make you have much money. Very much money, he say. It is a long name - too long for Little Flower to remember. She cannot understand such big word."

"Please, Little Flower! Please try to understand!"

"Little Flower she cannot say big words. But he say letters. Listen, while Little Flower try to say the letters: C-O-R-N-A-D-O -"

"Coronado!"

"That is what he say - the same word John - Jonathan, he say. There is one more word. It start like the first. Little Flower cannot say. She try to spell again: C-O-P -"

The piping voice broke and seemed confused. It became babbling and incoherent; then the spelling recommenced, laboriously, letter by letter:

"C-O-P-P -"

"Copper!" gasped the eager woman. "Coronado Copper. Is that what he told you, Little Flower?"

"That is what he say. What you say. The same funny big words, that Little Flower find too big to say. Jon-a-than - he say you must buy it quick. It must be quick - before it come too late -"

"Ask him how much to buy, Little Flower!" exclaimed the woman breathlessly. "How much!"

"I talk to him. Wait. He has hear. Through the ear of Little Flower, he has hear. I tell what he say."

The piping voice became still. There was a long, breathless pause. Then an incoherent jabber of the shrill voice, and words that were meaningless. Finally, the tones of Little Flower:

"He is say one - one something - one - something - some funny number, he say -"

AS the voice dwindled, and the breathlessness increased, a new sound pervaded the seance room. It seemed to begin from nowhere, and grow to a terrifying crescendo.

It was the sound of an uncanny, mirthless laugh. A whispered laugh, it lost its eerie shudder and rose to a loud, mocking peal that drowned the babbling of Little Flower.

Sharp gasps came from the members of the circle. The linked hands of the sitters trembled. That laugh had sounded like a dooming knell uttered by some fierce power of another world!

The laugh died away; then came a low reverberation, as though the tones had echoed back from space itself.

A creepy chilling silence followed. Then, Little Flower's babble resumed, incoherent and tremulous, no longer certain!

"John - Jon-a-than - he try to say - he try to say - one - one -"

With terrifying suddenness, that awful laugh again burst through the darkness. Shorter, louder it sounded. It broke off in the midst of a weird peal; then, after a second's pause, the same tones were duplicated with less volume. A longer pause, and another mirthless peal. Then, after a heart-bursting wait, the uncanny gibe came as a sinister whisper from corridors of nothingness!

Little Flower's last babble did not return. There was a moaning from the medium at the head of the circle. A man's voice groaned.

"Lights! Lights! Turn on the lights!" came a tense whisper.

Some one complied. With the snap of the light switch, the room was flooded with illumination.

A circle of a dozen sitters was revealed. Both men and women were in the group, and their faces were aghast. All eyes were centered toward the medium.

A sallow, nervous man, he lay slumped in his chair, with hands and feet bound as they had been arranged at the beginning of the seance.

A heavy, hard-faced individual arose from the circle and approached the medium. A woman joined him, and they managed to bring the medium from his trance. Still tied, he looked about, bewildered.

"Are you all right, Professor Jacques?" asked the man beside him.

The medium stared blankly, then recognized the man who had come to his aid.

"Yes, my friend," he said. "Yes, Mr. Harvey. I am all right. A terrible dream came to me in my trance. Some dreadful, evil spirit seized my soul. It seemed to strike at my heart.

"I see you now, my friends. Ah - Mr. Castelle" - he was addressing a dignified, middle-aged man across the circle - "I am glad that you were here. You were a skeptic. Now, you have seen how evil spirits can act. Is it not terrible?"

Castelle nodded slowly. His face was as white and drawn as were the features of the others in that circle. The medium, gaining new control of himself, glanced from person to person.

"Ah" - he was speaking to a frightened, elderly woman - "it was you to whom Little Flower was speaking, was it not?"

"Yes, Professor Jacques."

"I am sorry that your message was interrupted. It was too bad, madam, that such should happen on your first visit to my seance room. It is dangerous, sometimes, for me to gain messages for those who have never been here before. Some evil is present tonight!"

He paused, as his eye, moving farther around the circle, rested on a tall, hawk-faced man who was observing him with fixed, unchanging gaze. A frown appeared upon the forehead of Professor Jacques.

There was something about this silent individual that made the medium suspicious. The hawk-faced man, alone of all those in the room, appeared unperturbed. His hands, long and slender, were resting on his knees. His face was as firm as a stone chiseled countenance.

Professor Jacques was unable to meet those stern, unyielding eyes. The medium looked again at the hands.

Upon one finger, Jacques observed a strange, mysterious gem, that glowed like an undying ember. Its deep-purple rays changed to vivid crimson. That stone had the sparkle of living fire.

The medium fought against the fascination of that gem, and turned to the man beside him, the heavy-set man whom he had addressed as Mr. Harvey.

"I think I am all right, now," he said. "I am glad that you are here, Mr. Harvey. You and these others know and understand the dangers that confront a medium. I shall rely upon all my sincere believers" - he swung his head around the circle, dodging the gaze of the hawk-eyed man - "to see that no one in this group causes a disturbance.

"I shall try again to commune with Little Flower. But first, I shall seek the manifestation of a friendly spirit that will protect us all against the evil forces."

HE nodded toward his bonds. The nearest sitters, now calm again, examined the knots to see that the medium was securely tied. The hawk-faced man did not move from his chair. He sat still, with his bold eyes directed straight toward the fallow medium.

"Join hands," ordered Professor Jacques. "The circle must be complete while I am within it. Will you, Mr. Harvey, turn out the lights and then join the circle? Thank you."

The final statement was made while Harvey was on the way to comply with the request. The lights went out, and the voice of Professor Jacques sounded solemnly in the darkness.

"My strength has returned," he said. "But before I again commune with Little Flower, I shall call upon Temujin, the powerful, friendly spirit, to stand beside me. Often has he been of aid. Coming from the spirit plane, he can strike mortals as well as evil spirits.

"Should any one leave this circle, I cannot be responsible for his safety. Hark!" - the medium's voice became a prolonged moan - "I can hear the whisper of Temujin. He is beside me. I feel his powerful presence -"

As the medium's voice became indistinguishable, a suppressed gasp went around the circle. Hovering in front of the medium's form appeared a phosphorescent dagger - a sinister weapon wielded by an unseen hand!

"I feel Temujin's presence," came the medium's intonation. "It is above me - beside me - protecting me! Let mortals beware. Let them beware! No force of evil can enter this room. Bound spirits of the other plane beware Temujin!"

The medium's voice became a groan. When that groaning ceased, all knew that the voice of Little Flower would manifest itself.

The threatening, luminous dagger made hands tremble in the circle. Yet its presence was welcome, for with it here, that unearthly mockery of before could not return.

The medium's groan was dying. The falsetto babble of Little Flower was wavering through the stillness. The phosphorescent dagger was almost motionless as it shimmered slightly before the medium's head.

"I am Little Flower -"

The babble ended as the chilling tones of a creeping mockery gathered through the room. It seemed as though some unseen powers were gathering the vibrations of the air together, to hurl them into one tremendous taunt!

The rising sound increased above the subdued gasps of the sitters. It grew louder than the babble of Little Flower's voice. It burst like the crest of a mighty wave - a startling, mirthless cry of wild, outlandish laughter!

Chairs fell backward as sitters clambered to the floor. Screams came spontaneously from the lips of frightened women.

The phosphorescent dagger trembled as though the unseen hand that held it was startled by that reverberating cry. Then it flashed in a menacing swing, as though seeking a hidden enemy.

As the dagger wavered, something shot out of the darkness and gripped an arm beside the swinging blade. A loud, harsh oath was uttered.

The dagger was whirling, trying to escape an unknown grasp, as though two mighty, invisible forces were locked in supernatural conflict!

Now came a vicious curse from another voice. The mocking laughter burst forth in quick staccato as the dagger rose high above the floor. Amid the laughter came the thud of a falling chair - wild curses - the fierce sounds of a human struggle in the darkness.

The phosphorescent dagger whirled away in freedom. Striking from above, the blade swept downward like a dash of meteoric light. Its mission of vengeance ended as the blade was lost in thick darkness.

A terrible scream came from beside the medium's chair. It sounded again, weakly, and ended in a hideous coughing gasp.

Something thudded heavily, and the glowing handle of the dagger reappeared, poised motionless, only a foot above the floor.

"Lights! Lights!" came the cry of the medium.

The frantic words were drowned with a new outburst of the demoniac laugh that had brought consternation to the room. From the walls and ceiling, impish echoes resounded in the blackness. A host of tiny tongues seemed to be pouring forth a message of sinister doom.

As the taunts died out, the lights came on. Castelle, white-faced, had reached the wall switch. The bright illumination revealed a startling scene.

THE sitters were scattered about the room all in spots where they had fled for safety. Overturned chairs bore witness to their mad scramble from the seance circle.

The medium, his fallow face now a reddish purple, was struggling with the ropes that bound him.

Amazing though these sights were, they could not compare with the sight in the center of the room.

There lay the body of Herbert Harvey, face upward - the handle of a dagger projecting from a spot above the heart!

The man was dead - slain by that mysterious dagger, which no longer shone with phosphorescent light! While astounded eyes gazed upon the

horrible sight, fascinated by the pool of blood that gushed from the slain form, a weird, uncanny echo sounded from an unknown spot.

It was the last response of the strange mockery that had preceded this frightful scene! No one knew from whence it came. In the midst of that eerie sound, the medium's bulging eyes swept everywhere. His struggle stopped as he sought the source of those jeering tones.

He could see no one laughing. Only wild, white faces were in view. They were faces of the startled sitters. As before, these people were obsessed by fear.

From face to face, the medium glared, forgetful of the dead man on the floor, seeking only that hawklike visage that he feared.

But the search was in vain. The man with the firm, unyielding eyes was gone. All that remained to tell of his strange presence was the memory of a weird, sardonic laugh. A laugh so horrible that no one could believe had come from human lips.

It was like the laugh of a ghost. A mockery so grotesque that only a being from another world could utter it. An unearthly tone that even the cringing, faking medium believed had come from spirit lips.

Like the laugh of a ghost it had come; like a ghost, it had returned. A man had vanished with it, as though he, too, belonged in some unknown realm of the universe.

Yet that laugh, ghostly though it had seemed, had come from human lips.

It was the laugh of The Shadow!

CHAPTER II

SPOOK OR SHADOW

MURDERED by a ghost!

Of all the strange deaths that Detective Joe Cardona had investigated, the case of Herbert Harvey, stabbed to the heart with a keen-bladed knife, was the most mysterious.

To the ace of New York detectives, summoned to the seance room within half an hour after the murder, the situation presented baffling angles that afforded no tangible solution.

After a night of witness quizzing, after an exhaustive search for clues, Cardona was back to the point from which he started.

In the morning, the detective was summoned to the office of Police Commissioner Ralph Weston. This, in itself, was sufficient to arouse Cardona's apprehensions. The police commissioner, despite his fastidious tastes, was a keen analyst of crime.

Weston relied on Cardona, but he had a habit of criticizing the detective's pet theories on those rare occasions when he and Cardona went into consultation.

Joe Cardona was a man inured to criticism; with most persons he was quick with a keen retort. But Weston played on the detective's weaknesses.

Now, as Cardona approached the office, he felt that he was due to encounter a barrage of well-founded disapproval.

Commissioner Weston, well-groomed and leisurely, smiled in friendly fashion when Cardona was ushered into the office. The detective knew that lulling smile. He was not deceived by it.

He sat down on the opposite side of the glass-topped table, and watched Weston, while the commissioner studied a newspaper. Finally, Weston laid the journal aside and looked at Cardona.

"Well?" questioned Weston.

"I know what you want to know, commissioner," answered Cardona solemnly. "This Harvey case. Well" - he pointed to the newspaper with his thumb - "it's all there. For once, the tabloids have got it straight!"

An expression of amazement came over the commissioner's face. Cardona repressed a grim smile. He had dumfounded Commissioner Ralph Weston!

It was a full minute before the official recovered from his surprise. Then he thumped his fist on the newspaper and stared at Cardona defiantly.

"Do you mean to say," demanded Weston, "that this tommyrot about a killer ghost is all that you have discovered in this case? What has possessed you, Cardona?"

"Out of eleven persons present," declared Cardona, "ten bear witness to that fact. Only one offered a different theory."

"Ten fools!" exclaimed the commissioner. "Ten ignorant, stupid fools who -"

"Have you read their names, commissioner?" asked Cardona mildly.

"Yes," admitted Commissioner Weston reluctantly.

"I found those people very excited," said Cardona, in a quiet tone, "but I wouldn't like to say that any one of them was ignorant or stupid. They were very intelligent people, commissioner. People who have brains as well as money."

Weston folded his hands and sat back in his chair. He surveyed Cardona thoughtfully. He nodded slowly.

"Start with the beginning, Cardona," he requested. "I don't want to miss any portion of this case."

"The meeting was going on up at the Hotel Dalban," began Cardona. "That's where this Professor Raoul Jacques holds his seances, once a week, in a private room, off where they won't be disturbed.

"From what the witnesses say, most of the people were old customers. But they all didn't know everybody else the professor says he's glad to admit strangers. Claims he can get messages for any one.

"Well, last night, he was getting a contact for a new member of the ring. A Mrs. Henderson - she's in the list there, in the Daily Classic. Right in the middle of it, there was a lot of wild laughing. They got scared, and put on the lights. The professor claimed an evil spirit was jinxing the affair."

"Was that when the murder occurred?" questioned Weston.

"No," replied Cardona. "They started in again. The professor claims he called for a good influence to fight the bad. They saw a knife - a dagger - flashing in the air.

"Then came the laughs again. Some one yelled; they switched on the lights. There was Harvey, dead - and the laugh was still coming from somewhere. It stopped right after the lights went on."

"Is that where they evolved the ghost theory?"

"Yes. The professor says that two spirits were in conflict, the good and the bad. He claims that Harvey mixed in the mess, and got the worst of it."

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Weston. "A knife can't come out of nothingness, Cardona!"

"I AM telling you what the professor said, commissioner. I started a cross-examination on the spot. When you quiz excitable women, they don't begin to cook up stories. I talked to them. Nine people besides the professor all had the same story. They lay it on the ghost."

"The professor told his story first?"

"Yes, commissioner," said Cardona wisely. "That's the wrinkle. I figured just as you are figuring - that he was keeping something back. If this spook stuff is a fake, he would be the one to know it. So he would be the bird to lay it on. But that part doesn't hold."

"Why?"

"The professor couldn't have done it. He was tied to a fare-you-well. Get this, commissioner. Some one gave the alarm. There were two house detectives there inside of three minutes - good men, both of them. They pay for good men at the Dalban.

"Nobody went out of that room after they got there. They watched the professor. He was tied in his chair - and when I examined the knots, they were plenty tight. He didn't have a chance to get out of them - let alone get back in again."

"You're sure of that, Cardona?" the commissioner queried.

"Positive. It took us five minutes to get him loose. Even a wizard like Houdini was couldn't have got out of that chair, let alone this professor. He's no weakling, but he isn't husky."

"I don't like his story," persisted Weston.

"Neither do I," returned Cardona. "I think he's stalling. But it's not because he did anything - as I said before, he couldn't have."

"What is his purpose, then?"

"That spirit racket is his living, commissioner. With nine other people laying it on the spirits, is he going to say different?"

"The point is this, commissioner. He knows some real person did that job - not a ghost. But he doesn't know who the party is. Get the angle? What happens to his reputation if he lets that out?"

"I understand," said Weston, nodding. "You have landed something there, Cardona. The man must be a fraud - I believe most of these mediums are fakes. But with this murder happening right beside him - while he was bound and helpless -"

"That's just it," interposed Cardona, as Weston became speculative. "But don't give me too much credit until I tell you where I got the tip. I've got something up my sleeve, commissioner."

"Yes?"

"Yes, sir. And you won't find it in the newspapers, either! With ten witnesses shouting that a ghost was the killer, there wasn't much chance for the one who said different crashing into print, was there?"

"Ah! There was another -"

"Commissioner," declared Cardona gravely, "there were twelve people in that room when I got there. Twelve, including the dead man.

"The professor had his say. All the others together or apart - said the same. At first, that was. But later on, I got one man by himself."

"Who was that?"

"Benjamin Castelle, a big-money man. His name's on the list. You've got to figure this, commissioner. All those folks believe in spooks except Castelle."

"Ah! He is a skeptic?"

"Well, he thinks the professor is pretty much of a square shooter. Castelle says he's heard him tell some mighty remarkable things.

"But when it comes to ghosts slinging daggers, Castelle draws the line. He saw something there tonight that none of the rest of them noticed."

"At the time of the murder?" asked Weston.

"No. Before. I told you that there were twelve in the room, including the dead man. Well, Castelle tells me that there were thirteen!"

"He is sure of it?" The commissioner showed his interest.

"He counted them. The time the lights came on," Cardona went on. "He said the place seemed really spooky, after they heard the first laugh. He's a bit superstitious, Castelle is. He was looking around, and just naturally he counted noses. Thirteen there - something he swears he is right about."

"Then the thirteenth person -"

"May be the murderer!"

WESTON stared reflectively. He seemed to be visualizing the scene as he had read of it, and as Cardona had described it. He looked at Cardona questioningly.

"What became of the odd person?" he asked.

"He must have left," returned Cardona. "Castelle isn't sure, but he thinks there were seven men and six women in the place. There were six men and six women - Harvey included - when the house detectives got there. That makes an odd man in the crowd."

"How could he have disappeared?"

"There's a mystery," declared Cardona. "It's pretty near as bad as the ghost theory. When he went, he must have slid out the door just after the lights came on.

"He had a straight hallway ahead of him. No doors on either side. He might have slipped along to the balcony above the lobby, then down the stairs at the side.

"Castelle grabbed a telephone, and called for help right after the lights came on. The house men were there mighty quick. But when you're dealing with an uncertain time element -"

"It would have been possible, however?" interjected Weston. "Possible for a man to have left by the hall?"

"Possible, yes," agreed the detective. "That was the only way. One door to the room. Windows with locked shutters. Out through the hall - but if a man made his getaway there, he must have been a wonder. Nevertheless, Castelle has given me the tip. I figure he must be right."

"About the people in the room," began Weston.

"Commissioner," said Cardona, "there is not one suspect in the lot. Peas in a pod, all except Castelle. He's a skeptic as you say, but you can't hook up any motive for him."

"He speaks of an extra man. That might be a blind -"

"Not at all," said Cardona emphatically. "Castelle is talking straight. If he wasn't trying to help, he would have taken the easy route sided with the rest of them. He's right - absolutely.

"There was another man in that room, and he made his getaway. When we find him, we'll have the murderer!"

Weston picked up the newspaper. He made a study of the names in the list. He started a series of pointed questions regarding the various individuals. Cardona answered each query in methodical fashion. Weston dropped the newspaper and extended his hand.

It was a triumph for Joe Cardona - a glorious finish to this conference which he had approached so uneasily. Weston's conviction was evident.

"There was another man," declared the commissioner, with a note of final emphasis. "A man who wanted to kill Herbert Harvey. But why did he choose such a strange method?"

"That's easy," said Cardona, a slight smile upon his swarthy countenance. "It was a cinch, in the dark. They were all sitting around that circle. When the dagger began to float above, the only one who could have known it was phony was the medium.

"He says he had his eyes shut - always does when he is in a trance. The witnesses agree. But supposing he did catch a flash of that dirk. What could he do?"

"If he squawked and hollered for the lights, it might have got him. He was helpless, tied up in the chair."

"Right again!" exclaimed Weston, in a congratulating tone.

"Yes," said Cardona, "the professor sat tight, afraid to squawk. That's the story. The rest were scared stiff - and I include Castelle with the lot. But he had enough sense to use his head."

"CARDONA," said Weston, standing beside the desk, "I aim giving you free rein in this matter. You have done wonders, so far. The case is in your hands."

"Thanks, commissioner," said Cardona, rising. "I'm glad you feel that way about it. I don't want to waste any time, yet I want to feel that I'm not rushed. This trail - if I pick it up - may lead anywhere."

"What do you propose to do? Hold any of these people?"

"Not a one. The professor lives at the Hotel Dalban. He's safe there. We'll give him leeway, but he won't have a chance to skip town. He'll be a good witness, later on. I'm going to let his story ride for the present.

"All the rest are safe enough. Castelle lives at the Merrimac Club. He's a big man, well known and well liked. I can talk with him any time. But right now, I'm going back and work on a clew that will lead me to this man who made the slip."

"Let me make one suggestion," said Weston seriously. "Some time ago, Cardona, you had a great failing. You were inclined to attribute certain unexplainable events to a nonexistent person whom you termed The Shadow. You have corrected that fault. Do not let it undermine your sound opinions in connection with this case."

Cardona's face lengthened for a minute; then the detective laughed in a forced manner.

"I've forgotten that, commissioner," he said. "Let's not talk about it."

"Agreed," smiled Weston, clapping the star detective on the back. "Go to it, my man! I am relying upon you. The case is in your hands. Find the missing murderer."

As Cardona left the commissioner's office, he wore a solemn look upon his face a look that Commissioner Weston would have eyed suspiciously.

For Weston's words had aroused the detective's intent memory. As he headed for the Hotel Dalban, Cardona was wondering deeply.

Some unknown being had figured in this crime. The tabloids were loud in their cry of a ghostly hand - a wild theory that looked good in print, but which Cardona had rejected absolutely.

Yet the strange disappearance of the missing personage must either be supernatural or superhuman.

Ghosts, Cardona had heard, were supernatural. The Shadow, Cardona knew, was superhuman.

Spook or Shadow - which?

Cardona spoke his decision mentally.

"The Shadow!"

CHAPTER III

CARDONA RECEIVES A PRESENT

EVENING found Detective Joe Cardona worn and worried. From the time he had left Commissioner Weston's office, his mind had been working in forbidden channels. At the Hotel Dalban, he had searched for hidden clues. He had discovered none.

The Shadow!

That was the one thought that had impressed the detective more and more. With that mysterious name uppermost in his mind, Cardona had become singularly mute and unresponsive.

He had gained the privilege that he had desired - complete freedom in the handling of the Harvey case. But he knew well that, should Commissioner Weston suspect the detective's mind was reverting to The Shadow, the solution of the crime would become the work of other men at headquarters.

Often in his career, Cardona had seen traces of The Shadow. He knew well that the name alone could bring terror to the black hearts of hardened gangsters.

Crooks had died, gasping that strange name. Time and again, the plans of clever mobsters had been thwarted by The Shadow.

Who was The Shadow?

Cardona had no idea whatever. He knew simply that the strange man who identified himself by that name was the sworn enemy of crime.

A power of vengeance, he descended upon skulking criminals, and brought them to account for their misdeeds. Often had The Shadow's terrible automatics barked forth their message of doom to those who fought the law.

Yet, even the most crafty leaders of the underworld were totally at a loss concerning the identity of The Shadow. They knew him only as a man in black - a tall, weird figure that came from nowhere, and vanished into the thickness of the night.

Fiends of lawlessness had faced The Shadow. They had listened to his awe-inspiring voice. They had heard the sibilant whispers of his hidden lips. But those who might have answered questions regarding The Shadow did not live to yield such information.

Cardona, himself, had seen The Shadow. He knew that the man of the dark was no myth. But no one at headquarters could support the star detective's word. Cardona had seen lives saved by The Shadow. He, himself, had escaped destruction, due to the intervention of this mighty man.

On other occasions, Cardona had solved mysteries that were seemingly unfathomable, through the secret aid of The Shadow. But Cardona, not The Shadow, had received the credit. Only The Shadow had known the truth - and The Shadow had never told!

Millions of people had heard the voice of The Shadow - were hearing it even now. For, once a week, The Shadow broadcast over the radio on a national chain.

Often had mobsters sought to gain a clue to the identity of the mysterious announcer who spoke from the silence of a black-curtained room. But ever had they failed.

Men lurking at the very door of the inclosed compartment had heard the mocking tones of The Shadow's laugh; and had entered quickly, only to find the room a void.

These facts were known to Joe Cardona, but they had brought him nowhere. Now, his day's work ended, he was seated at his desk in headquarters, staring glumly at the wall. His theories were vanishing like early snowflakes.

The laugh that had echoed through the seance room - it could only have been the laugh of The Shadow!

The amazing disappearance of the thirteenth man - only The Shadow could have accomplished it!

Only one of two men might have killed Herbert Harvey. One was Professor Jacques, the medium - and he could not have done the crime. The other was The Shadow - and he would not have stooped to murder.

Cardona had investigated Herbert Harvey. He had discovered that the man had money and good social standing, although he was alone in New York.

It was possible that Harvey might have been a crook. But it was not the way of The Shadow to strike from the dark, with the knife.

This knowledge brought Cardona back to the impossible. The hand of a ghost - or the hand of Professor Jacques, the pretended ghost maker? Neither could be possible.

What was the meaning of the crime? Cardona had a gloomy sense of foreboding. He had seen mysterious murders before - murders that had led to new killings.

The detective had left the commissioner's office that morning in a spirit of elation. Now, his sense of triumph was gone. He saw defeat - perhaps disaster.

It was in this time of gloominess that a startling hope dawned within Cardona's brain. The evolution of the inspiring thought came through a slow and unexplainable process. A chain of ideas led to its inception.

First, Cardona thought of the presence of The Shadow. That presence showed crime and great crime. A single murder would not merit The Shadow's attention. Others were in progress; and unless The Shadow could thwart them, they would become new and difficult crimes for Joe Cardona to solve.

Whatever the outcome might be, the detective faced a hazard. He saw hopeless days ahead, with clues dwindling and opportunities fading.

For once, Cardona had won Commissioner Weston's complete confidence. If he faltered now, that confidence would be lost.

The Shadow had helped Cardona in the past. Would he help him now? Cardona had that hope; but he greatly feared that The Shadow's aid would come too late. Perhaps only after Weston had decided that his judgment of Cardona's ability had been mistaken.

The Shadow's ways were mysterious. No one but The Shadow could govern them. But did The Shadow know Cardona's present situation? Perhaps, if The Shadow knew -

That was the thought that brought the inspiration. The Shadow would know if Cardona told him! The detective's mind centered on that point. How could he reach The Shadow?

Reflecting, Cardona knew that when a certain crime development aroused The Shadow's interest, no detail was too small to escape the notice of the man of mystery.

To-day, reporters had been clamoring for a statement from the star detective. Cardona had gruffly stalled them. He knew that they would call again tonight. They would want an interview. He would let them have one.

Although he was capable at solving cryptic statements, Cardona was no hand at making them. He began to scrawl on a sheet of paper. His first effort failed, and he scowled as he crumpled the paper and threw it away.

This experience was repeated. Before long, the place was littered with the detective's attempts to word a message that would have a special meaning to a person who could read between the lines.

At last, with a much-penciled sheet before him, Cardona sat back in his chair and scowled. He heard a slight shuffling at the door, and looked up to see the familiar figure of Fritz, the taciturn janitor, who liked his job so well that he often spent evenings cleaning up at police headquarters.

The sight of Fritz forced a grin to Cardona's perspiring face. For once in his life, the stolid janitor appeared nonplused. He was staring, in apparent bewilderment, at the havoc which Cardona had wreaked. Balls of paper everywhere.

"Clean it up, Fritz," said the detective. "Stick around a while. I'll have a lot more for you. I'm just playing a game by myself."

"Yah," responded the stoop-shouldered Fritz, stooping to pick up the crumpled sheets of paper.

Joe Cardona, forgetting the janitor's presence, transcribed these words from the heavily penciled sheet:

Murder of Herbert Harvey

New Elements Entering Death

Hotel Employees Left Penniless

Seance Had A Dozen Offhand Witnesses

A noticeable point about Cardona's writing was the size of the capital letters in the three lines beneath the top. These letters were so large that they spelled a statement in themselves. It read:

NEED

HELP

SHADOW

The weakness of the idea did not escape Cardona. He knew that the remarks, if they appeared in print, would appear with letters in lower case, instead of capitals.

He could not dictate just how type must be set up. It would give the game away. However, it was the best that he could do.

He transcribed the statements to another sheet, to see how they would look in print, and he shook his head mournfully at the result.

Reluctantly, he crumpled the capitalized sheet and threw it on the floor for Fritz to remove.

Beneath the final, poorly formed draft, he wrote a few brief remarks along the lines suggested by the headings. He folded the weak effort in his pocket, and walked from the room, still shaking his head.

Fritz continued his slow and laborious job. The last sheet of paper that the janitor picked up for his rubbish can was the one which Cardona had

thrown to the floor before he left.

Fritz did not drop this with the others. He placed it in the pocket of his overalls.

Moving slowly from the office, Fritz made his way to a deserted locker room. There, he discarded his working clothes. His attire underneath was a well-fitting suit of black. He had simply covered it with his overalls.

Before he put the overalls into the locker, Fritz withdrew the crumpled paper and dropped it in his coat pocket.

A METAMORPHOSIS had come over the man. No longer stooped, he stood erect before the locker. From the depths of the iron box, he drew forth two objects - a black cloak and a slouch hat.

A broad flash of crimson showed from the lining as the changed man flung the cloak about his shoulders. Then he was a form totally clad in black, from cloak with upturned collar, to hat with turned-down brim that completely masked his features.

Fritz, the janitor, had become The Shadow!

Silently, swiftly, the man in black swept from the locker room. He became a fleeting form as he moved down the corridor to the street door.

Then this mysterious being went out into the night, and not even a splotch of darkness indicated the course that he had taken!

Half an hour afterward, a click sounded in a little room. A circle of light appeared beneath a green-shaded lamp. The rays of illumination were centered on a table.

Two hands appeared. They were long, white hands, and upon one finger glowed a gem with changing, translucent hues.

It was the same gem that Professor Jacques had seen on the hand of the hawk-faced man who had disappeared from the seance room! It was a rare girasol - or fire opal - a stone unmatched in all the world. That gem, alone, was a single jewel that The Shadow wore!

Something plopped upon the table. It was Cardona's sheet of paper. A moment later, it was unfolded, and there the hidden eyes of The Shadow read the message meant for them.

A low, whispered laugh passed through the darkness of that room. Its tones were neither mocking nor mirthful. They seemed to carry a meaning that could not be defined.

Cardona's plea was whisked away into darkness. Had The Shadow ignored it?

His next action gave no clue to his purpose. A stack of typewritten sheets appeared upon the table. One by one, the hands went through them. They were confidential reports of The Shadow's agents - a small but efficient band of loyal henchmen.

The Shadow's hands stopped momentarily upon one sheet. The soft laugh was repeated. The papers disappeared. Now the hands had taken a new task.

The left hand held a small metal disk of a dull silver color. The right was poised with a small engraving tool between its fingers.

Carefully, the hand inscribed. The disk was cupped in the left hand so the letters were hidden as each was made.

Invisible eyes were guiding the task. Soon the work was completed. The light went out. The soft laugh sounded and when its echoes died, the room was empty. The Shadow had departed.

Morning found Joe Cardona entering his office with a folded newspaper tucked beneath his arm. His statement had been printed.

Despite his insistence to the reporter that he be quoted exactly, Cardona had found that his wording had been changed - probably by some one at the copy desk. His attempt at a message to The Shadow had been badly garbled, although traces of it still remained.

Cardona was dubious. He knew The Shadow's skill at solving cryptic messages. But this had been a crude, poorly made attempt. The keenest mind in the world could hardly see any meaning in such a pitiful endeavor.

A DETECTIVE, lingering within the door, pointed to a package on Cardona's desk. It had been there when the man had come in.

Wondering, Cardona looked at the small cardboard box. It bore no name or address. Nevertheless, it would not be on his desk if it were not intended for him.

Cardona broke the string and opened the box. He fished through a layer of tissue paper, while his companion watched him.

A raucous laugh came from the other detective as Cardona's hand emerged. For Joe Cardona, hard-boiled sleuth, was standing stupefied, with a bunch of violets in his grasp!

The sole witness of this hoax shouted from the door, and other faces peered in to view the ridiculous sight. Angrily, Cardona strode toward the door. The laughers scattered, as they saw the savage fury on his face.

Cardona slammed the door. His face reddened as he glowered at the flowers. He drew back his arm to hurl the bouquet against the wall. His clenching fist crunched the tender stems.

Cardona stopped his toss with arm still raised. Something was driving itself against the base of his thumb - a hard, edged object.

Bringing the violets below the range of his eyes, Cardona pulled the bouquet apart and let the flowers flutter to the floor. All that remained between his finger and thumb was a blank disk of silvery metal.

Cardona stared; then turned the disk over. On the reverse side, he noted an inscription. He read this cryptic announcement:

SATURDAY

PHILADELPHIA

ANITA MARIE

Bewildered, Joe Cardona wondered. Then, almost mechanically, the answer dawned. A marked disk, tendered in a bunch of violets.

The Shadow's answer to Cardona's call for aid!

CHAPTER IV

LITTLE FLOWER SPEAKS AGAIN

SATURDAY found Detective Joe Cardona in Philadelphia. The taciturn sleuth had said nothing about his trip from New York. Since the morning that he had received the bouquet of violets, Cardona had preserved an air of aloofness.

The name, "Anita Marie," had puzzled Cardona. When he reached Philadelphia, the detective knew nothing of its significance. He realized that he might be on a wild-goose chase; that the violets might have been the prank of a practical joker.

Nevertheless, a ninety-mile trip from Manhattan was nothing if the journey might lead to a clue concerning the now famous ghost murder in the Hotel Dalban.

In Philadelphia, Cardona knew that his position as a New York detective would enable him to secure the cooperation of the local authorities. But he did not wish to take this step unless absolutely necessary.

Hence, he scanned the Philadelphia newspapers as he sat in his hotel room, seeking any item that might include the name of Anita Marie.

Obviously, Anita Marie might be a woman's name. But the name was incomplete. Therefore, it could be the name of a shop, a tea, room - or even a ship in the port of Philadelphia. But the advertisements and news notes that Cardona read gave no clue in this direction.

The detective's mind went back to the first impression - that Anita Marie must be a woman. He suddenly decided that the name might be complete, after all.

He picked up the telephone book in the hotel room, and ran through its pages to the letter M. There he found the name "Marie" - followed by the first name, "Anita."

Cardona was forced to smile at his stupidity. Anita Marie was the complete name after all. He noted the address, and the telephone number. It was evidently a residence in West Philadelphia.

Cardona left the hotel, and rode westward in the subway. He reached his destination, and strolled down the street opposite the spot where the house was located.

There, on a small sign, he read:

ANITA MARIE

PSYCHIC CIRCLE

Anita Marie was a spirit medium! Not only that, but she was using the same title that Professor Raoul Jacques had employed with his group of believers in New York.

Reaching the corner, Cardona drew a tabloid newspaper from his pocket. He had looked through the personal columns before, but he had not noticed anything of special interest, although he remembered that the word psychic had appeared there.

He discovered it again - in two or three announcements. One stated as follows:

Psychic meeting tonight. Friendly visitors welcome. Eight o'clock.

Beneath the notice appeared the address of Anita Marie.

It was already late in the afternoon. Cardona decided to wait until eight o'clock. He found a restaurant in the vicinity and dined there. He was sure, now, that his mysterious tip-off had come from The Shadow.

During his investigation of the Harvey murder, Cardona had realized that events in one seance room might have a possible connection with those in others. But the job of watching every medium in Manhattan and environs had seemed a ridiculous plan.

Cardona, in all his work, played for breaks that would lead him somewhere. He had found one now, and it was worth following.

Shortly before eight o'clock, he arrived at the home of Anita Marie. Cardona was astounded when he saw the rows of automobiles gathered on both sides of the street.

Evidently this medium did a rushing business at her Saturday-night seances. Cardona was impressed, in spite of himself.

He went up the steps of the house and rang the bell. The door was opened by a sharp-featured maid. Cardona, hat in hand, inquired if the seance had begun. The maid's reply was in the negative.

She stepped aside, and the detective entered. The maid took his hat and ushered him into a large room.

Some forty persons were seated in chairs around the walls. Cardona took a vacant seat, and quietly eyed the other visitors. Most of them appeared to be persons of some intelligence.

While he was studying his companions, Cardona noticed them glancing toward the end of the room. Staring in that direction, the detective viewed a woman who had just entered.

SHE was the medium - Anita Marie. A tall woman, past middle age, and inclined to stoutness, she had an appearance of impressive dignity. But there was a defiant attitude in her bearing, and her eyes threw a sweeping challenge as they glanced about the room.

She had the manner of a school mistress looking warningly toward misbehaving pupils.

Satisfied with her inspection of the assemblage, the medium took her seat behind a table. In a harsh, rasping voice, she informed the newcomers that it was customary for visitors to the circle to make a deposit of one dollar before the seance began.

This, she explained, was not a matter of profit. It was for the protection of the clients themselves, as the fee assured them that undesirable persons would not be present to disturb the meeting.

The explanation seemed thin to Cardona. By his estimate, there were more than forty persons present, which meant a good evening's business for the medium.

The detective joined the group of persons who approached the table to place their money. He nudged elbows with another man as he did so. Turning, Cardona found himself staring into a pair of piercing eyes.

The appearance of the stranger whom he had thus encountered made a distinct impression upon Cardona. The keen, hawkish visage of the man - his cold, evenly molded features produced an immediate reaction in the detective's mind.

He was sure that he had never seen the man before, yet there was a haunting glint to those sparkling eyes that seemed vaguely familiar. A moment later, the man was gone, back to an obscure corner of the room.

When all were seated, the seance began. The medium opened with a jargon of talk that eventually formed itself into a message for some one.

A man stated that he recognized initials which Anita Marie was giving, and the medium concentrated her speech upon him. So long as the man agreed with facts she told him, Anita Marie spoke with assurance. When he mildly informed her that some of her statements were incorrect, she adopted a browbeating attitude.

"The spirits do not lie!" she cried. "Don't try to argue with me. I am right and you are wrong! You are trying to disturb the messages."

With that, she indignantly broke into a new line of chatter that wound up with a message for a more susceptible person. A young girl answered all of the medium's questionings in a breathless tone.

Pumping her for information, Anita Marie managed to deliver some facts that seemed startling to the girl who received them. A buzz of approval rose from the faithful present.

To Cardona, it was a mass of drivel. He wondered what any one could see in this pure bunkum, and he shook his head as he eyed the faces of eager persons who seemed to admire the medium's self-proclaimed talent.

He caught a glimpse of the solemn-faced man in the corner. He noticed that the stern visage was immobile.

An hour passed, and the dull proceedings continued. The medium was working on the faithful - old customers whom she had impressed before. Her overruling tactics beat down the mild objections that arose occasionally.

Cardona was becoming weary. This affair promised none of the spectacular proceedings that had occurred in the strange seance held by Professor Jacques, in New York.

But then, Cardona remembered, the professor had charged fifteen dollars to each entrant in his circle. He was a worker of a more cunning sort, Cardona decided.

It was after nine o'clock when the seance began to take on a more lively aspect. Anita Marie was holding discussion with a middle-aged lady whose attire marked her as a wealthy woman.

From the medium's coaxing, honeyed tones, it was evident that this woman was a frequent visitor to the psychic circle.

"Yes, yes!" she was agreeing to every statement that Anita Marie uttered. "This is wonderful! Please tell me more!"

Now the medium gazed triumphantly around the circle, with a look that was intended to wither skeptics who were present. Seeing that the majority of the persons were believers, Anita Marie decided to press her advantage.

"I'm agoin' to put myself under the control of a spirit," she asserted, in rapid, slurred tones. "With so many good people here tonight, I have been doin' my best for all. But this lady, here, is anxious for more advice. She has troubles, this lady has. I can see it. That's right, lady, isn't it?"

The woman nodded.

"You see?" said the medium, turning her head. "The spirits are tellin' me that, because they know this lady wants to know. So I'm agoin' to help this lady. I can see that her troubles are in this world, not in the spirit plane. That's right, lady, isn't it?"

Another nod from the lady was the response.

"Have you been here before, lady?"

The woman nodded.

"Did I ever ask you your name, lady?"

"No," was the reply.

"Did anybody tell you to come here tonight?"

"No."

"You see, I don't know you, then. But I can hear the spirits atellin' me. They say the name Maude."

"That is my name!" exclaimed the woman.

"That's all they are asayin' to me," resumed Anita Marie glibly, "but when I go into a trance, they can talk to me better. Would some of you gentlemen kindly oblige by turning out the lights at the side of the room? There. That's good!"

THE room was in semidarkness, but the medium was visible in the gloom. She began to roll her head and make grimaces to indicate a spirit control.

Her voice muttered incoherently. It took on a high unnatural pitch that was startling at first to Cardona. The raspy voice became squeaky.

"Hello, good people!" came a falsetto tone. "Good, good people to be here tonight. Good people. Good lady to want to hear what Little Flower say. You listen, good lady. Little Flower speak. She tell what she hear, Little Flower do!"

Joe Cardona had not learned, in his investigation of the Harvey murder, that a spirit called Little Flower had been presumably speaking through the lips of Professor Raoul Jacques. The name that came gurgling from the throat of Anita Marie formed no connecting link to the New York seance in the detective's mind.

But the name of Little Flower brought another thought to Cardona's brain. The strange disk that had started him to Philadelphia had come to him in a bunch of violets.

The reason was plain now. Little Flower! A violet was a little flower!

Eagerly, the detective listened. The medium was babbling on once more.

"Little Flower," came the shrill voice. "Little Flower tell the lady what the lady want to know. She see lady want to know what she to do with money. Big, wise man spirit, he tell Little Flower what to say to lady. He say he know lady back on earth. He say lady's name. Little Flower listen -"

A pause followed. There was a tenseness in the room. The woman who was expecting the message was seated not far from Cardona, and the detective could see her pale face.

Cardona glanced toward the corner, also; but the man with the hawklike face was invisible in the gloom.

"Man spirit, he tell Little Flower," came the voice from the medium. "He say he speak to lady who he call Maude Gar -"

"Yes, yes," whispered the woman breathlessly.

"He say another name," resumed the voice of Little Flower. "It is like Gar - something. Little Flower listen. Yes, Little Flower hear it. She hear the name - Garwood."

"That is right" exclaimed the woman, in an impressed tone. "That is right!"

The medium writhed for a moment, then quieted, and let her head fall back in her chair.

"Man spirit tell Little Flower he know what trouble lady," the falsetto voice went on. "He say lady wonder what she do with money. He say lady must be wise. He say lady put money in good stock."

"Ask him what stock!" exclaimed the woman. "He knows. He knows -"

"Man spirit he say funny words," continued Little Flower. "He say word like Coro. It is long word. It is Coronad-o. He say another word, too. Little Flower hear him say tell lady Cop - Cop-per. He say two words go together."

"Coronado Copper!" the woman exclaimed.

"That is what the man spirit say," resumed the falsetto voice. "He say tell good lady Maude. He say tell good people -"

THE babble ended suddenly. Another sound had entered the room. From somewhere in the circle came the rising tone of a shuddering, mystic laugh!

Its wild, heart-rending echoes swept through the room and seemed to thrum with a loud, pulsating beat. Then, like a departing wind, it whispered away into an unfathomable distance.

Startled gasps were coming from the sitters. White faces were peering at one another. Even Joe Cardona was dumfounded.

Silence followed that dreadful laugh. Then, at length, the medium spoke, in her own voice.

"Turn on those lights," she ordered.

With the room illuminated, Anita Marie sought to regain her composure. She succeeded. Sitting up in her chair, she glared about, seeking the author of the weird disturbance.

"Some one here is atryin' to make trouble," she rasped. "I'm awarnin' them. I won't stand for nothing like that!"

Cardona was looking toward the corner. He saw the firm-faced man with the hawkish countenance. That visage was inscrutable.

Looking toward the medium, Cardona saw her meet the gaze of the man's unyielding eyes. Anita Marie seemed to tremble. With an effort, she resumed her challenging attitude.

"I'm agoin' on with this," she declared, "and I'm agoin' to call an officer of the law if there's any more trouble. You people are here in my home. I've got my rights, I have!"

The side lights were extinguished. The medium gurgled. Again she spoke in the voice of Little Flower.

"Man spirit, he say lady name Maude do as he tell," came the falsetto. "He say she be glad. He say lady must come see man from India. Man from India is medium. He tell lady -"

In cut the mocking laughter. It sounded high above the blabbing voice of Little Flower. It was short - bursting forth with uncanny suddenness; consternation reigned.

Cardona, rising from his chair, edged toward the door of the gloomy room. He saw other people standing up. He heard a call for lights. The switch was turned.

The medium, pale and thoroughly frightened, was clutching the arms of her chair, staring wildly about the seance room.

Men and women were clustered near the door, where they had sprung spontaneously to escape that terrible sound which had seemed to come from all about them.

Cardona knew that the seance was ended for the night. This terrified group could stand no more.

The medium was completely bewildered. She could not imagine whom to blame for the disturbance.

Cardona, too, was bewildered; but for a different reason.

He knew who was responsible for the startling outburst. He was looking toward the corner of the room, and from that point he was scanning every spot. It was this search that astounded him.

The hawk-faced man was no longer in the seance room! Swiftly, silently, he had departed.

The Shadow had gone - laughing!

CHAPTER V

THROUGH THE WINDOW

WHILE the seance was in progress at Anita Marie's home in Philadelphia, a train from the West was nearing that city. Two men were seated in the drawing-room of the club car. They were conversing in low tones.

"The old lady is getting the bunkum tonight," said one. "I talked with Anita Marie over long distance, last night. I didn't tell her where I was. Maybe she thought I was calling from Bombay."

"That doesn't matter," said the other. "All I want to know is whether or not the lay is sure."

"Positively!" emphasized the first speaker. "You've got the plan of the place, and the old lady is out. Garwood never goes upstairs until it's medicine time. The best of it is, there's nothing to be planted, Slade."

"I know that, Bert. The only difficulty is if the servant that told Anita Marie so much about the private life of the Garwoods had her signals mixed. I always feel safer when I look over a proposition myself."

"Well, there's nothing to be lost," said Bert. "If it doesn't look like the right time, let it slide. But if you pull it, the books will all be closed for this haul of fish. Just drop a deceased note on the Garwood page of the ledger."

The sentence ended with a chuckle. The men rode along in silence.

"You know," said Bert, "I've got a reputation to maintain. This is a tough life at times, traveling incognito. Back in harness when I hit the big burg!"

"And on a slow train, too. This old roller coaster has been traveling like a snail since I picked it up at Harrisburg."

"That's the trouble, Slade. I like to keep by myself. There are fewer people on a slow train. I let Tony go out of the drawing-room if he wants; but I stay out of sight. When a man's supposed to be in India - and there's millions in the gag -"

"You're right, Bert. I took a good train in to Harrisburg from Cincinnati. I was just noting the difference - that was all. You came all the way from Chicago."

The train began to live up to its slow reputation. Its speed decreased, and the man called Slade arose.

"We're pretty near in," he said. "I'll make that suburban connection, and then -"

Some one was opening the door of the compartment. A slender young man entered. Slade stood aside to let him pass.

"See you later, Bert," he said. "You, too, Tony. So long."

When the train came to a stop at the suburban station platform, Slade walked briskly away, unnoticed. He was carrying no suitcase or luggage of any description. His dark suit rendered him inconspicuous.

He went to another platform, and took an electric train that arrived a few minutes later. He rode a few stations, then left the train.

As he walked along through the dark, Slade acted in a curious manner. He appeared to know where he was going; yet he seemed to be making a careful study of the locality.

His stride was rapid; at the same time, he kept to the edge of the sidewalk, as though his motions required stealth.

He arrived at a corner, crossed it cautiously, and approached a house that stood alone in a large lot. Here, with a peculiar, hesitating gait, the man strode lightly up a bank and disappeared in the shadow of a tall hedge.

The house was deserted. There was no danger of observation from that direction. There were lights from the adjoining lot, where a large house stood close to the hedge, but Slade was completely concealed by the hedge itself.

He found a slight opening in the hedge. He stopped, carefully squeezed through, and stood almost beneath the house itself. Looking upward, he spied a window that was dark. A small projecting row of eaves extended beneath the window.

The eaves were the continuation of a back porch. Boldly and swiftly, Slade went toward the porch, clambered softly to the rail, and hoisted himself to the roof.

He found a slight gutter underneath the eaves. In another moment, he was clinging just outside the window.

HE could see light as he peered within. That seemed to please the man rather than annoy him. The light came from a hallway, beyond this room. Slade extended his head and shoulders into the room. He saw the tiling of a bath room.

Although it was obvious from his actions that the man had never been in the house before, he performed in a manner that showed an acquaintance with the place. He reached up to the right, and his hand opened a small, swinging door.

The hand emerged, holding a bottle. He pushed the door shut. Reaching on the other side, he fumbled gently in the dark, and produced another bottle. Both looked alike as he saw them in the faint glow.

Slade put the first bottle where the second had been. Holding the second bottle, he suddenly flattened himself along the eaves.

A man entered the bathroom and turned on the light. Slade could not see him, but he could tell that the man was portly, because of his heavy stride, which sounded cumbersome. There was a rattling of glassware.

In the light, this man who knew the house, was clumsy in searching for the object he wished. Slade had worked much more smoothly in the dark, although handicapped by unfamiliarity.

The light went out. Hearing footsteps leaving, Slade boldly edged himself to the window and peered in to see a stout man going into the hall.

Without a moment's hesitation, Slade replaced the bottle that he held exactly where he had gotten it. He laughed softly as he noticed an open place ready for him to set the bottle.

The job was ended. The mysterious visitor glided along the eaves, down the post, and off through the hedge. He left as stealthily as he had arrived.

Back in the house, the heavy man was shaking four pills out of a bottle. Small white pills, he laid them on his tongue and swallowed a glass of water. He laid the bottle aside. He sat down in a comfortable chair, and began to read a newspaper.

It was not long before a sudden change came over the man. His face took on a troubled look. He placed his hands to his stout body. He was undergoing an unexpected pain.

He arose and made his way to a couch. There, he collapsed. His form heaved slowly for a short time. At last, it ceased to move.

A few minutes later, a long, weird shadow crept across the floor of the room. It showed upon the side of the couch, where the man lay motionless. It seemed to crawl upward like a hand of the night.

Then a man in black stood in full view. Garbed in dark cloak and hat - even his hands covered by black silk gloves, and his face invisible beneath the hat brim, he might have come from nowhere.

He bent over the prone man, and touched his body. The man was dead!

The mysterious visitor spied the bottle of pills. He raised it and examined it. He removed one pill, and dropped it back in the bottle. He placed the bottle where he had found it.

THE man in black paused to listen. Some one was coming up the stairs. Quickly, the visitor swept from the room.

Only one man could move with that amazing stealth. That man was The Shadow. He it was who had come here tonight.

Standing invisible against the edge of the hallway wall, The Shadow saw a servant enter the room where the dead man lay. He heard a startled cry - a man's voice calling downstairs - other servants running up.

The Shadow glided into the dark bathroom. There, with eyes that pierced the gloom, he spied the other bottle on the rack above the washstand. He looked about the room and laughed - softly but grimly.

Shouts were coming from the servants. They were buzzing in the death room, calling excitedly to one another.

"Mr. Garwood is dead!"

Noiselessly, The Shadow let himself through the open window. He dropped lightly to the ground, found the spot where he could pass easily through the hedge, and disappeared in the direction which the other man had taken.

It was an hour later, when The Shadow reappeared and entered the house by the very way which he had left. Gliding from the bathroom into the hall, he heard the sound of voices - two police officers discussing the death.

"Just a dumb mistake, that was all," said one. "Just a plain dumb mistake that -"

"You said it!" agreed the other.

The Shadow laughed in low, sinister fashion, as he glided back toward the window. He had expected this.

A mistake! That was what they were supposed to think.

But The Shadow knew that a man had died, not by mistake, but through design!

CHAPTER VI

DEATH BY ACCIDENT

THE laugh of The Shadow!

The echoes of that sinister sound were ringing in the ears of Detective Joe Cardona, as he returned to his hotel in downtown Philadelphia.

Staring at the window, he reflectively chewed the end of his unlighted cigar. Cardona faced a problem of deductive addition.

He was trying to put two events together - to find a reason for the strange happenings which had disturbed the spirit circles in New York and here.

It was obvious that one hinged upon the other. Yet death had struck upon only one occasion.

Assuming that The Shadow had been at the seance of Professor Jacques in the Hotel Dalban, there was a logical reason why the mysterious man should have left when the death dagger reached the heart of Herbert Harvey.

That was the way of The Shadow - to disappear when mystery reached its height.

But what was The Shadow's purpose at the home of Anita Marie? As on the previous occasion, he had probably gone there to shatter a display of fakery. If so, he had succeeded.

Nevertheless, Cardona could not explain the sudden departure of The Shadow.

Mentally, the detective identified the hawk-faced man and The Shadow as one. Cardona knew well that The Shadow was a master of disguise; that he possessed the amazing ability of changing his face almost at will.

Cardona had never before seen the man who had been at Anita Marie's. But the detective could not forget the eyes that had peered from that impenetrable, masklike face.

The eyes of The Shadow!

Cardona had seen those eyes in the past. Peering from beneath the brim of a slouch hat, they had flashed vengeance upon men of evil.

The hawkish face of the man at the seance had been as effective a disguise as an actual mask, but it had not hidden the sparkling eyes.

Cardona made his summary. There was a connection of some sort between the psychic circle in New York and the one in Philadelphia.

Professor Raoul Jacques, suave, sophisticated, and discriminating in his choice of patrons, was working in the same cause as Anita Marie, the harsh-voiced woman who plied her mediumship at the low rate of one dollar a head.

The Shadow had attended the New York seance. He had left at a critical moment. Only Benjamin Castelle had been aware of his presence. Once again, The Shadow had attended a seance here in Philadelphia.

On this occasion, only Joe Cardona had been able to divine his presence. The Shadow had gone from a seance room which teemed with confusion, but not with crime.

Why had he departed? Cardona suspected that The Shadow had gone on an unknown mission. If so, did the clew to it lie in something that had happened there?

Cardona recalled the jargon about Little Flower. Also the mention of the stock, Coronado Copper. These were good points to remember for the future. The name of the woman - the believer who had received the message from Little Flower - was Maude.

Cardona recalled that her last name had been given also, but somehow, it evaded his memory. Then, there had been a few words about a man from India. It was then that The Shadow had laughed again.

Had that second interruption been timed for a purpose? Had The Shadow suddenly picked up a thread of importance that had made it necessary for him to travel elsewhere? The thought perplexed Cardona, but he could think of no satisfactory conclusion.

He felt that he had profited by this visit to Philadelphia; but he was also sure that tonight's event was simply an isolated incident that made a single item in a complete scheme of things.

Cardona penciled a few notes for future reference. He dropped the paper in his pocket and went to bed. In a few minutes, he was sound asleep.

Of an unimaginative disposition, Cardona was seldom troubled with dreams.

But that night he awoke suddenly to gain the impression that some one was in the hotel room.

He listened intently in the darkness, seeking for any semblance of a sound. When none occurred, the detective turned on the light and stared about him. The room was empty.

The door was still locked. Peering from the open window, Cardona noticed a balcony a floor below. There was no one on the balcony. The detective went back to bed and slept soundly until morning.

Arising, he remembered what had occurred during the night. Dissatisfied, Cardona looked about the room, to make sure that his previous inspection had been thorough. He decided to make a notation on his sheet of tabulations, especially as he now recalled that the name of the trusting woman had been Maude Garwood.

Reaching in his coat pocket, the detective discovered that his sheet of notes was gone!

What had he done with it?

It seemed incredible that an unknown intruder could have entered here and made away with those notations. What purpose could have been gained by such a procedure?

Every fact that he had written was emblazoned in Cardona's brain. There was nothing in the notes that he could not write again from memory.

Confused, Cardona decided that he must have placed the paper somewhere other than in his pocket. He made a search about the room, and finally reached a point where he was wondering if he had made the notes at all.

Then he thought of the only spot where he had not looked. Beneath his pillow! Perhaps, absentmindedly, he had thrust them there.

Raising the pillow, Cardona stood stupefied. There were his notes; but they were not alone. The sheet of paper was tucked beneath a string that bound a small, flat box!

Excitedly, Cardona seized his own paper and made sure that it was the one he had prepared last night. He yanked the string from the box and burst open the cardboard package. Within, he discovered a small bunch of violets!

Only one man could have placed that package there. The Shadow!

Now, Cardona realized that the man of the dark had secretly entered this room. The Shadow had placed the box beneath the sleeping detective's pillow.

To make sure that Cardona would discover it, he had taken the detective's notes from the coat pocket, and had put them with the package!

Pulling away the stems of the violets, Cardona found the object that he sought. A small flat metal disk, like the one that had brought him on his errand to Philadelphia. Like the first, this coinlike bit of metal bore a message:

DEATH

THROUGH

WINDOW

"Death through window!"

The thought took Cardona back to the scene at the Hotel Dalban, in New York. Could that be the death to which The Shadow had referred? It was the only death that interested the detective.

Cardona recalled the windows of the seance room in the Dalban. Closed shutters, locked on the inside. The hotel men had said that they were always shut and locked, except when the room was being aired.

Why had The Shadow sent this message to Philadelphia? A few days ago, in New York, it would have been of value. There was nothing in last night's seance - and Cardona was examining his notes carefully - that could have given a clue to the mode of entrance used by the killer in New York.

Angrily, Cardona threw the violets in the wastebasket. He saw it now! The Shadow was tricking him! He had been brought here on a futile chase, so he would be absent from New York.

Perhaps some undiscovered evidence remained in that room at the Dalban. If so, it would be removed by now.

Cardona's faith in The Shadow waned. Furious, the sleuth believed that The Shadow, himself, must be a wanton slayer - the killer of Herbert Harvey.

There was no time to lose. His duty lay in New York. Hurriedly packing his few belongings, Cardona rushed downstairs, paid his hotel bill, and dashed for the railroad station.

He had just time enough to buy a ticket and a local Sunday newspaper. He obtained a seat in the club car of the New York express, and sullenly ordered a breakfast.

While he waited at the little table, Cardona spread the newspaper before him. The arrival of his meal interrupted his reading, and Cardona laid the journal aside while he ate. The train had passed the limits of Philadelphia when the detective again began to peruse the news items.

A heading caught his eye:

MISTAKE BRINGS DEATH TO BANKER

The story followed. Geoffrey Garwood, retired man of wealth, had taken pills from the wrong bottle. He had been found dead in a room at his home.

According to the newspaper account, Garwood kept medicinal pills on a rack in the bathroom. In a medicine chest, close by, was another bottle that contained pills of similar appearance, which were poison.

In some unknown way, Garwood had deliberately taken the bottle from the medicine chest, instead of the one that was on the rack. He had gone to his own room, had swallowed a few of the poison pills, and had died.

“Geoffrey Garwood!”

The name came to Cardona’s mind, as he stared unseeingly toward the sweeping landscape. He remembered the name of the woman in Anita Marie’s seance room. Maude Garwood!

THE SHADOW’S message took on another import - different from Cardona’s interpretation. This must be the death to which The Shadow referred.

A glance at the newspaper article showed Cardona that Garwood had died at nine o’clock, while only he and the servants were in the house.

That was the hour when Cardona had been at Anita Marie’s seance. There, The Shadow had laughed his departing challenge. Had he sensed the tragedy that had occurred at Garwood’s?

The train was slowing its speed as it crossed the high bridge over the Delaware at Trenton. It was due to stop at the New Jersey capital.

Cardona picked up his hat and his suitcase, and signaled to the porter that he intended to get off at that stop, forty-five minutes from Philadelphia.

The detective waited half an hour for an express from New York. He arrived back in Philadelphia exactly two hours after he had left.

He went immediately to the local detective headquarters, announced his identity, and stated that he would like to visit the scene of Geoffrey Garwood’s death.

Cardona’s request was received with some surprise. He was informed that the investigation of Garwood’s death had proved that it must have been a matter of accident; that complete data had been furnished regarding Geoffrey Garwood’s recent actions, and there was absolutely no reason why the wealthy man could have contemplated suicide.

Suicide! Cardona was searching for murder!

But the New York detective wisely checked the words that were upon his lips. He realized that with an established verdict of death through misadventure, he must present some tangible evidence in order to cast doubt upon the findings of the local authorities. Yet he knew nothing about the Garwood case.

A bunch of violets, slipped beneath his pillow. A marked disk, received here in Philadelphia, when he was supposed to have been in New York. A reference to a death - which might be any death at all!

These were the bases of Cardona’s interest in the death of Geoffrey Garwood. Had it not been for them, he would have passed up the matter entirely.

Cardona had no desire to make himself appear ridiculous. He decided instantly not to mention the fact that he had attended a spirit seance in Philadelphia the night before.

Instead, he wisely turned his talk to poisons. The death of Geoffrey Garwood, he stated, might furnish him with valuable data. He was anxious to learn how quickly death had occurred; if the dying man had sensed that his end was near.

This tactful discourse placed Cardona in the light of a New York sleuth making a special trip to Philadelphia to study the effective methods of the local investigators. Joe Cardona’s diplomatic questioning brought him immediate cooperation.

A Philadelphia detective was delegated to take him to Garwood’s home in a headquarters car. There, Cardona could see for himself just how simple it had been for a man to unwittingly poison himself.

Geoffrey Garwood’s home was in a suburban district, within the city limits. It had a wide expanse of lawn on one side; but on the other, it was built close to a hedge. Cardona noticed that the adjoining property was untenanted.

Two servants were alone in the Garwood house. They admitted the detectives, and Cardona was led first to the upstairs room, where the banker’s body had been discovered. Looking through the window, Cardona observed the lawn.

“He got the bottle from the shelf in the bathroom,” declared the Philadelphia detective. “Over on the other side of the house. He must have been absentminded. Come along, I’ll show you the mistake he made.”

The bathroom had a single window. It opened toward the hedge. Below it were projecting eaves that extended from a roof over a side porch. Cardona observed this fact immediately.

“See this shelf?” asked the Philadelphia sleuth. “There’s the bottle of medicine. White pills - no label on the bottle.”

The shelf was on the right side of the window, directly above the washstand. On the other side of the window hung the medicine chest. The Philadelphia detective opened it and indicated a lower corner.

“Right here was the bottle of poison,” he said. “Little pills, like the others. A single pill wouldn’t have mattered - that’s the way they were to be taken. Strychnine, you know - prescribed once by Garwood’s physician.

“But Garwood swallowed four, by mistake. We figure he must have opened the medicine chest and seen the bottle. Forgotten about the old bottle here, you know. Took it along with him, and left the other bottle where it was -”

CARDONA was listening mechanically. He was staring at the open window. His keen mind was finding another explanation - one that meant murder!

How easy it would have been for some one to reach through that window from the row of eaves. How easy to remove the bottle from the shelf, and to put the poison in its place! How easy to wait until Garwood had left to take his nightly dose, then to replace the ordinary medicine on the shelf where it belonged!

"Garwood was married?" Cardona asked thoughtfully.

"Yes," replied his companion. "His wife was out. She arrived home at ten o'clock, to find her husband dead. She was broken up, and went to a friend's house. Guess she'll come back here later. Garwood was worth a million, anyway. No children - just the widow left -"

The rest of Cardona's questioning was a hollow sham. He was sure that there had been murder here, but his entire theory was based upon speculation. The matter was outside his bailiwick.

If the death had happened in New York, Cardona would have gone into a devious study of the ways whereby some unknown individual might have learned of Garwood's habits, and thus planned the crime. But Cardona realized that to act now would mean a long discussion of the matter with the Philadelphia authorities.

It would be better to wait; to rely upon new developments, rather than give away the fact that he had spotted a crime in Philadelphia that could be linked with the killing in New York.

Any reference to Garwood's death as a murder would produce sweeping headlines in the Philadelphia newspapers. The murderers - for Cardona was convinced that there was collusion in this plotting - would be on their guard.

Cardona's faith in The Shadow was restored. He thanked the Philadelphia detective for his service, and returned with the man to headquarters. He left on an afternoon train for New York.

As the express sped along the rails, Cardona wondered. He was sure that The Shadow - at the seance - had sensed some danger that threatened Geoffrey Garwood. That was why The Shadow had disappeared so suddenly.

The man of the dark must have visited Garwood's home, too late to save the victim's life. But he had seen the opportunity for crafty murder, and had - in his own mysterious way - notified Cardona, so that the sleuth might see the evidence also.

Where was The Shadow now?

Had the strange avenger found a further clue? As a master of deductive reasoning, The Shadow was unsurpassed. Cardona, despite his perplexity, felt a feeling of security. With The Shadow operating, hidden mysteries would come to light.

Cardona knew the course that he must follow.

He must work with The Shadow.

The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER VII

ANITA MARIE ADVISES

THE death of Geoffrey Garwood was a closed case so far as the Philadelphia police were concerned. The funeral was over, and Maude Garwood was back in her home. But the unfortunate widow lacked neither companionship nor solace.

Her nephew, Richard Terry, had arrived from Texas in time for the funeral. He had promised to remain for an extended visit. He was Maude Garwood's only living relative, and his presence kept her free from loneliness.

As for solace, Maude Garwood received that from Anita Marie. She had often consulted the medium privately for advice, despite Anita Marie's pretext in the circle that Maude Garwood was scarcely more than a chance visitor.

Maude Garwood had poured out her sudden grief to Anita Marie, and had been cheered by words of comfort.

With only two persons upon whom she felt she could rely, it was only natural that the widow would tell one or the other. Hence, the second evening after Dick Terry's arrival, she told her nephew of the wonderful medium who had been such a help in time of trouble.

Aunt and nephew were at dinner when Maude Garwood first mentioned the name of Anita Marie.

"Dick," she said confidently, "I don't know how I could have borne this misfortune but for Anita Marie's sympathy."

Dick, brown and husky as one of the steers in his native state, looked up in surprise when he heard the name.

"Who is Anita Marie?" he questioned.

"A wonderful woman, Dick," declared Maude Garwood. "She has psychic powers. She can see into the other world."

"A fortune teller?" demanded Dick, in a hostile tone.

"Don't speak that way, Dick," reproved the aunt. "Anita Marie is not a fortune teller. How I dislike that term! Anita Marie is a psychic - a medium who communes with the spirits."

"They're all alike to me," grunted Dick. "A bunch of fakers! Those buzzards don't last long down in Texas. I don't like to hear this, Aunt Maude."

"Why not, Dick?"

"Because you're a rich woman, Aunt Maude. Most of Uncle Geoffrey's estate belongs to you. You're the kind of person that swindlers would be after. But they're not going to get far while I'm around!"

"You talk like your Uncle Geoffrey," sighed Maude Garwood.

"Did Uncle Geoffrey know that you went to see this spirit woman?" questioned Dick.

"Yes," said the aunt, "and he always objected. I can't understand why, Dick. Anita Marie told me some wonderful things facts that she could not have learned from any one else. Only spirits could have told her, Dick."

The young man grunted disdainfully. Then he noted the far-away look in his aunt's eyes. He realized immediately that her belief in the supernatural was more deep set than a fleeting fancy.

It would not be wise, Dick decided, to voice his contempt of spirit mediums. He could accomplish more by pretending to humor Maude Garwood's whim.

"Well," he said gruffly, "I'm open to conviction on anything, Aunt Maude. But at the same time, I'm no child. I've seen so much hokum in my life that I go around with my eyes open. I'm not going to stand by while you lose your money."

"I know that, Dick," said Maude Garwood gently. "I have great confidence in you. But I hope you will not be narrow in your view, as Geoffrey was.

"I told him advice that I had heard Anita Marie give to others as well as to myself. Ways that people could make a great deal of money. But poor Geoffrey would never risk a single penny, and he forbid me to do so."

"Hm-m-m," thought Dick. "They've been working already!"

But he did not express the thought aloud.

"I am going to visit Anita Marie tonight," declared Maude Garwood. "She holds her seances only twice a week. On other nights, she may be consulted for a reasonable fee."

"All right if I come along?" questioned Dick pleasantly.

"Yes, indeed," replied Maude Garwood. "I should like to have you meet Anita Marie. If you could only understand, Dick! I think you will, after you have seen this wonderful woman."

After dinner, Maude Garwood summoned the limousine, and she and her nephew rode to Anita Marie's home.

Dick remained taciturn; he listened thoughtfully to his aunt's elated description of Anita Marie. He realized that Maude Garwood regarded the medium as a sort of superior being, and he did not like it.

THE large seance room was dark. Maude Garwood and her nephew were ushered into a small reception room. Dick Terry glanced suspiciously at the sharp-faced maid. When the visitors were alone, Maude Garwood became confidential.

"I was here, Dick," she explained, "the night that your Uncle Geoffrey had his accident. I had received a wonderful message, Dick. But it was interrupted by a horrible laugh that came through the room."

The woman paused and shuddered as she recollected that terrifying occasion.

"Do you know, Dick," she said, "it must have been a warning! A warning that my husband was dying! I have wondered about that since.

"I asked Anita Marie if it could have been a warning. She said she thought perhaps it might have been. She says that the spirits know everything."

"I guess they do," observed Dick. "The question is, do they tell what they know?"

"One was telling me that night," said the aunt. "A spirit named Little Flower was giving me a message from the higher plane. A spirit there was telling me that money could be made by investing in a stock called Coronado Copper -"

"That's a racket," growled Dick, unable to repress his disdain. "What's the idea of this Little Flower stuff?"

"Little Flower is the medium's control," declared Maude Garwood solemnly. "When Anita Marie enters a trance, Little Flower can take her place. She talks with the spirits, and tells what they say."

"It wouldn't suit me," objected Dick. "I'd like to see the person I'm talking to - whether it's a human being or a spook. Listen, Aunt Maude. You must use good judgment now. Promise me that you won't do anything foolish -"

Terry ended his sentence as Anita Marie entered the room, and gazed shrewdly at her visitors. Dick, rising, faced the medium.

He instinctively disliked her, and Anita Marie observed that fact. She threw a defiant, withering glance toward the young man.

Looking at his aunt's face, Dick observed an expression of total rapture. Maude Garwood seemed cheered by the very presence of Anita Marie.

The medium sat before her, and took the widow's hands. She addressed all her remarks to the believer, and Dick, watching from the side of the room, felt an increased opposition.

"All is well, dear student," declared Anita Marie, in her raspy voice. "The spirits have encouraging words for you. They're agoin' to help you, poor dear."

Dick experienced an immediate resentment. The sight of his aunt, intelligent and refined, listening to this encouragement from an ignorant, untutored woman, was more than he could stand.

"Just how are the spirits going to assist my aunt?" he demanded.

Until now, Anita Marie had ignored Dick as though he had been a child. When he spoke, she glowered in his direction. Her words became defiant.

"Young man!" she reprimanded. "Young man, beware! If you're agoin' to hamper this poor, grief-stricken woman, you're amakin' a great mistake. You can't argue with me, young man."

"You are doing the arguing, right now," objected Dick.

Anita was furious. Her eyes were wild with rage. Only the presence of Maude Garwood restrained her from uttering oaths and imprecations.

"Dick!" exclaimed the widow. "You mustn't be unfair to Anita Marie. She is trying to help me."

"The young man is a skeptic," declared Anita Marie, in a cold, harsh voice. "He is one of them who make trouble. They think because the spirits will not talk when they are around, that the spirits cannot talk.

"They are fools! Fools!" - she spat the word with a frenzy - "fools! They frighten the spirits away. They drive them away - yes - and sometimes they bring evil spirits that lie like they lie."

The heavy woman calmed gradually after she had loosed her feelings. Because Dick refrained from further response, she fancied, egotistically, that she had withered him. Ignoring the intruder, Anita Marie turned again to Maude Garwood.

"You remember what Little Flower told you?" she questioned. "You do as Little Flower tells. Little Flower is atryin' to help you."

"I know it, Anita Marie!" exclaimed Maude Garwood in a voice choked with emotion. "I know it - but I am so afraid. You know how my husband was. He would not believe. I wonder what he would think. I told you that over the telephone, Anita Marie."

"YOUR dear husband will think the same as you do, now," declared the medium impressively. "He is on the spirit plane, too. Perhaps he can talk to you through Little Flower."

"You believe he could?"

Maude Garwood's tone was breathless.

"Yes," declared Anita Marie. "Little Flower could talk with him. But there are skeptical people" - she glared at Dick as she spoke - "who might not

believe. I'm atryin' to help you, poor lady. I've been atalkin' with Little Flower. She says your husband is in the higher plane."

"Let me talk to him through Little Flower!"

"No. I'm not agoin' to try. I'm agoin' to let you talk right to him - to your husband. You know what I was atellin' you about the man from India -"

"Yes - yes!"

"He is in this country now. He has come to New York. Little Flower has been atellin' me that mebbe Rajah Brahman can help you. He is a great man, missis. Mebbe he can bring your husband to talk to you -"

"Wonderful!" cried Maude Garwood.

She turned to Dick Terry.

"Do you hear that, Dick?" she questioned. "Anita Marie says that Rajah Brahman can bring your Uncle Geoffrey back to the earthly plane. That would convince you that this is real. Wouldn't it, Dick?"

"Perhaps," said Dick noncommittally.

"You must go soon to see Rajah Brahman," declared Anita Marie. "He is the leader of our circles. If he knows that you come from me, he will do all he can to help you.

"Take your nephew" - she stared triumphantly at Dick - "and let him see what the spirits can do, when the master is acallin' them!"

Anita Marie stood up to indicate that the interview was ended. Dick waited until his aunt was standing before he performed the courtesy of rising. Maude Garwood was opening her pocketbook, but Anita Marie stopped her with a sweeping gesture.

"I'm achargin' you nothin', missis," she announced, looking sidewise at Dick as she spoke. "I'm atryin' to help you. I'm adoin' good to others. There's no charge for what I'm atellin' you."

The maid came in with Dick's hat. The sudden appearance of the servant made Dick presume that the maid had been listening while he had been talking alone with his aunt, and that Anita Marie had received relayed word of the situation before she had entered the room.

"Thank you, Anita Marie," declared Maude Garwood. "I shall visit Rajah Brahman as soon as he is ready to receive me. You have helped me wonderfully, Anita Marie."

Accompanied by her nephew, Maude Garwood left the house. Dick Terry stared back as he went down the steps. He could see the bulky form of the medium, behind the curtained window of the door.

Inside the house, Anita Marie was glowering. She was giving way to the suppressed rage which she felt toward the unwelcome visitor who had accompanied her client. She called to the maid.

"Pack up my bag!" she ordered roughly. "I'm agoin' to New York tonight. I'm not agoin' to wait no longer."

The maid hurried away, and the medium marched up the stairs. Hardly had her heavy footfalls died before there was a motion in the dim hall. From an obscure spot, a tall, black-clad figure emerged.

A soft laugh sounded from unseen lips. It was an echo - almost noiseless - of those sardonic tones that had thrown consternation into Anita Marie's seance room, last Saturday night.

The sinister figure glided across the hall and noiselessly opened the door. As the tall form vanished through the opening, it seemed to melt away. A believer - had one been present - would have sworn that a spirit form had de-materialized itself.

The weird stranger was gone; the only trace of his farther progress was the appearance of a fleeting splotch of blackness as it drifted past the glare of a lamp-post on the street.

The Shadow had seen. The Shadow had heard. The Shadow had departed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAN FROM INDIA

ANOTHER seance was in progress. This was far more impressive than the one that Joe Cardona had observed in the home of Anita Marie. A master was at work, and those who surrounded him were more than mere believers. Their countenances wore the enthralled look of disciples.

Not only was the group a remarkable one; the surroundings themselves were impressive. It seemed as though this little cluster of enraptured persons had been transported from the matter-of-fact atmosphere of New York to the glorious environment of India.

There were only half a dozen persons in the room, and their evening clothes betokened them as members of New York's upper strata of society.

The leader of the throng was attired in a splendid Oriental costume. He sat in a thronelike chair near one end of the impressive room, the walls of which were hung with shimmering tapestries woven in cloth of gold.

The smoke from two incense burners floated up in wreaths about the golden image of a solemn-faced Buddha.

Rajah Brahman was the medium. He was ending the first seance that had marked his return to New York. Only the most faithful had been permitted to attend this initial meeting.

Now that they had heard the mystic's words of wisdom, and his promises of future marvels, they were awaiting his command to leave.

As was his custom, Rajah Brahman must spend the later hours of the evening in contemplation of the vaster things of life. He was about to commune privately with the spirits of the other world; to learn all hidden things which he would later reveal to his disciples, when he summoned them again.

Clad in a golden robe that bore the symbol of a hooded cobra, his head adorned with the resplendent turban worn by the highest caste in India, the rajah's dark-hued face was that of a man of superior knowledge. His close-cropped beard gave him a masterful appearance; his dark, glittering eyes transfixed themselves upon each true believer as he stared upon each in turn.

Rajah Brahman clapped his hands three times. The sharp sounds echoed through the gilded room. The tapestries seemed to waver as though controlled by the action. A slender, white-clad Hindu entered the room, and stood toward the enthroned master.

This servant, Rajah Brahman's faithful Imam Singh, bore himself with the same solemnity as his master. He reached the throne, and stood at the left side, arms folded, his youthful face stern and inflexible. This was his appointed place.

No one ever stood upon the right of Rajah Brahman's throne. That was the spot where the master received his spirit guide.

Again, Rajah Brahman clapped his hands thrice. Like sheep, the students of the master arose and bowed. One by one, they filed through a curtained door that led to an outer room. Imam Singh stalked after them, to usher them from the sacred premises. Rajah Brahman was alone.

A strange man amid strange surroundings! Yet this luxurious abode, with all its fashionable glory of the East, was located in one of the highest stories of a New York skyscraper. The Callao Hotel, Manhattan's newest and tallest apartment building, had been chosen by Rajah Brahman as his residence.

Money meant nothing to this man of wealth, who brought great and unfathomable messages from the Yogi of the Himalayas.

Within ten minutes after the servant had departed, Imam Singh returned to interrupt his master's soliloquy. He approached the throne and spoke a few words.

The rajah arose and went into another room, the entrance of which was hidden behind the tapestries in the corner. This was his consultation room. It was as exotic as the room which he had just left.

Beneath the dim lights a huge crystal ball glittered upon the lap of a smaller Buddha. The fragrance of incense pervaded the room.

A small cushioned throne was in the corner. There the rajah took his seat and waited, the sole occupant of a weird pagan shrine. The curtains opened across the room. A man slipped through and approached the seated figure.

The newcomer was Professor Raoul Jacques, the medium who had conducted the seance at which Herbert Harvey had been slain.

Rajah Brahman motioned his visitor to a chair. Jacques glanced furtively toward the curtained doorway as he sat down. In a low, excited voice he began to speak.

"I got your message," he said. "I had to be careful coming here, though, because they may still be watching me. You know about the trouble I got into."

Rajah Brahman spoke. His voice was low and solemn, as impressive as his appearance and his environment.

"You have made a grave mistake," he said. "This disturbance in your circle may cause untold harm. You were not wise to act as you did. You should have concluded your seance when you encountered difficulty."

"I DIDN'T know what was coming," declared Jacques. "I've had a few funny things happen before, and that luminous dagger was always a good stunt. It was planted on Harvey, and he slipped it to me. I didn't think there was going to be a fracas.

"I was trying to get the other guy, but he slipped away. There I was in a jam, for sure! Lucky for me the cops didn't get wise to those gags on the chair. They let me go. They were sure I couldn't have been loose. I stuck to my story, and had a lucky break with it -"

"That was the only wise procedure that you used," declared Rajah Brahman. "It was, indeed, fortunate that your statement was not doubted."

"It pretty near floored me," replied Jacques, "when the whole crowd stuck with me. I knew that some of them would tell the same story that I did; but I thought that a few would say something about the fellow who got away. I couldn't spill that story myself."

"It was lucky that one of them had enough sense to figure the real dope. A fellow named Castelle told a detective that he thought there was another bird. Now they are looking for him, and I guess they figured he did it."

"You have arranged for your believers to join my circle of enlightenment?" questioned Rajah Brahman.

"That's all been fixed," replied Jacques. "They are all good, and I have all the dope that Harvey gave me."

"There's one good customer that was coming to my next seance - a man named Telford - that Harvey dug up for me. I have the inside dope here with me" - he drew an envelope from his pocket - "and I want to get rid of it."

He extended the envelope toward Rajah Brahman, but the Hindu master held up his hand reprovngly.

"Rajah Brahman needs no such information," he declared solemnly. "You may give it to my servant as you leave, since you fear that its possession might work to your disadvantage. That is sufficient. Go, and be cautious in your deeds."

Professor Jacques slunk from the room. Rajah Brahman laughed. After all, such fakers as Professor Jacques were superstitious. Despite the fact that they knew their work was trickery, they were ready to believe that some one more intelligent than themselves might actually possess a true psychic power.

Rajah Brahman had ended with the first of his special visitors. The appearance of Imam Singh told him that another had arrived. At the rajah's command, the servant left the room.

Anita Marie entered. This woman, who was ordinarily so domineering, was now abject and subdued. Even more than Professor Jacques, she was impressed by the importance of Rajah Brahman. She did not even attempt to speak until she had received his nod.

"The woman is a comin' here," Anita Marie began. "She visited me tonight, and she wants to see you very much."

"Have her eyes been opened to the light?" questioned Rajah Brahman.

"Yes," replied Anita Marie. "She has had a great trouble lately. Her husband died last Saturday. He was the one who was atryin' to keep her away from me. Now that he is gone, she's anxious to do as I have been atellin' her."

"You say her husband is now on the astral plane?" inquired Rajah Brahman. "If so, I shall commune with my spirit guide. Perhaps I can bring the spirit of her husband to my sanctum."

"That's just what she wants!" exclaimed Anita Marie. "She wants him back. If you can let her see him, she will listen. I was atellin' her about that copper stock, through Little Flower. She liked it, but she was afraid on account of her husband. But now he's gone."

Anita Marie rolled her eyes upward as a gesture to show that the departed spirit of Geoffrey Garwood had reached a spot in a higher world. Rajah Brahman ignored the woman's grimace.

"Bid her," he said, "to come to New York to await my call as a true believer should. She will be summoned by the master when her time has arrived."

"There is a couple of things I want to tell you about her," began Anita Marie glibly.

Rajah Brahman shook his head reprovngly.

"The master understands all," he declared, slowly and impressively. "I listened when you spoke to me before, because I desired to know if this woman was one who might see the light now. I wish to know no more. You may go!"

Anita Marie turned and walked through the curtains. Her challenging air had been completely lost during her interview with Rajah Brahman.

She reached a little anteroom, and looked about her suspiciously, as though she feared that hidden eyes were watching. The room was illuminated by a single light that shone dimly in one corner.

The woman gave a start as the white-clad form of Imam Singh glided noiselessly into the room from another entrance. Then she followed Rajah Brahman's servant.

Hardly had the two departed before a slight motion occurred beside a thick curtain that covered the entrance to Rajah Brahman's shrine.

An invisible form came into being from the darkness. A moment later a tall black-clad man stood in the center of the dull anteroom.

It was The Shadow.

Unseen, unheard, the mysterious man of the night had entered the Hindu's sanctuary. There, veiled behind the curtain, he had listened to every word that had passed between Rajah Brahman and his visitors.

The Shadow did not laugh. Noiselessly he moved back toward the blackened curtain, and seemed merged with the darkness itself.

When the Hindu's servant returned a moment later to reenter the master's sanctum, no sign of the living shadow remained.

CHAPTER IX

THE SHADOW TELLS

WHEN Imam Singh arrived in the sanctum, he found Rajah Brahman still enthroned. The boyish-faced servant spoke in English.

"She's gone," he said. "I showed her out."

"Good!" exclaimed the rajah, clambering from his cushioned throne. "That lets me out, too, Tony. Give me a hand with this rig."

The Hindu seer cast his turban on the floor, and with the servant's help began to divest himself of the cobra-headed jacket. The pointed shoes shot across the room, impelled by their owner's kick. A few moments later, Rajah Brahman stood clad in American trousers and shirt sleeves.

Imam Singh - who still looked his Hindu part - left the room and returned with towel and washbasin. He produced a jar of cold cream, and the rajah set to work.

"Sorry you've got to wear that get up of yours, Tony," he grinned, as he smeared the cold cream over his face. "But it isn't so bad. Lighter than my outfit. You've got to answer the buzzer, you know."

Imam Singh smiled in response.

Rajah Brahman's well-formed beard was yielding to the cold-cream treatment. The man stood smooth-shaven, and surveyed his countenance in a small mirror that he dug up from among the cushions of the throne.

"Remember the time I grew one, Tony?" he asked, rubbing the spots where the beard had been. "It looked all right, but it was a nuisance. The fake one means more work for you, but it's the best idea."

The man pulled a cigarette pack from his trousers pocket. He lighted a cigarette and puffed it. He seemed to enjoy its flavor as a welcome change from the odor of incense.

The transformed face of Rajah Brahman bore little of the dignity which it had formerly possessed. It was sallow, but not nearly so dark as it had been.

It was the face of a schemer - not that of a master. The eyes which had seemed languorous and penetrating were now crafty and shifting.

"This is better than an hour of deliberation, Tony," declared the new-visaged rajah, buttoning his collar. "Listen - yes, that's the buzzer. Slide out to the door and see who it is. I'll switch the light off, here."

The servant was gone, and the room was plunged in darkness a moment later. Only the glowing end of Rajah Brahman's cigarette was visible. It poised in mid-air, while its owner awaited Imam Singh's return.

Soon, the curtains parted, and the slight glow from the outer room showed a face which Rajah Brahman recognized, even in that dim light.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "I thought you were the one who rang. Wait until I switch on the light -"

"Never mind," interrupted the quiet voice of the visitor. "The darkness will suit me. I don't want to be disillusioned, Bert. Wait until I find a chair."

The speaker bumped into one a moment later and sat down, to stare toward the lighted end of the cigarette.

"Well," came the voice of the false rajah, "I chased out the suckers, and then met the saps. Professor Jacques and Anita Marie."

"What did they have to say?"

"Jacques was all worried about the mess he landed into. Told me how surprised he was when everybody stuck with him on that crazy notion about a spirit hand throwing the knife. Said if it hadn't been for one intelligent person in the mob, he would never have been able to swing the detectives after the fellow who made his getaway."

"Did he name the intelligent person?"

"Yes," laughed Rajah Brahman. "He said that a man named Benjamin Castelle had the bright idea, and it pulled him out of a mighty tough spot."

The visitor made no response, so Rajah Brahman resumed his conversation. Now, his tone was questioning.

"Who was the fellow who started the trouble?" he asked.

"I don't know," replied the visitor.

"I don't like it, chief," declared the rajah. "Jacques certainly lost his head when he swung the dirk. That's bad stuff."

"If the police knew he was hooked up with me, they would be watching this place. A fine mess - just when I've arranged to fleece the lambs after they have been herded into the barnyard."

"It might be best to take them slowly, Bert."

"Of course, chief. That's the way I always work. Anita Marie has hooked that dame from Philly - and I've got to play carefully, there."

"I thought she would be soft, with the husband out of the way."

“SO did I, worse luck. But Anita Marie tells me that a nephew has blown in from the sticks to mess up the game. That won't mean anything when I begin to work; but it would be just as well if friend nephew wasn't around.”

“Because -“

“Because of what Slade pulled. This nephew may be a wise boy. Slade said it was O.K. after he spotted the lay. He did the job so clean that even Anita Marie doesn't suspect. But a nephew, right there in the house -“

“He could never trace Slade.”

“Right! But he could suspect that something was wrong. I'll be watching him like a hawk, chief. If his only trouble is not being able to see the light, I'll fix that. Skeptics are my meat - with gravy in addition.”

“You say Anita Marie has no idea about -“

“That dumb dollar-grabber?” The voice of Rajah Brahman was contemptuous. “Say, chief, she's the dumbest spook queen along the whole route. Thinks because she brings a lot of people into her camp that she's good.

“Fifty a night at a dollar a head! I could have them hanging out of the galleries of the Hippodrome at that price.”

“I know you could, Bert.”

A match flickered to reveal the cunning face of the unbearded mystic. Rajah Brahman was lighting another cigarette. The man in the chair laughed slightly as he glimpsed the ex-Hindu on the throne.

“I would have said to ditch her long ago,” declared the self-styled rajah, “if I hadn't figured that some day she would bring in a good one like this Mrs. Garwood.

“You know, chief, this racket has its troubles. I've found that out on the road. I can learn plenty when I crash the circles without my whiskers.”

“What's the difficulty?”

“If you get a smart fellow like Jacques,” answered Rajah Brahman, “he's too anxious to grab the big money for himself. If you get a small-timer like Anita Marie, she can't deliver the real goods.”

“Which do you prefer?”

“The small-timers are best - if they manage to deliver. They know when they're over their depth. They know they can't compete with a big shot.

“They're only too glad to play into favor and send along a real customer. They're satisfied with a small cut, too, because they don't know what big money is.”

“You're right on that, Bert.”

“Do you remember that big clean-up we made a year ago” - the rajah's cigarette light was swaying back and forth as he spoke - “I mean, the third time I came back from India -“

“Half a million gross,” came the voice of the hidden chief.

“Well,” declared Rajah Brahman quietly, “this sheep-clipping job is going to double that. Maybe more. My mystic shrine in India is still in need of endowments. Copper is going up. Spirits still like to take back valuable souvenirs when they depart for the astral plane.

“Jacques is out of the picture. He has been pretty tight about sending up his best payers to the big league. Now, since he forgot himself with the dirk, he's ready to do anything we ask. He wants to forget all his old clientele. I can handle the entire lot.

“Anita Marie has chipped in with a real bet in this Garwood woman. She's good for plenty of jack. Maybe the best sucker of the lot. I'll pay off Anita's mortgage on that joint of hers in Philadelphia, and she'll be tickled green.

“There's a couple of good ones coming from the Middle West, all ripe for my psychic development classes. There's one coming from Cincinnati that is a sure bet.”

“You mean Arthur Dykeman?”

“Right. Since his daughter floated to the upper plane, he's been looking everywhere for a materialization. Madame Plunket, out in Cincinnati, passed him along as her contribution.

“The madame goes in for better game than Anita Marie, but she's pretty cheap, too - and Dykeman will be pretty near all profit.”

“Thanks to Slade,” observed the chief.

“Yes,” responded the rajah. “Slade did well there. That's why I figured this Philadelphia proposition would be safe. I didn't waste any time after Anita Marie gave me the news about Mrs. Garwood.”

THERE was silence in the darkened room. The shrouding curtain at the doorway masked all light. Rajah Brahman's cigarette had gone. But the interview was not yet over. The rajah had an important matter to discuss.

"Say, chief," he said, "you wrote me that you didn't like the mess up at the Hotel Dalban. You figured that it might mean a lot of trouble of a kind we didn't expect. What did you mean by that?"

"I was thinking about the person who started the trouble," came the quiet reply. "He put Jacques out of commission. He may try something like it again."

"Just a wise guy. Jacques lost his head, that's all."

"No, that isn't all. There was something unreal about the whole affair. The man who commenced it came from nowhere. He went back to where he came. Puffed out of the room like a cloud of smoke!"

"He can't bother us any more. He probably knows that the police think he did it. He'll lay low from now on."

"Not if he is the man I think he is." There was an ominous tone to the remark. It was impressive even to Rajah Brahman, the man who was law unto himself.

"Do you know who he is, chief?"

"Did you ever hear of The Shadow?"

"The Shadow!" Rajah Brahman's exclamation was a low, quick cry. "Do you think it was The Shadow?"

"I suspect it," said the chief. "The people in that room were a scared lot, and Jacques felt it as badly as any of them. He said that the laugh came from the other world. I wouldn't be surprised if he believed it."

"I have heard that The Shadow laughs like that. I have heard that The Shadow is a man who disappears mysteriously. There are gangsters who are afraid to turn, because they dread The Shadow!"

"The Shadow goes after gunmen," declared Rajah Brahman. "He wouldn't spend his time trying to grab spooks."

"Not ordinarily," replied the chief, "but don't forget that The Shadow plays for big game. If he knew that Jacques was just one member of our ring -"

The voice ended with its fateful suggestion. The remark awoke a responsive chord in Rajah Brahman. The man on the throne was no longer confident.

"I'm glad you told me this, chief," he said. "I see your point, now. We are playing our cards mighty close, but we have our fingers on one of the biggest rackets in the country. We've got to be on the watch."

"If The Shadow is in back of this, he may try to tumble me - like he tumbled Jacques."

"Exactly."

"Well, my eyes are open. I'm taking preferred customers only. A stranger doesn't have a chance up here. You know that, chief."

The rajah spoke with a renewed assurance. He arose from his throne, and strode through the darkened room. He pushed aside the heavy curtain of the anteroom, and beckoned to his companion. The two plotters were quartered in the outer room when Imam Singh joined them.

"Tony," said Rajah Brahman quietly, "it's up to you to keep a close watch on everything. The big work is beginning, and we have a hunch there may be trouble - from The Shadow."

The turban-capped servant opened his eyes and nodded.

"Remember it," admonished the shirt-sleeved rajah.

He thrust out his dark-stained hand and received the clasp of his chief. Tony, otherwise known as Imam Singh, ushered the visitor to the door. Rajah Brahman swung about and looked toward the curtain that shrouded the entrance to his sanctum.

He was staring at a mass of solid blackness beside the door. It did not move. Rajah Brahman gave it no further notice. He laughed as he went through the curtain.

A long shadow fell upon the floor of the anteroom. It moved toward the outer door, and a tall, black clad form followed it. The silent stranger merged with the wall as Imam Singh returned.

When the servant had left to join his master, somewhere beyond the sanctuary, the stranger in black laughed.

His whispered tones were different from the sordid mirth that Rajah Brahman had uttered. The laugh of The Shadow, as it sounded in that little room, was filled with sinister mockery. While the low echoes still resounded, the man in black was gone.

It was an hour afterward that two hands appeared above a lighted spot on a plain table. Upon one glowed the mystic fire of the girasol.

The white hands fingered a sheaf of newspaper clippings. They removed one that told of the death of Stella Dykeman, a Cincinnati debutante, in an automobile accident, a month ago.

The hands produced a tiny metal disk. They busied themselves with it for a short while. Then the light went out, and a sardonic laugh rippled through the tomblike room.

WHEN Detective Joe Cardona reached his office in the morning, he found grins awaiting him. The answer was a package on his desk. Unconscious

of ridiculing eyes, Cardona opened the cardboard box, and disclosed another bunch of fresh violets.

"Guess these were meant for Fritz," declared Cardona gruffly.

He pushed his way through a throng of viewing detectives. He encountered the janitor standing in the hallway. He thrust the flowers in the man's hands, much to the merriment of those who watched him.

The janitor was dumfounded. For this was the real Fritz - not the unknown man who sometimes played his part. Fritz, followed by a group of laughers, went to his locker and placed the violets upon the shelf.

Alone at his desk, Cardona was staring at a tiny disk in his right hand. He had drawn it from the violet stems, and had retained it there when he had given the bouquet to Fritz. Upon the disk were inscribed these words:

ACCIDENT

CINCINNATI

MARCH

The disk clinked in Cardona's pocket. The detective donned his hat and left the office. Half an hour later, he was riding toward the Pennsylvania Station, in a taxicab, his suitcase on the seat beside him.

CHAPTER X

SPIRITS APPEAR

RAJAH BRAHMAN, clad in full Oriental regalia, was listening at a secret panel which opened into his reception room. A smile gleamed upon his dark-dyed face. Carefully, he opened a slot in the panel. His keen eye peered through and observed the visitors who had assembled.

There were nearly twenty persons present all of them people of affluence. Shrewdly, the rajah took account of their identities.

The throng was about equally divided into men and women. Among the latter was the wife of a rich Chicago packer - a woman worth more than a million in her own right. She had come with hopes of communicating with a child that had died in infancy. Rajah Brahman smiled.

He saw a man from Los Angeles an elderly gentleman who had long since retired from business. He was a regular contributor to the many mediums who thrived in the metropolis of southern California.

A good prospect - but one who should be worked slowly, he had been corralled by the leader of the psychic circle in Los Angeles.

Weaned from his many spiritualistic interests, this man from the Pacific coast had made a special trip to New York to attend the seance of the renowned Rajah Brahman, whose fame lived everywhere.

In a corner stood two men; both legacies from the now defunct circle once conducted by Professor Raoul Jacques. One of these was Benjamin Castelle - a skeptic, but a wealthy man whose presence was desirable.

The other was Thomas Telford, the prospective dupe whom Jacques had recommended. Rajah Brahman smiled once more. Those notes that Jacques had left were to prove useful even though the Hindu seer pretended that he had no need of them.

A middle-aged woman attracted the rajah's attention. This was Mrs. Garwood, from Philadelphia. One glance told the renowned rajah that here was a true believer. Impressed by the crude demonstrations of Anita Marie, she would be an easy mark.

The mystic's forehead wrinkled as he noted the young man who stood beside her. This was the nephew of whom Anita Marie had spoken. His presence was not pleasing to the seer.

One last glance showed Arthur Dykeman, an elderly, gray-haired man who stood moody and alone, his face worn with care and unhappiness. He had come here to seek word from his lost daughter, the only child who had been in line for his millions.

Stricken with grief, the miserable father was willing to pay thousands for one brief glimpse of his departed child. So far, he had received but little solace.

Tonight, Rajah Brahman reflected, happiness would come to the tired spirit of that man. Short happiness for Arthur Dykeman; continued profit for Rajah Brahman and his chief.

The tiny opening closed. Rajah Brahman walked into a darkened hall. He found Imam Singh - otherwise Tony - seated, turbanless, at a table, with a pair of earphones adjusted to his head.

A sheaf of penciled notations showed that the assistant had been keeping close tabs on the discussions that were going on in the reception room. For the earphones were connected with a dictagraph that was hidden on the wall of the other room.

Rajah Brahman smiled and stroked his false beard as he watched Imam Singh at work. He reached out, removed the earphones from the man's head, and placed them over his own ears.

Seating himself at the table, he listened intently, then pointed to the door. Tony understood the signal. It was his cue to usher the guests into the seance room. The servant put on his turban and left.

The babble from the earphones died away. Tony returned and stood waiting. Rajah Brahman was carefully scanning the written notations.

"Good work, Tony," he said. "Wait for your cue - after I finish with Mrs. Furzeman, the fat woman from Chicago."

"O.K.," said Tony.

"You'll have plenty of time to make up," declared Rajah Brahman. "Is the table all loaded?"

"Yes."

"Let's go, then!"

Rajah Brahman was an imposing figure as he strode into the seance room. Faithful Imam Singh preceded him and stood waiting for the appearance of the master. Arms-folded, standing at the left of the throne, Imam Singh brought an awed silence to the seated group.

When Rajah Brahman appeared, a slight buzz of admiration arose, but it was quickly silenced by an impressive glare from the medium's dark eyes.

SEATING himself upon the throne, Rajah Brahman assumed the passivity of the golden Buddha. After a few moments, his head turned slowly, and his eyes met those of different persons in the group.

They singled out the woman from Chicago, and noted her enraptured gaze. They rested calmly upon the face of Arthur Dykeman, the bereaved father.

Finally, they stared directly at the face of Benjamin Castelle.

A faint smile appeared upon the skeptic's lips as he met the seer's challenging stare. Rajah Brahman was unmoved. He saw the smile fade slowly away.

"I speak," declared the rajah, in a voice that bore a foreign tone, "to those who are willing to see the light. To all others I say that your presence here is purposeless.

"I see among you some of the faithful who have learned my first lessons in Hindu occultism. I may say that all mediumship has originated in the Orient - among the Yogi of the Himalayas and the Mahatmas of Tibet.

"It is from such masters that I have learned my hidden knowledge. This must be understood by all who have not yet been versed in the true development of psychic mediumship.

"I see one" - the rajah's eyes assumed a glassy stare - "who has suffered a grief more recent than all others. One woman among you has come here tonight because she seeks advice of a person on whom she has relied for years."

The seer's head turned and stared directly toward Maude Garwood. The widow pressed her nephew's arm, as she sighed in rapture. The stern face of the rajah softened.

"All cannot cross immediately the barrier that lies between the earthly plane and the astral," he declared. "Your husband, madame" - a gasp of astonishment came from Maude Garwood - "has not yet reached the higher plane from which I can hope to conjure his spirit. But perhaps I may gain a message of hope."

He clapped his hands three times, and Imam Singh bowed before the throne. The rajah spoke a few words in Hindustani.

The servant walked to the side of the room, and returned with a tall, gilded table. He placed it before the throne. Opposite, he set a large chair. He turned toward Mrs. Garwood, and made a salaam. The woman understood. She was to seat herself in the chair.

She arose with a short, happy glance toward her nephew, and sat opposite Rajah Brahman.

"It is in the dark that spirits manifest themselves," stated the seer. "But as conditions are not yet such that I can produce a complete manifestation of your departed husband, I believe that we may accomplish our wish with out the aid of darkness."

He clapped his hands thrice, and Imam Singh approached with a large slate. Rajah Brahman asked that it be passed about the circle. Meanwhile, he spoke softly to the woman who sat before him, murmuring a jargon of English and a foreign tongue.

Imam Singh arrived with the slate, and placed it on the table. He added a piece of chalk.

Ignoring the chalk, Rajah Brahman showed the slate. He requested Maude Garwood to put the slate under the table, holding it in her own hands, keeping its upper side against the under surface of the table. The woman complied with the request.

"This semblance of darkness," declared the rajah, "may bring us the message that we require. Let us listen."

An impressive silence followed.

"Let me remove the slate," suggested Rajah Brahman.

He did so, and placed the object on the table. The upper side of the slate was still blank. The seer viewed it thoughtfully.

"Perhaps," he said, "a declaration of your identity might induce a response from the spirit. Will you write your name upon the slate, with this chalk?"

Maude Garwood complied.

"One moment," said the rajah. "Is there any one here whom you know - one in this circle who could identify the writing of both yourself and the one who has departed?"

"My nephew," declared Maude Garwood.

"Request him to join us," said the mystic.

Dick Terry approached and stood on one side of the table. Imam Singh was opposite him. Dick noted his aunt's signature upon the slate. He saw Rajah Brahman lift the slate and place it in Maude Garwood's hands.

"Beneath the table," said the medium. "That is right. But be sure to turn it so your signature is downward. Spirits, like mortals, write from above. Listen!"

THE final word commanded silence. The room was breathless. A soft scratching sound seemed to come from the table. The noise ceased. Rajah Brahman nodded to Maude Garwood. The woman brought forth the slate and placed it on the table.

There, in chalk, was written the message:

You were right, Maude, dear. Have faith. My spirit will be with you.

GEOFFREY.

"My husband's writing!" exclaimed Maude Garwood. "Look, Dick! Geoffrey's own words."

Dick Terry scanned the words. He was familiar with his uncle's hand. He was forced to admit that every stroke, even to the signature, was a facsimile of Geoffrey Garwood's inscription.

Dick's face appeared puzzled. Then, with a sudden thought, he reached quickly forward and turned over the slate!

Rajah Brahman smiled. On the opposite side appeared Maude Garwood's signature, exactly as she had written it. Dick was dumfounded.

Imam Singh politely lifted the slate and passed it around the circle. He brought it to Maude Garwood, who had returned to her own chair. He let her keep the slate, and the woman smiled while her tear-dimmed eyes shone.

The table was carried away by the Hindu servant. Thoughtfully, Rajah Brahman stared into space.

"I see a little child," he stated, "a child living in the spirit realm. A child who has dwelt in the astral plane since infancy. Does any one recognize the spirit? It is close to one who is here tonight - close to a woman in our midst."

The woman from Chicago was nodding. Rajah Brahman motioned to Dick Terry and to Benjamin Castelle. He extended his arms and asked each man to stand beside him. Simultaneously, the lights went out as Imam Singh pressed the switch.

"Hold my wrists, good friends," said Rajah Brahman. "Hold my wrists. One on either side."

The men obeyed. They could feel the mystic's arms touching them. A long sigh came from the medium, then a short moan. A tiny flicker of light floated about in the air above the sitters.

The light grew; then gradually disappeared. It emerged again and developed into a flitting, luminous form. It took the vague shape of a baby that floated back and forth, close to the floor, then high above the heads.

Directly from the spirit shape came a low, baby cry. It grew louder; then faded. With its passing, the tiny shape began to disappear, exactly as though it were entering an unseen dimension of space.

A prolonged gasp came from Rajah Brahman. He wrenched his arms, and for a moment, Dick thought the man would totter from the throne. Then came his call to Imam Singh.

The lights appeared to show Rajah Brahman, with arms outstretched, leaning upon the two men for support.

Eyes looked toward the ceiling. There was no sign of the vanished spook.

Mrs. Furzeman was at the rajah's throne, pouring forth her gratitude. She had recognized the spirit of her child. For the first time, she had seen a full materialization.

The rajah bowed in acknowledgment of her thanks. He could see that the entire group was awed, and now he prepared for the greatest spectacle of the evening.

A cabinet, mounted on a light but broad platform, was carried forward by Imam Singh. The spectators watched curiously as the Hindu servant arranged it in the center of the circle. The cabinet had upright corner rods and a thin, black top.

There were curtains at the sides; these were controlled by a single tasseled cord, the end of which was carried to Rajah Brahman by his servant.

Imam Singh went to the wall, and changed the lights until only a mild, indirect glow produced a soothing luminosity. Under that illumination, the high ceiling alone showed traces of light. The floor all about the cabinet was vague and obscure.

Not even the white-clad Hindu servant was visible. Only a faint sparkle from the costume of the jeweled rajah reflected the lights from above.

"Within these curtains," said Rajah Brahman softly, "I shall materialize a spirit - one that some one here shall recognize. Be thoughtful in your speech with the spirit. Remember that it will appear from another plane -"

The voice ended as the curtains swished down. The rajah had released the cord. A tenseness came over the circle. Minutes ticked slowly by, until the rajah drew the cord to raise the curtains. The bare vacancy of the cabinet was scarcely discernible.

"Let us wait," said Rajah Brahman solemnly. "My psychic vision shows that one will soon be with us -"

As his mystic tones dwindled, all eyes watched the cabinet. A luminous spot was appearing upon the platform, which stood a foot above the floor. The spot enlarged. It became a shapeless mass. Taller, taller it grew, until a radiant form of light stood swaying in the cabinet.

The outline of a human face was visible. It turned about as though seeking some one in the circle. It stopped, and as it lingered, those who watched saw the countenance of a beautiful young girl.

"My daughter! Stella!" The cry came from Arthur Dykeman, the man from Cincinnati.

DYKEMAN was pressing forward; seeking to grasp the ethereal vision, but the materialized girl waved him back. A voice came from the spirit - a plaintive murmur - and Dykeman paused to listen to its message.

"I must return to the astral plane," were the words. "I cannot linger long tonight. I have found the guide who can bring me here again. Have faith, dear father. Have faith."

"Are you happy, daughter?"

"Yes, father. All is happiness on the higher plane. All is happiness -"

The spirit extended her hands.

"You may touch her hands," said Rajah Brahman, in a low tone. "Be careful, that is all. She is completely materialized. Step back when she commences to sway -"

Dykeman was clasping the hands of the gorgeous spirit. The form shimmered weirdly, and the father moved away. Still, the form remained.

"She is waiting for you to speak," said Rajah Brahman. "She wishes a token of your love - a token of remembrance -"

Arthur Dykeman was fumbling in his pockets. He brought out a jewel case. As he opened it, the sparkle of gems showed as they reflected the dazzling luminosity of the spectral vision. The girl spirit was out of the cabinet, now - a few paces forward.

"Your jewels, darling" - Dykeman's voice was faltering - "your own jewels - those that belonged to your mother before -"

One by one, the man placed the glittering rings upon the fingers of the shining, extended hands. As the task was ended, the form began to sway. Dykeman stepped back, and the vision dwindled.

It moved toward the cabinet; there it became a swirling patch of light, until finally all was blackness. The curtains swished upward.

A long silence followed. At last, Rajah Brahman spoke, in a low, weary voice.

"I no longer feel the presence of my spirit guide. Like the materialized form, he has returned to the astral plane."

The man on the throne clapped his hands, weakly. Lights came on in the room. Imam Singh was standing by the door. Rajah Brahman was reclining on his throne.

He dropped the tasseled cord as Imam Singh approached. The servant drew the cord to reveal the bare cabinet. He drew the contrivance away to the side of the room.

The sitters knew that the seance was ended. Some obeyed the gestures of Imam Singh, who motioned them toward the reception room. Others, a trifle more bold, approached the rajah's throne.

All had been impressed by the amazing seance - particularly the ones who had seen spirits which they recognized.

Dick Terry and his aunt were close by when Benjamin Castelle was speaking to Rajah Brahman.

"A wonderful demonstration," Castelle was saying. "I am a skeptic, you know, but seances such as this will make me a believer. This gentleman" - he indicated Thomas Telford, standing near - "told me that he was anxious to speak to you. He is new in psychic research -"

Rajah Brahman was looking toward Telford. He saw a tall, elderly gentleman, whose face was mild and whose eyes were half shut. He motioned to the man to approach. With one hand on Telford's shoulder, the seer spoke in a low voice.

"I saw a spirit form near you tonight," he said. "I know that there is a message for you - a message that concerns you gravely. Have faith. Perhaps, at my next seance, I can prevail upon that spirit to speak.

"Rome was not built in a day. We must not hope to commune with the spirits too rapidly. But soon - I promise you - soon."

THE mystic sat upright on his throne, and folded his arms. Those who understood, knew that he was preparing for his hour of contemplation when he sought the advice of his spirit guide. The little group moved away and went to the reception room. Imam Singh closed the door behind them.

In the reception room, Maude Garwood was speaking in rapture to her nephew. The two were alone.

"Wasn't it wonderful, Dick?" she asked. "The message from Geoffrey - ah! Perhaps I may see him as that man saw his daughter - that was wonderful, Dick!"

"Yes," grunted Dick, still unconvinced. "Wonderful, the way he passed over fifty thousand dollars' worth of jewelry. This rajah is clever, Aunt Maude - very clever - but he is a faker!"

Maude Garwood was protesting as they left the room. Dick Terry was not listening. His hand had gone to his coat pocket - and as they were riding downstairs in the elevator, Dick was wondering about an object that he had discovered there.

When they reached the lobby, Dick went out to find the limousine, which had been forced to park a distance away from the hotel. By the light of a street lamp, he brought the object from his pocket.

It was a large gold watch. Dick placed it to his ear. The watch was not running. He stared at the dial, then tried to open the case. He could not budge it.

How had he obtained this timepiece? Dick could give no explanation. Unless it had materialized in his pocket, there was no way of explaining its presence there. Dick pocketed the watch in bewilderment.

Then, to his ears, came the slight echo of a startling laugh. Strange, sinister tones that seemed to have no author. Dick glanced about him, startled. There was no one near by.

The ripples of the laugh died away. The sound was more uncanny than the strange manifestations that had taken place in Rajah Brahman's seance room.

What was the meaning of that laugh? Had some one - a weird phantom of the night - seen him glancing at the mysterious watch? Were there really spooks, that came and went in the darkness?

Dick Terry was bewildered more than before. He felt that he was on the border of the unexplainable.

He did not know that he had heard the laugh of The Shadow!

CHAPTER XI

ROGUES AGREE

WHEN Imam Singh reappeared in Rajah Brahman's seance room, to indicate that the last of the visitors had gone, the seer arose from his throne and cast aside his resplendent turban.

"It all went smooth tonight, Tony," he said. "Good work, boy!"

With his assistant's aid, the mystic divested himself of the remainder of his Hindu garb, and drew the package of cigarettes from his trousers pocket. While he smoked, Tony brought in the basin, towel, and jar of cold cream. Rajah Brahman laid his cigarette aside and attacked his make-up.

Smooth-faced, and several shades lighter in complexion, he stretched his arms and laughed. Then he went to the tall table that stood in a corner of the room - the same table that Imam Singh had brought forward for the slate writing.

The transformed seer turned the table upside down. From a racklike slide, he removed a blank slate.

"I knocked that nephew goggle-eyed, didn't I?" he asked. "This is a sweet stunt, the way I work it now, Tony. I pulled out the message slate with one hand, while I slid the blank into the slots. That was the time I didn't get the message."

He paused and laughed.

"They sure fell for it," he added. "Neither the dame nor her nephew had an idea that she was writing her name on top of a slate that already had the message! I let her handle it alone from then on. I thought that copy of the old man's writing would knock them dead."

Tony, no longer wearing the solemn countenance of Imam Singh, was grinning as he carried the garments of the rajah into the adjoining room. The unmasked Hindu made a brief inspection of the cabinet at the side of the room, then joined his assistant.

Picking up the jacket of his Hindu costume, Rajah Brahman felt among its folds. Not discovering what he sought, he turned to his companion.

"Where did you put the phony watch, Tony?"

"It must be there still."

"I can't find it. Sure you didn't take it out of the secret pocket?"

"No."

"That's funny," declared the rajah. "I shoved it there when I yanked my hand away from Castelle - just before I gave you the word to turn on the lights."

"Maybe that's it," said Tony, pointing to an object on a table in the corner. "I don't remember putting it there, though."

Rajah Brahman picked up a watch that was lying on the table. He placed the stem to his lips. He blew a puff of air, and the watch itself slid away along a noiseless telescoping rod that stretched its slender length a distance of six feet.

Gripping the stem beneath his teeth, the rajah puffed slowly, and the front of the watch opened. A balloonlike form came into view - appearing more like a toy than a spirit - for there was light in this room.

The mystic shook his head. He sucked in his breath. The balloon flopped into the watch. Rajah's head went back, and the bulk of the fake watch slid down the telescopic rod. The rajah locked it with a click of the stem, and laid the watch on the table.

"That's the old one," he declared. "I had it out tonight, before the seance. I was using the new one - it makes a spook twice as big as the other, so it's more effective."

"Take a look around the seance room, Tony," he added with a touch of worry. "It would be a bad thing to have that lying where some one might pick it up."

Before the assistant could start forth on his search, a buzzer sounded.

"That's Martin Slade," declared Rajah Brahman. "Show him in, Tony."

A minute later, a cool-faced man entered the sanctum and smiled as he viewed the shirt-sleeved rajah. The mystic looked toward his visitor.

Martin Slade was a man of good appearance. Quietly dressed, faultlessly attired, he presented himself well. Only the slight shiftiness of his eyes betrayed the manner of a crook.

"Hello, Bert," greeted Slade, in a smooth, convincing voice. "The chief told me you wanted to see me."

"I do," said Rajah Brahman. "Sit down. I've got a couple of jobs for you, right here in New York. You're going to stay here for a while."

Slade nodded and took a chair.

"First of all," declared Rajah Brahman, "we must clinch the Garwood proposition."

"I CLEANED that up for you, Bert," responded Slade. "You know how I worked it down in Philadelphia. The old man's out of the way -"

"Yes," interrupted the rajah, "but there's another trouble now. Mrs. Garwood has come to New York, as Anita Marie told her to do. But she has brought her nephew along with her. A fellow from Texas, named Dick Terry. He was here tonight at the seance."

"Did he try to queer your act?"

"No. On the contrary, I fooled him completely. But I've sized him up, Slade, and he's going to be a tough customer. It would be best to have him out of the picture."

"That's easy, here in New York. You know how I stand with Barney Gleason's mob. They don't know my racket. They'll do what I tell them - cheap."

"All right. Keep that in mind. But remember - it's got to be done so the old lady won't suspect anything is wrong. Fix it so the nephew disappears, and is in wrong with his aunt. Think it over, Slade. See me about it later."

"I'll do that, Bert. What's the other job?"

"An easy one for you, Slade. I've added a new sucker to the list - an easy play if I can get the story. Jacques left a complete report on him. He was here tonight. Tony!"

The last word was in a louder tone. The white clad form of Imam Singh entered the sanctum.

"Get me the dope on Telford," ordered Rajah Brahman.

The assistant went away, and returned with a sheet of paper. Rajah Brahman smiled as he consulted the document, holding it close to the light so he could read it more readily.

"Here's the dope, Slade," he said. "Telford is a wealthy man from New Orleans. We don't have a psychic circle there, yet, or we probably would have landed him direct."

"However, Telford had a row with his only son, several years ago. The son ran away. The old man heard from him in New York. He learned that the son - James - had gone to sea. He thinks that the boy drowned in a ship that sunk off the coast of Virginia."

"Telford has been living in a house on Long Island, hoping that he might trace poor young Jim - if the boy is still alive."

"Lately, he got the idea that maybe if his son was dead, the spirits could be of help. That's how he happened to get in touch with Professor Jacques."

"So far, the information is meager, but Jacques has learned one thing that is going to help. Telford has accumulated everything pertaining to his son - letters that young Jim wrote; a diary that he kept; newspaper clippings; photographs and what not."

"Did Jacques see any of them?" questioned Slade.

"No," replied the rajah. "That's the best part of it. The old man has them all in a safe out on Long Island. He's living alone in a small home. An old housekeeper is there, but she's a bit deaf. Jacques talked to her on the telephone once."

"So my job is -"

"To crack that safe some night when Telford is away. Find out all you can - but don't leave any traces. Telford said something about going up to Boston to-morrow to see an old seaman who was on the same boat with his son."

"Get this: the old man talks about his grief, but he's cagey. That's why I like it. When I begin to give him specific information, he will fall like a ton of bricks."

"If he's going to be away," said Slade thoughtfully, "I may be able to bring the stuff in here, and take it back after you've looked at it."

"Great!" exclaimed the rajah. "If you can work it that way, so much the better."

"That means I'll have to stay in New York," said Slade. "Well, the other jobs can wait. St. Louis is all right. So is Cleveland. The Chicago job is off for the present, anyhow. Madame Plunket is working there, now, instead of Cincinnati."

"The chief and I talked about it, this afternoon. She has most of the members of the old psychic circle, and it isn't a good idea to work on her customers so soon after the Dykeman job."

"That settles it, then," said the rajah. "Go after Telford right away. Then look over the Garwood proposition. I want that fellow Terry out of the way."

RAJAH BRAHMAN paced slowly back and forth across the room. He was an incongruous figure, now, in his shirt sleeves.

He was thinking about something of importance - a matter which he wished to discuss with Martin Slade. But he was doubtful of the advisability. At last, he stopped and put his first statement into the form of a question.

"What else did the chief have to say?" asked the rajah.

"He talked about the copper stock," said Slade. "It's going great guns. He's letting it out as fast as the brokers call for it. He says if it keeps on the way it's going now, he'll unload completely and start on another line."

"He'd better be thinking about it pretty quickly, then," declared Rajah Brahman. "When he dropped Consolidated Timber and started an Coronado Copper, it took a couple of months for the suckers to switch."

"They were still crying for the timber stock. That means a switch all along the line. Little Flower can't begin to change her tune overnight, and there's a

lock of mediums working her overtime right now.”

“He’s going to speak to you about it,” said Slade.

“Did he mention anything else?” questioned the rajah.

“Nothing of importance.”

“Maybe he thought it would be best to keep quiet,” said Rajah Brahman, “but it’s up to me as well as to him. So I’m going to let you in on it, Slade.

“I was talking with the chief the other night. We were discussing that affair up at the Dalban. We thought - only thought, mind you - that maybe The Shadow was mixed in it.”

“The Shadow!” exclaimed Slade.

A change came over the man’s calm face. He glanced about him as though expecting a sinister form to emerge from the curtains of the anteroom. Rajah Brahman eyed his confederate closely.

“Did you ever see The Shadow?” he asked.

“No,” returned Slade. “I don’t want to see him, either! I’ve kept clear of him for a long while, Bert. They say he’s uncanny - that he can be everywhere at once. I don’t like it, Bert, if he’s in it -”

“Don’t talk foolishly, Slade,” argued Rajah Brahman. “We’re only discussing possibilities. It looks like The Shadow, and it doesn’t look like him. That’s enough, isn’t it? All it means is to keep your eyes open.”

“I’ll do that, Bert! If I get the least suspicion that The Shadow is wise to anything, I won’t be asleep a minute. I work smooth, Bert, and there’s only one man in the country who could get on my trail if he ever went after it. That’s The Shadow himself!”

“It doesn’t concern you, at present,” said the rajah quietly. “The Jacques affair was a mistake. It’s not linked with any of your doings. I’m only telling you, because you’re working in New York, right now. The Shadow doesn’t fool around the sticks. Cincinnati - Philadelphia - all the rest of them. The Shadow isn’t in those places.”

“That’s right, Bert,” said Slade, in a relieved tone.

“I’m the one who must be careful,” declared Rajah Brahman. “And I’m not worried about The Shadow. As a matter of fact, I wouldn’t mind meeting him. If he’s as slippery as they say he is, he’d be a good assistant to use in the spook cabinet.”

THE tone of derision made Martin Slade grin. His momentary qualms were ended. He spoke reassuringly.

“You don’t have to worry,” declared Slade. “What if The Shadow should find out that Rajah Brahman was Bert Clutten? You’ve never been mixed up in the killings, directly. Neither has Tony.”

“I said that I was not worrying,” responded Rajah Brahman. “But I’m on the lookout, just the same. If The Shadow took a shot at the seance Jacques was giving, he may try the same with me. That’s all.”

“He can’t do it, Bert,” declared Slade emphatically. “From all I hear, it’s beginning to leak out that the police are after a stranger who was at the Dalban seance. The rumor is that they think an unknown man killed Harvey. So that bird - whether he’s The Shadow or not - will have to lay low for a while.”

“That’s what the chief and I decided,” said Rajah Brahman. “But I have a different idea about it, now. I wouldn’t be surprised if The Shadow should pop into my seance room any night. You know who’s handling the Harvey murder, don’t you?”

“Sure. Joe Cardona,” Slade answered.

“Right. Where is he?”

“There’s talk about him being away on leave.”

“Right,” the rajah responded. “Did you stop to think that this is an odd time for him to be away?”

Slade became slightly nervous.

“You don’t mean” - his voice was tense - “that Cardona might have got wise to the other rings -”

“Not a bit of it!” laughed Rajah Brahman derisively. “That flatfoot couldn’t get wise to anything. At the same time, I’d rather have him here in New York than away.”

“Why?” questioned Slade, in surprise.

“Because Cardona loves to kick up a fuss,” Rajah Brahman explained. “If The Shadow is in this, playing a waiting game, he can’t do much while Cardona is in town. Cardona would come blundering on the job as soon as The Shadow started anything. That’s why I think there’s a reason for Cardona’s absence.”

“You mean The Shadow?”

“Yes. I mean The Shadow may have decoyed Cardona somewhere. Unless - which is only one chance in a thousand - Cardona has really got a clew. But he can’t get far with it if he has. It’s The Shadow I think about - not Cardona-”

"I get you, Bert."

"If Cardona moves," the seer continued, "he gives himself away a week beforehand. But you can't tell how The Shadow works. I've heard enough about him to know that. So I'm keeping my eyes open."

"You do the same," he cautioned. "Watch yourself when you come in here. Watch when you go out."

The men strolled into the anteroom, Rajah Brahman repeating his admonition. The tall, temporarily smooth-faced mystic was calm and at ease, but Martin Slade was still dubious as he glanced suspiciously about him. Noting the man's manner, Rajah Brahman pressed his lesson home.

"Come only when necessary," he said. "The chief is staying away except when he can come without anybody suspecting who he is."

"Jacques is out altogether, keeping quiet, and not coming near here. He shipped his paraphernalia over here, and that may have been a mistake. But it was the only way he could get rid of the chair."

"You've got it here now?"

"Yes. Downstairs."

"It's a clever gag, isn't it?"

"Well," declared Rajah Brahman in a noncommittal tone, "I can't say it's no good at all, because nobody suspected it up at the Dalban. They must have looked it over with everything else that was there."

"But I know better gags than that chair, and I wouldn't use it in a seance of my own."

"Particularly now," said Slade.

"Not at any time!" declared Rajah Brahman. "I have my own methods - and I'll fool the mediums with them, as well as the public. The Shadow, too! I'll spot that fellow the minute he puts his soft foot in this place!"

Martin Slade left by the outer door. Rajah Brahman returned to the inner sanctum. He had forgotten all about his missing watch - the tricky device with which he had produced his baby spook.

Not for one instant did the mystic suppose that it was anywhere other than some place in this apartment.

Rajah Brahman had stated to Martin Slade that he would be able to spot The Shadow. Had the pretended seer possessed the second sight which he claimed, he would have had his opportunity now.

For scarcely had the curtain dropped before the door of the inner shrine, than a figure emerged from a darkened spot on the wall beside that very curtain.

It was The Shadow - the tall, mysterious man in black. Once more he had stood unseen before the portal of Rajah Brahman's sanctum.

Softly, The Shadow laughed. Then his tall form glided along the path that Martin Slade had taken.

A soft, eerie laugh echoed in the room to mark The Shadow's passing.

CHAPTER XII

THE RAJAH'S SCHEME

It was exactly forty-eight hours later that Martin Slade again appeared in Rajah Brahman's luxurious apartment. He came in a spirit of elation.

Although the night was warm, Slade was wearing a light overcoat, and he did not divest himself of the outer garment until he was received in Rajah Brahman's sanctum.

He found the false mystic in the natural guise of Bert Clutten. There had been no visitors to-day. It was a Hindu day of repose, and Rajah Brahman was smooth-faced and clad in dressing gown and slippers. He looked up shrewdly as Slade arrived, and smacked a small portfolio upon a chair.

"I've got the whole works!" exclaimed Martin Slade. "Everything - here."

"I thought you were after it last night," declared Rajah Brahman.

"I laid low instead," explained Slade. "I wanted to make sure the old man was away. I got the lay of the place, and was lucky enough to hear that old housekeeper shouting at the top of her lungs over the telephone. Telling some one that the old man wouldn't be back until Tuesday morning - that's to-morrow."

"What about putting the stuff back?" questioned Rajah Brahman, opening the portfolio.

"I'll do it tonight," declared Slade. "There's plenty of time to go over it all and get it back there."

"I was worried about cracking the safe," he went on, "but the old crib was easy when I got started. Opened like the door of an ice box. Nothing to it!"

Rajah Brahman was sorting out the things that the portfolio contained. The expression in his eyes resembled that of a man who has discovered a gold mine. Here were letters clippings - everything that he desired.

Tony - as much Imam Singh as ever - arrived at his master's call, bringing paper and pencil. Cross-legged on the floor, Rajah Brahman began to take notes, calling Martin Slade to sit beside him.

As the minutes went by, the two men gained a perfect account of the past history of young James Telford, Thomas Telford's son.

Rajah Brahman held a photograph in his hand. He looked at Slade thoughtfully. Then he called Tony.

"Take this downstairs and snap it," he ordered. "Wait a moment, Tony! Here's another!"

Referring to his notations, Rajah Brahman selected a small snapshot that showed James Telford standing in front of a Louisiana bungalow. He gave it to Tony also.

"How much do you know about New Orleans?" he inquired of Martin Slade.

"I know it like a book," declared Slade. "Many's the night I've spent along Canal Street - and in the French quarter. I could give you the dimensions of Jackson Square from memory. The old town isn't what it used to be, though - a few years back, when I was there."

"How many years ago?"

"Five or six. Six, now I come to think of it."

"That's about the time young Jim Telford left there," said Rajah Brahman reflectively.

"I get you," said Slade. "Well, if you want any dope to spring on the old man, I can supply it. When you materialize the spook of the lost boy -"

"I don't need information about New Orleans," interrupted Rajah Brahman suavely. "I wanted to know what you knew about the town. It won't be necessary for me to go into details with Thomas Telford. I expect you to do that."

"You expect me -"

"Yes. In other words, there will be no materialization of James Telford."

"But" - Slade could not seem to understand - "but that's why I cracked the safe. You've got the dope, and you're not going to use it?"

"Look at this picture," said Rajah Brahman, thrusting a photograph of the missing man into Slade's hands. "Did you ever see any one who looked like that?"

"The face is familiar," said Slade doubtfully.

"Look at this, then." Rajah Brahman dug among the cushions of his lesser throne, and produced his mirror. "Look right into it, Slade. Then look at the picture."

THE meaning dawned on Martin Slade. The man in the photograph bore a marked resemblance to himself, although the face was nearly ten years younger.

"I'm to play the spook?" he asked. "Is that the idea?"

"I said there would be no materialization," replied the seer, in an impatient tone.

"Then what's the gag?" asked Slade, still puzzled.

"The gag," said Rajah Brahman, "is that Martin Slade, after he accomplishes the bit of work he has to do with Dick Terry, will conveniently cease to exist as an identity. In his place, James Telford will suddenly reappear, to be restored to his father!"

Slade slapped his thigh.

"Great!" he exclaimed. "I get it now. You figure the real James Telford went down with the ship *Castris*, as the newspaper clippings indicate. But - so far as the world will know - he was saved, and will be restored to his father -"

"To his dad," corrected Rajah Brahman. "Don't forget that point. Remember, too, that your dad will call you Jim. Spend a while practicing that handwriting. That reminds me: when Tony comes up, I'll have him take some photographs of these letters, too."

"How will you figure in it?"

"How will I figure? I'm going to be the one who discovers where the missing son is! I'll be the instrument that effects the restoration!"

"Then, when the soft-hearted old man wants to put cash into the endowment of my Hindu shrine, you, through gratitude, will urge him to do so."

"I'll be the only heir," said Slade thoughtfully.

"Right," declared the rajah. "If the game looks good enough, you can play the part of a loving son for a few years, if necessary. But if it begins to go sour, you can act in the meantime."

Martin Slade nodded. Unsurpassed as a calculating devil who could put people out of the world by subtle methods, he saw an easy task in front of him.

"Tony is taking two pictures," declared Rajah Brahman. "One is for our reference. The other - the snapshot - will be in your possession when you find the old man. It tells all about it on the back of the original. There's every reason why you should have one."

"You can play the part, Slade. This is a better job than your old game of working as a butler or a secretary."

"It's the money!" exclaimed Slade, with enthusiasm. "It leaves you high and dry on those other jobs you have, though -"

"For a time," said Rajah Brahman, "but they can wait. I told the chief we were going to hit above a million on this present crop of suckers. I was way too low. We'll be able to retire after this goes through, along with the others. We'll keep on going, though. This will be just the beginning."

The glint in Rajah Brahman's shrewd eyes showed the thoughts toward which his cruel mind was turning. Martin Slade was as gleeful as his comrade.

Tony arrived on the scene, and was given the letters and other documents to photograph. Rajah Brahman began to map out a campaign.

He made notations, and finally reached the point where he decided that further reference to the articles on hand was unnecessary.

"It all depends on you, Slade," he said. "Get going right away. The first job is to put all this stuff back in the safe. After that, lay low and spring the works on Dick Terry."

"When old Telford gets back, I'll give him a seance that will be the turning point of his life. Another soul will be made happy - thanks to Rajah Brahman."

The sarcasm in the man's tone made no impression upon Martin Slade. He was lost in enthusiasm over the clever scheme which was in the making.

Slade gathered the articles into the portfolio, and added the photographs and papers which Tony brought along. Then he left the presence of Rajah Brahman.

There was no thought of hidden shadows in Martin Slade's mind as he crossed the little anteroom. He left the Callao Hotel quietly, and entered his car that was parked outside.

He rode eastward, across the East River, and sped toward the part of Long Island where Thomas Telford kept his residence. The bungalow was on a side suburban street. Slade parked his car a block away, and stole across a vacant lot.

He pried open the window of a darkened room. He entered and crept along until he reached the small room in which the safe was located. There, with the glow of a small flashlight, he opened the safe and placed the portfolio within.

When he had closed the safe, Martin Slade listened. He was tense, for he knew that upon this one deed, the success of the future rested.

Slade flicked out the light. Although the room was soundless, he had a sensation that some one was watching him in the darkness.

What should he do?

HE doubted that Thomas Telford had returned. He could not imagine who else might be here. But it would be best to meet the menace now. Slade turned on his light, and swept it about the room.

He trembled, and started to his feet as a long shadow seemed to project itself across the floor. It seemed ready to seize him in a sinister grasp.

He laughed a forced laugh as he saw that nothing but a fancied silhouette had frightened him. A large bookcase, its farther end projecting from the wall, had evidently caused the shadow.

Slade, despite his trepidation, was sure now that he was alone in this house. Nevertheless, he cursed his folly in having used the light so recklessly. Extinguishing his torch, he crept to the other room.

All the way, even while he was slipping through the window, Slade felt his fear returning. In eager, maddened haste to get away from this place, he clambered through the window, and tumbled to the ground. Regaining his feet, he hurried across the lot, and leaped into his car.

Driving back to Manhattan, he felt ashamed of his timidity. Dread of that sort was something that Martin Slade had never before experienced. He tried to attribute it to nervousness, and finally succeeded.

The room had not seemed uncanny the first time he had visited it. For once, due to his tenseness, his imagination must have gained the better of him.

All would be well, now! A report to Rajah Brahman - a report that would not include an account of the childish terror which had gripped him - and Martin Slade would be ready to become James Telford, when the proper time arrived.

His career as a murderer would be suspended - for a time. But, as usual, his mind was already turning to murder as the easiest way of gaining an evil purpose.

Free to act as he chose, he could watch and wait, after he had become James Telford. Then, his genius for crime would assert itself, as it had done so often in the past.

He thought of Rajah Brahman and the man whom the mystic termed as chief. They had found a use for Martin Slade's ability as a killer. They would find it as useful in the future as it had been in the past.

The only element that disturbed Slade's evil contemplation was a momentary recollection of that darkened room. A shudder came over the murderer as he gripped the wheel more firmly.

Eyes in the dark! He had sensed their presence. But the eyes had not been there. He had looked to see, and had noticed nothing.

BUT had Martin Slade been able to see within that room just then, his dread would have returned in all its forcefulness.

For, back in the home of Thomas Telford, a light switch clicked beside the projecting end of the bookcase. A shadowy blot appeared upon the floor, and spread toward the safe.

A black-clad form stepped from behind the end of the bookcase and swept across the floor. A gloved hand turned the knob of the safe. The door swung open.

The Shadow examined the portfolio. He inspected its contents, and his unseen eyes studied every detail. The portfolio dropped back into its place. The door of the safe closed. The Shadow moved across the room, and the light went out.

A long, low laugh echoed through the stillness. More than ever before, The Shadow's mocking tones carried a foreboding note.

The eyes of The Shadow, hidden in the dark, had caused the fear that had swept over Martin Slade. The crook had instinctively felt the sinister presence.

Yet The Shadow, for some secret purpose, had spared the crouching murderer!

What was the reason?

Only The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER XIII

BELIEVERS AND SKEPTICS

"THERE'S Telford. Take a look at him, Slade."

Martin Slade, peering through the narrow crevice that opened into Rajah Brahman's reception room, spied the tall, gray-haired man upon whose face appeared signs of anxiety.

"Remember. You'll call him dad, pretty soon. I'm going to sell him the idea tonight."

Rajah Brahman, turbaned and whiskered, was standing in the darkness beside Slade as he spoke. A low response came from the man who was to play the part of James Telford.

"Where is Dick Terry?" questioned Slade, in a low voice.

"Just coming in," replied Rajah Brahman. "That's Mrs. Garwood, with him. Look him over, Slade. Remember, I'm trying him once more tonight. He'll either believe, or he'll be out for all he can get on me.

"If that's the case, take your cue. You'll have your chance."

Martin Slade grinned sourly in the dark. Dick Terry, husky and glowering, was a type of man he disliked. Treacherous by nature, Slade had no use for any one who detested thieving ways.

The hidden observer took a last careful look at Thomas Telford. The elderly man was talking to Benjamin Castelle, who was listening in a sympathetic manner.

Telford, the rajah had told Slade, talked constantly about his son, to any who would show interest. Hence Slade decided that the topic must be that subject which was all-important in the life of Thomas Telford.

Most persons would have felt a sense of pity for the old, careworn man, who had suffered so much remorse during his fruitless search. But Martin Slade was a man who had never known what pity was. His lips curled in a contemptuous smile as he thought of the deception he was to practice upon this gullible individual.

Rajah Brahman drew Slade away.

"Come," he said, in a low voice. "You can stay in the sanctum. This seance won't be long. I am giving consultations tonight."

The low laugh which the faker uttered showed that by "consultations" he meant that the birds were ready for plucking. Slade, familiar with the methods of the medium, laughed in return.

They reached the inner shrine. Rajah Brahman, proud as a peacock, strutted about the room. He made an imposing appearance in his Oriental garb, and Slade looked on with admiration. The Rajah was a swindler de luxe.

"Look this over while you're waiting," suggested Rajah Brahman. "It's my bluebook. Information supplied by the dirty dozen themselves."

He handed Slade a heavy, clothbound volume. The man received it with interest, and began to peruse its tabulated, printed pages. The bluebook, a time-honored institution among fraudulent mediums, had become a most powerful instrument in the hands of Rajah Brahman.

In its pages, Slade discovered alphabetical references to all the wealthy persons who were falling for the rajah's crooked game.

The "dirty dozen" were the spirit mediums throughout the country. This volume had been prepared from information which they had supplied to the master faker. Slade noticed, with satisfaction, certain items which were of his doing.

"Daughter, Stella - passed to the spirit plane" - Slade read this reference under the heading of Arthur Dykeman.

He turned to the page that bore Maude Garwood's name, and read aloud.

"Husband, Geoffrey - passed to the spirit plane."

These were but single remarks in pages of useful material. Unclassified numerals appeared upon the borders of certain pages. They were marked in inks of different colors.

Red, Slade decided, meant ordinary fees and contributions. Green must be endowments to the mythical shrine which the rajah claimed to have established in India. Blue were evidently investments in Consolidated Timber; black, sums spent in Coronado Copper.

Slade observed that these final numbers ran well into the thousands. This was the first time that he had ever made a close survey of the notorious bluebook, although he had seen the volume often. He knew that most traveling mediums possessed similar books.

Outside, in the seance room, Rajah Brahman was receiving the faithful. Tonight his shining eyes rested upon the countenance of Thomas Telford.

"There is one among us," declared the medium, in his most solemn tones, "who has long been seeking the light. He has failed in a search for one whom he loves. Now he intends to consult the spirits.

"Perhaps he will hear from his son in the spirit plane. Perhaps others, there, will respond. Let us endeavor in his behalf."

He paused and turned his head until he was staring straight at Dick Terry.

"If there are those here who are skeptical," the rajah added in an impersonal tone, "let them refrain from disturbing the manifestations."

THERE was a challenging sternness in his voice. It was obvious to whom he was speaking. Various believers stared antagonistically toward Dick.

Staring with trancelike gaze, Rajah Brahman began a low incantation. He recited words in Hindustani. Finally, he spoke in English.

"There are four elements: Earth, fire, water, air. It is in water that I see the answer. Let us have water."

Imam Singh approached with a huge brass bowl. He placed it at the rajah's feet. As though performing a ceremony, he went away and returned with a Hindu lota, which was filled with water. He emptied the contents of the small bowl into the large, and went to obtain a new supply of the desired element.

The process of filling the large bowl required several minutes.

Rajah Brahman turned to the right, as though facing his invisible spirit guide. He waited solemnly, then declared that manifestations would be difficult tonight. A voice from the beyond was calling; but its whisper was too low for human ears to detect.

He clapped his hands three times. Imam Singh came forward with a long metal trumpet. It had a white band at the larger end, where it tapered like a megaphone.

Two members of the circle were instructed to take their stand close before the rajah's throne, that they might know he did not leave that sacred spot. The lights were extinguished by Imam Singh. The end of the trumpet glowed with phosphorescent light.

While Rajah Brahman spoke from his throne, the luminous band began to rise in the air. It floated above the heads of the spectators in a weird, bewildering fashion.

At last the voice of the enthroned medium was hushed. Sounds came from the floating trumpet. Words were heard, but they were low and incoherent.

Now, a choking, gurgling sound manifested itself. It was a hideous noise - the gasping cry of a drowning person! An agonized exclamation came from Thomas Telford. It was quickly subdued, and the gurgling noise continued.

Finally, the choking was replaced by a gasping voice. A spirit declared itself in ghostly, whispered tones.

"My body lies in the deep. Far in the deep. I am one who was lost - lost - lost when the ship *Castris* settled to the bottom of the sea."

An awe-inspiring pause; then the weird words continued. "There is one here who wishes to know of that solemn tragedy. One here whom I cannot see. Let that person speak. I shall answer."

"Are you my son?" quavered Thomas Telford. "Are you my son - James Telford?"

"No," came the spirit response. "I can see your son. He is clinging to a small boat. The waves are beating against his body. He lives. Men are drawing him into the boat. He is safe. He is safe. I can see no more. My time has come!"

The voice ended in a spluttering gurgle that told its dreadful significance. The spirit was enacting the event that had ended its mortal career. The choking increased; then faded.

After a short silence, Rajah Brahman called through the dark.

"Are there any who can see farther?"

A whispered voice sighed from the trumpet as it wavered to and fro. It sounded like a wind passing through the treetops. It spoke in tones that were barely distinguishable.

"Have no fear. Your son is waiting. You will find him. Seek him in a spot where there are many people. You will find him there. Be of good heart. It is foretold -"

The voice broke off. The trumpet floated to the floor. Imam Singh pressed the light switch. Darkness ended, and Rajah Brahman was revealed, staring steadily from his throne. Two men stood close by him, and the trumpet was resting on the floor beside the large bowl.

The seer blinked his eyes, and became cognizant of those about him. He looked toward Thomas Telford.

"You have heard the messages of the spirits," he said. "Your son will be restored to you."

Thomas Telford was stepping forward to pour out his thanks, but Rajah Brahman announced that the brief seance was at an end. He was ready to confer with those who waited in the reception room.

FIRST on the list was Maude Garwood. When she was ushered, with Dick Terry, into the presence of the rajah, they found the man from India seated on his throne, alone in the room.

Maude Garwood began an immediate plea. She had come to New York, she said, to seek spirit communication with her dead husband. So far, her wish had not been granted.

Rajah Brahman turned to Dick Terry, who was looking on with a disdainful air.

"This," said the rajah firmly, "is your doing. Your aunt has seen the light. She seeks as a believer. She has already received a message from her beloved husband. It is you who, by your disbelief, make it impossible for her to see his spirit."

Dick curbed a hot retort.

“So long as you persist,” declared Rajah Brahman, “there can be no success. Unless you can believe, it would be wise for you not to visit the seance room.”

“Do you hear that?” demanded Dick, ignoring the seer and speaking directly to his aunt.

“Rajah Brahman speaks the truth,” declared Mrs. Garwood.

“Then I'm not wanted here?” quizzed Dick.

“You have heard the reply,” remarked Rajah Brahman serenely. “You are welcome if you choose to believe. You are not welcome if you do not believe.”

For a moment, Dick gazed threateningly at the man on the throne. Then he spoke to Mrs. Garwood.

“Do you agree with that?” he asked.

The woman nodded solemnly. Without another word, Dick turned on his heel and left the sanctum. He reached the reception room. There, he cooled his heels while Imam Singh was ushering out some others, among them Thomas Telford.

Dick saw the elderly man shake hands with Benjamin Castelle, and he heard Telford mention that he had an appointment with the rajah for the next evening. Then, Imam Singh spied Dick, and brought him his hat.

Going through the hallway, Dick felt his anger subsiding. After all, he owed a duty to his aunt, no matter how foolish she might be. He decided to wait in the downstairs lobby until she arrived.

When he reached the elevator, he encountered a wise-faced man who was waiting there alone. The man grinned knowingly. Dick responded with a grunt.

He did not know that the waiting man was there by design. It was Martin Slade, but Dick Terry had never seen him before.

While they were waiting, Slade made a joking remark that aroused Dick's immediate interest.

“Been up to look over the spook camp?” questioned Slade pleasantly.

“Yes,” replied Dick.

“I haven't been there yet,” said Slade. “I hear it's a great racket.”

“It is,” responded Dick, glad to discover some one who felt the way he did. “It's a fraud, clear through. I'll never go back to the place again.”

“I'm glad to see somebody that's wise,” declared Slade, in a careless tone. “I know plenty about the man that's running it. I could get a lot on him, if I had a mind to.”

The suggestion was all that Dick needed. He tried to pump his companion, as they rode down in the elevator together. In the lobby, Slade drew Dick aside.

“Say,” he said. “Maybe you know somethings I don't know. But there's one fellow - I know him well - who has the real goods on this crooked rajah. If we could get hold of him, he'd tell us plenty. He used to work in the racket.”

“Where is he?” questioned Dick.

“He hangs out in a rowdy joint,” said Slade. “He took me there once, and spilled some stuff about the medium upstairs. I'd like to see him again. Want to go along with me, and look him up?”

Dick expressed his willingness.

“My car's out on the street,” declared Slade. “Come along - I'll take you to meet this fellow.”

Dick and his newfound friend left the lobby together. Dick Terry was entering the trap. Martin Slade was drawing the net about him.

Both men were intent upon their different purposes. They did not glance about the empty lobby as they passed through the revolving door.

Hence Martin Slade, despite his watchfulness, failed to see a tall form in black emerge from the corner of the lobby and follow them into the street.

The Shadow was on the trail!

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRAP CLOSES

MARTIN SLADE listened to Dick Terry's discourse as they rolled along through darkened streets. Dick, elated at having discovered a man who could give the inside story of Rajah Brahman, was telling Slade about Maude Garwood's weakness for matters psychic.

Slade, in turn, was agreeing cordially with everything that Dick had to say.

"It's a terrible racket," declared Slade. "Several times I've wanted to tell the police about it, but I didn't like to start trouble alone."

"I'm willing to," responded Dick.

"Good," said Slade. "I'll back you up. But we'd better see this other fellow first. He may prove useful."

Slade parked his car in an obscure street. Dick, keen in his consideration of Rajah Brahman, had no idea where this place was located. He followed Slade through a narrow alley and up a steep flight of stairs.

They entered a crudely furnished restaurant, which was provided with a rickety bar at one end of the room. A heavy-set, black-haired man was standing behind the bar. Other men were seated at tables.

Slade pointed to a door at the far side of the room.

"There's another room over there," he said. "Let's go in there. We'll be alone."

Dick acquiesced, and followed his companion into a poorly furnished place that had no windows. The bartender appeared. Slade ordered two bottles of beer. When the beer arrived, Dick paid no attention to it. He was anxious to discuss details with Martin Slade.

"Who is this fellow you were talking about?" he asked.

"He comes here every night," said Slade. "Wait a while. We'll see him. Meanwhile, let's get a line on the phony rajah - whatever we know already."

"Look at this," said Dick, pulling an object from his pocket. It was the watch that he had found after the first seance.

"What is it?" asked Slade curiously.

"Something that came from the rajah's seance room," declared Dick. "One of his spook machines. Look!"

He blew into the hollow stem of the watch. The watch sprang forward from a telescopic tube, and a bulging form came from it.

Dick let the shape fall and made the tube collapse. He handed the device to Martin Slade, who examined it closely.

"Say!" he exclaimed. "If we could get a few more contraptions like this one, we'd have the goods on that faker. This gives me an idea.

"I have an apartment on the same floor as Rajah Brahman. That's how I began to get interested - seeing so many people travel in and out. Suppose you stay up there, with me.

"We could watch at close range, and maybe start something that would queer the racket altogether."

Slade leaned his elbow on the table and spoke in a confidential tone that was completely deceiving to Dick.

"You see," he said, "I'm a private investigator for certain concerns. Checking up on men that they thought were pulling something crooked. That's how I happened to run into this fellow they call Reds - his last name slips my mind.

"I just knew him by sight, that was about all, until one time I spotted him up at my apartment house.

"I thought he was playing some phony game, and might be on my trail. So I put it up to him when I saw him down here. He told me he was up at the Callao Hotel seeing Rajah Brahman.

"He used to work for the rajah, and wanted to get back with him, but the rajah wouldn't have anything to do with him. Reds was so sore that he began to spill a lot he knew.

"He said the rajah's real name was Clutten - and a lot of other facts that I don't exactly remember.

"Since then, I've thought about crimping that crook's racket. I've seen so many people coming in and out - going away from there, telling how wonderful Rajah Brahman is.

"You're the first sensible person I've seen come out of there, but of course your story explains it. I'm willing to work with you. But we've got to do it wisely."

"Your idea's a good one," commended Dick. He was being completely misled by Slade's easy manner. "Of course, I'm handcuffed while I'm with my aunt. She believes this faker is wonderful. I can't leave her. If I do, she will hand everything she's got to Rajah Brahman."

"Not if you're watching, she won't," commented Slade. "If she's falling for the rajah's game, the best stunt you can do is try to crimp him before it is too late!"

"You're right," agreed Dick.

"WHY not let your aunt think you have gone back to Texas?" questioned Slade suavely. "She'll tell the rajah that you've left town. He will become bolder then - and you will be watching without his knowing it!"

"Good idea!" said Dick. "I'll leave a note in her hotel. We can go by there tonight."

He fumbled in his pocket and produced a folded sheet of writing paper. Slade was ready with a fountain pen. Dick scrawled these lines:

DEAR AUNT MAUDE:

I have gone back to Texas. I am tired of this foolish waiting to hear what this fake rajah has to say. Take my advice and forget about him. If you don't hear from me again, you can send my trunk to San Antonio when you leave New York.

Signing his name, Dick sought an envelope. He had none, but Martin Slade provided one. It happened to bear the name of a Washington hotel in its upper corner, but Dick paid no attention to that, as he wrote the name of his aunt and her hotel. He sealed the envelope and dropped it on the table.

Slade tapped the fake watch which Dick had handed to him.

"You say that you found this in the seance room?"

"I found it in my pocket," said Dick. "You know, I was just about ready to believe that faker was real. He had been doing some pretty clever stuff. Writing on a slate - these spooks coming out - and all that. But when I found this watch, and made out what it was for, then I knew I had the goods on him."

"I wonder how it came in your pocket," said Slade reflectively. "Maybe he dropped it there in the dark - without realizing it. The other night, you say?"

"Yes. Tonight, he was working with a trumpet. Say - that was weird, all right. It had a lighted end, and you could see it floating all around through the air, with a voice coming out of it!"

"That trumpet gag is old stuff," said Slade, with a knowing air. "The end comes off the trumpet - nothing but a luminous band - and he must have had it hooked on to an extension rod like this one on the watch. That would let him keep the people looking up, thinking they were seeing the trumpet floating.

"Then you figure he had the trumpet with him?" Dick quizzed.

"Sure. So he could make the voices himself. A whisper sounds uncanny through one of those trumpets."

"But I heard a noise like a man drowning. It sounded real -"

"Did he have a bucket of water there?" interposed Slade.

"Yes. Not a bucket" - Dick corrected - "it was a big Hindu bowl."

"That gives it away," laughed Slade. "I know how he did it. He put the end of the trumpet into the water - the big end - and then blew through the small end. It makes a gurgling sound, like a man choking.

"I'm nobody's fool on this sort of stuff, you know," he went on. "I've run into some of these fakers before. But from all I hear, Rajah Brahman must be the ace of them."

Slade was picking up the envelope to give it back to Dick, along with the watch, when suddenly he stopped and stepped to the door, which was slightly ajar. He peered through the crack, and turned to nod to Dick.

"There's Reds now," he said. "Over at the other side of the big room. Sit tight a few minutes. I'll go over to get him."

He slipped through the door, and let it remain slightly opened. Dick, still thinking about Slade's explanation of Rajah Brahman's latest miracle, was not at all suspicious of the man's action. The door opened a few moments later, and two men entered.

Dick looked up, expecting to see Slade and the expected "Reds." Instead, he viewed two tough-looking ruffians, who paid no attention to him. They closed the door behind them, and took a position at a table in the corner of the little room.

Dick waited a few minutes. Then he arose, partly opened the door, and peered out. He closed the door, but not all the way. He went back to his table.

"Hey, you!" growled one of the newcomers. "Close that door! Leave it the way you found it!"

The curt order awoke an angry response from the husky Texan.

"Who are you talking to?" he demanded.

"You - bohunk!" snarled the mobsman.

Dick was on his feet in an instant. Common sense would have told him that retreat was advisable, but he was no man to let an insulting ruffian get the better of him.

The fact that the ugly-faced gangster had a companion meant nothing to Terry. He would have acted the same had there been half a dozen.

THE gangster, big-fisted and crafty-eyed, arose also and advanced to meet his opponent. He made a feint, and shot a swift punch at Dick's ribs.

The Texan warded the blow aside, and swung in with a straight right to the gangster's jaw. The impact was terrific. The man crumpled on the floor.

The other was rising, drawing a gun. Before he could cover Dick with his revolver, the Texan leaped upon him, and the two grappled furiously.

The revolver barked twice, but the shots went by. Getting his right hand free, Dick drove a punch squarely between the gangster's eyes. As the man's grasp weakened, Dick flung him aside.

He grabbed for the revolver, but missed. The gunman was scrambling away. Dick did not follow. He had had a chance to make his getaway, but instead, he reached into his pocket and pulled out a small automatic.

He had carried this weapon with him to Rajah Brahman's. He had said nothing of it to Martin Slade.

Dick was seeing red. He had no time for parley. Quick as a flash, he fired two shots, and the rising gunman sprawled upon the floor. The gun clattered away. Dick, realizing that he might have killed the man, thrust his automatic in his pocket and opened the door of the room.

He looked quickly about for Martin Slade. He saw no sign of his companion. He realized suddenly that the room was half filled with ruffians, like the ones who had just attacked him.

The whole situation dawned in an instant. He had been double-crossed by Martin Slade!

He was in a death trap. The only reason that he had found these men inactive was because they supposed that he not the gangsters - had fallen during the fray in the little room.

There was only one chance for escape - the inner room! As he saw a hand rise with a gleaming revolver, Dick made a dive for the door. A shot rang out, but it found its mark only in the woodwork. Dick was safe in the inner room. But now the horde of gangdom was on his trail.

Three husky gangsters were leaping for the barrier, determined to smash their way through the temporary barricade. Dick Terry was safe for the moment, but he could not hope to withstand the odds that were against him now.

Barney Gleason's mob - the group of sullen thugs who used "Black Pete's" place as their hangout, were springing into action. Two of their number had been overpowered by this stranger. The rest were out for vengeance.

Crash!

A heavy chair smashed against the door. Another swing, and the central panel gave. The third stroke broke the rickety door clear from its hinges. The way was open for the mob of vicious gunmen!

CHAPTER XV

THE HAND OF THE SHADOW

As the door of the inner room clattered to the floor, the attacking mobsmen dropped away to cover. Their first step gained, they waited for the moment. The way was clear, but they knew that in the room an armed man waited them.

A short, powerful ruffian stood in the center of the large, outer room. This was Barney Gleason, leader of the gorillas.

He stared coolly about him, and saw that his forces numbered nearly twenty men. Four were waiting by the door of the inner room. The others were scattered about at tables.

There were a few faces that Barney Gleason did not recognize, but they did not matter. All here were mobsmen, and the few outsiders who were present by chance would follow the law of gangdom. They would join with the attacking mob, if required. But Gleason knew that they would not be needed.

He noticed one man - a grimy, sweater-clad individual - seated at a far table. The fellow's ugly face bore a long, livid scar. He was a man whom Gleason did not know, but that did not matter. A single glance convinced the gang leader that the scar-faced man was a fighter of the underworld.

Like a general reviewing his troops, Barney Gleason finished his calm inspection of his forces. Standing boldly in the center of the room, he faced the door of the inner compartment and waved his automatic in that direction.

"Go get him!" he ordered.

All eyes turned toward the door of the beleaguered room. The four men crouching beside it would be the shock troops. With one sustained rush they would enter and overpower the doomed man.

Perhaps one or more of them might fall. What of it? That was the chance that went with membership in Barney Gleason's mob.

Dick Terry's only hope of escaping the four gorillas would be to break through their attack. That might not be difficult.

If he chose to flee, they would, in all probability, let him go - out into the room where more than a dozen revolvers sparkled in readiness.

It was at that moment that Dick Terry sprang the unexpected. He appeared suddenly at the door of the inner room. He spotted the form of Barney Gleason.

He shot at the gang leader, but Gleason had seen him coming. A series of shots rang out as Gleason dived for cover. Dick Terry dropped back out of sight.

Gleason was on his feet again, making silent signals that all understood. He was giving the cue: Wait for a few minutes.

If Dick appeared again, the crouching shock troops could fling themselves upon him, following him back into the inner room. The other gats must wait.

Like a music maestro, Gleason was lulling with a downward movement of his hands. The meaning was plain.

Moments passed. Barney Gleason, in the center of the room, was snarling meaningless orders to mislead the beleaguered victim. His watchful eye was on the door of the little room, however.

Dick Terry acted as Barney Gleason had hoped. He appeared again at the door, armed with the revolver of the gangster whom he had shot in the little room. He spotted Barney Gleason, but the gang leader was already dodging for the protection of a thick post, and Dick's shots were of no avail.

This time there was no fusillade from the gangsters scattered about the room. Instead, the four gorillas by the door leaped to their feet and threw themselves in a mass toward Dick Terry.

Their attack was totally unexpected. But for a remarkable intervention, they would have fallen upon their startled prey before Dick could fire another shot to save himself. Death was planned as quick and certain.

But the intervention arrived. Automatics barked from close beside the outer door of the big room. Like toy figures, the four attackers went down in quick succession, one toppling - two sprawling - the last slumping slowly to the floor!

It formed a most amazing picture - four fiends of gangland rising silently to the attack, then dropping helplessly at the sound of that protecting gunfire - dropping before they had discharged a solitary bullet!

Barney Gleason whirled toward the spot from which the destructive shots had come. He saw the smoking automatics in the hands of the scarred, unknown gangster. Barney's quick shout, that rose above the echoes of the dying gunfire, was the signal for a free-for-all attack.

Gangsters, on their feet, were aiming for that unexpected enemy, while others were shooting toward Dick Terry at the doorway of the inner room.

Only Barney Gleason was inactive. He was heading for a spot where he would be momentarily protected from the gunfire of the stranger.

THE sharp crack of the stranger's automatics began a split second before the general attack. It was that momentary start that gave him a remarkable advantage. His rising automatics clipped his nearest foemen.

Crouching one instant, he fired straight at a hand that held a leveled revolver. A moment later, he was towering beside the wall, his other hand performing deadly work in a new direction.

There were shots in reply - many of them; but somehow, this mysterious man had the faculty of picking off the most dangerous mobsters first.

Guns which would have loosed fatal bullets dropped harmlessly to the floor. Those which were in excited hands were the one's which he ignored. Bullets whistled by and dug into the walls.

But always, when the shots came high, the scarred gangster was crouching. When revolvers turned to cover his huddled form, he was sweeping away to a new vantage point, his form tall and elusive.

Only Barney Gleason was not firing. He was holding his shots, for his position behind an overturned table made it difficult for him to draw a steady aim toward that weaving figure. His automatic could spell its message later on - if needed.

Watching with beady eyes, the gang leader was tense. He was following the motions of a long shadow that stretched across the floor - a mysterious, flickering shadow that came from that fighting form.

The Shadow!

Barney Gleason knew the identity of this antagonist. He realized that only The Shadow could fight as this man was fighting. He knew that The Shadow was a conqueror of odds.

The right-hand automatic ceased to function. The Shadow flung it swiftly toward a gangster who was reaching toward the floor, striving to regain a revolver. The heavy missile crashed against the gangster's head. The left-hand gun barked, and a second gunman sprawled, weaponless.

The right hand of The Shadow, sweeping beneath the grimy sweater, appeared with a new automatic. It was just in time to clip an enemy who had fired once and missed. All these events were happening with lightninglike rapidity.

Into the midst of the fray came a sudden interruption. Dick Terry, who had ducked for the safety of the inner room, had reappeared at the open doorway.

Seeing his lone protector engaged in single-handed conflict, Terry joined in the fire. He knew that all but this one were his enemies.

An excellent shot, Dick, by his timely action, assured the outcome of the fray. The Shadow, superman though he was, stood in constant danger of a single chance shot from among the rattle of decreasing gunfire.

Now, with Dick working from another angle, Barney Gleason saw that his few remaining gorillas bore no chance. Rising, he aimed his automatic toward Dick Terry.

Protected from The Shadow's gunfire, Barney's single shot reached its mark. Dick Terry crumpled, wounded. Barney did not fire again. One was out.

The Shadow was his quarry now!

Whirling across the room, The Shadow was on his way to protect his fallen ally. Two shots barked from his right-hand automatic. They were the last. Not another replied.

All but Barney Gleason had fallen. A few badly wounded gangsters were stumbling toward the outer door, which their enemy had left. The rest were silent where they lay.

Now was Barney Gleason's chance. He sprang from his table, a wild gleam in his eyes. He leaped straight for The Shadow, leveling his gun as he hurled himself forward.

He had settled with the enemy in the inner room. Now he would get the other!

It was Barney's mad desire that proved his undoing. He caught a glimpse of a scarred face turned in his direction. Like a flash, The Shadow was coming toward him. A side move by the sweated gangster enabled him to escape Barney Gleason's first shot.

Before Barney could fire again, a long arm swung upward and crashed against his wrist. Barney's finger pressed the trigger. The bullet ended in the ceiling.

The Shadow's two automatics were empty! But now he was contending with a single enemy. Hardened mob leader that he was, Barney Gleason had encountered his match.

POWERFUL arms gripped his body and flung him, sprawling, across the room, to the wall, more than twenty feet away. But Gleason was tough. He came up fighting, his automatic still clutched by his right fist.

Again, The Shadow was upon him, struggling to wrest away the gun. Barney's left fist struck at the scarred face. He heard a sinister laugh from grimy lips as the blow passed futilely beside The Shadow's jaw.

His opponent seemed to slump, and Barney, with a triumphant cry, clutched at the face below him. His right wrist, held high by a powerful hand, tried to wrest itself free.

Up went the form of Barney Gleason, heaved by an irresistible force. Up it went and backward! Barney's left hand swung away as he sought to protect himself from a fall.

The automatic dropped from his helpless clutch as he made a wild, sweeping gesture to catch the sides of the broad window.

His effort was too late. His floundering form was flung furiously backward. Head foremost, Barney Gleason smashed into the window sash.

The frame gave way, and the gang leader's body shot backward, turning head downward as it plunged toward the paving of the alley, twenty feet

below the window.

All was silent as The Shadow leaned over the form of Dick Terry. He was examining the wound that Barney Gleason's bullet had indicted.

Long minutes went by, amid unabated silence. There was a noise at the corner of the room behind the bar.

A door opened, and the frightened face of "Black Pete" peered into the room. Formidable as Black Pete appeared, he was a coward at heart. He kept this dive only because Barney Gleason demanded it.

Black Pete moved cautiously into the room. He saw the bodies of the dead gangsters the remnants of Barney Gleason's mob.

Then he caught a glimpse of the man who stood by the door of the inner room. Cringing, Black Pete held up his arm.

The Shadow laughed.

Silence still reigned in that room of death, when a stumbling step sounded on the stairway twenty minutes later. Black Pete was alone, now, standing behind the bar. He looked up to see the bloodstained countenance of Gleason.

The gang leader spied Black Pete amidst the chaos, and stumbled into the room. He looked about suspiciously; then, seeing no sign of a scar-faced gangster, he limped over to the bar and leaned upon it.

His bleary eyes noted that the form of Dick Terry no longer lay by the door of the inner room.

"Where - where are the guys that made all the trouble?" he questioned, in a faltering voice.

"One of 'em scrambled," replied Black Pete.

"What - what about the other?" was Barney's inquiry. "I plugged one over there by the door."

"You got him, all right," declared Black Pete. "A couple of gorillas came in here after the other fellow scrambled. I told 'em to get rid of the body. That guy wasn't no gunman. I didn't want his corpse around here."

"They took it away?"

"Yeah. They were a couple of regular guys. Don't know their names, though. Told 'em to see you later, but they said it didn't mean nothin' to 'em, helpin' me out of a jam."

BARNEY GLEASON nodded. He knew the ways of gangdom. He was satisfied that Dick Terry was dead. That had been accomplished, even though it had meant the mopping up of his mob.

"I'd have got both of them," growled Barney Gleason, "but I slipped while I was fighting the big bozo by the window. Went backward, right through the sash.

"If it hadn't been for that little roof down below, it would have been my finish I couldn't hold on, but it broke my fall. Even at that, I was knocked cold when I landed in the alley."

Barney swept his arm weakly about the room to indicate the dead members of his mob.

"Sit tight, Pete," he said. "I'm going out to round up the rest of the mob. We'll get back here and cart the bodies out. Keep mum if the cops should come in. Maybe we'll run into that tough guy yet."

Barney Gleason left Black Pete's place. When the loud falls of his stumbling footsteps had ended on the stairway, the door opened beside the bar, and the scar-faced gangster stepped into view.

"You played it the way I told you," he said to Black Pete. "You're not one of the mob. You're not even a crook. I know all about you, Black Pete. You'd be out of this racket to-morrow, if you could get out.

"You're afraid of Barney Gleason. He's got you where he wants you. Well" - a short laugh came from the speaker's lips - "you'll have your chance to get clear. Keep mum. That's all. Stick to the story you just told. Understand?"

The eyes that gleamed threateningly at Black Pete were cold and merciless. The stocky, black-haired man understood. He knew what this strange personage could accomplish. The bodies on the floor were mute testimony.

Black Pete nodded.

"That fellow is all right, now," declared the scar-faced gangster. "I'm taking him out with me. Remember, Pete. Keep mum."

The man disappeared and returned from the other room, carrying the form of Dick Terry over his shoulder. The heavy Texan's body was no burden for this man who had mopped up Barney Gleason's mob.

As the carrier and his load crossed the room, Black Pete began to shudder at the sound of a sinister laugh that suddenly pervaded the room.

It was a mirthless, mocking tone. It was a laugh that Black Pete knew, although he had never before heard it.

The laugh of The Shadow!

It told the identity of that strange fighter who had won his amazing conflict. The gangster who had just left - taking a helpless man with him - was The Shadow!

As much as Black Pete feared the wrath of Barney Gleason, he feared the very name of The Shadow more. Now, after the demonstration he had witnessed, Black Pete realized that a single word of betrayal on his part would spell his instant doom.

A half hour later, when Barney Gleason returned with some mobsmen, Black Pete maintained a discreet silence. He did not mention his belief that the unknown fighter was The Shadow.

Barney Gleason had the same idea, but he said nothing to Black Pete. He intended to mention the fact to no one.

He smiled in a satisfied manner. He had done the work which Martin Slade required. Dick Terry was dead, despite The Shadow. That was sufficient.

Thus had the hand of The Shadow thwarted the death of Dick Terry. At the same time, The Shadow had lulled Barney Gleason into the belief that Dick Terry had been slain!

Dick Terry was still among the living - but only The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER XVI

A THREAT IS MET

MARTIN SLADE walked with a slight swagger as he entered the lobby of the Callao Hotel. One week ago, Barney Gleason and his mob had done their efficient work of killing Dick Terry, although Barney remarked that the Texan had fought like a steer. During that week, Slade had lived an eventful life.

He was no longer Martin Slade. He had assumed the identity of James Telford, and had been welcomed back by his overjoyed father.

Slade smiled to himself as he rode upward in the elevator. He could still picture the face of Thomas Telford when he had bumped into the waiting man in the concourse of the Grand Central Station.

Rajah Brahman's prediction had come true. Thomas Telford had found his missing son in a place thronged with many people.

Satisfaction governed Slade's manner as he reached the door of Rajah Brahman's apartment. Stealth was unnecessary in his visits here. Thomas Telford had brought his son to meet the famous rajah.

In fact, tonight, Slade had mentioned to the old man that he was coming to express his gratitude to Rajah Brahman.

The solemn face of Imam Singh greeted the visitor. Slade was ushered into Rajah Brahman's inner sanctum. He felt a trifle uneasy as he crossed the anteroom.

Even though he knew this to be a den of fakery, the silence troubled Martin Slade. He felt as he had felt that night at Telford's, when he had fancied that invisible eyes were watching him from the darkness.

Shaking off his nervousness, Slade pushed the thick curtain aside and entered the sanctum. The room was in darkness. Only the glow of Rajah Brahman's cigarette betrayed the presence of a living being.

"Hello, Bert," said Slade in a low voice.

"Hello, Slade," came the rajah's reply.

Another voice spoke quietly from the darkness.

"Good evening, James Telford," it said.

"The chief!" exclaimed Slade. "I didn't know you would be here tonight."

"There is a reason," declared the voice in the darkness. "We shall discuss that later. First, let us hear what you have to say. Then Bert can tell you what is on our minds."

"Everything is O.K. with the old boy," declared Slade. "He has fallen straight from the start. I'm so used to being called Jim, that it seems like my real name, now.

"When I blew in with that phony snapshot, the game was in the bag. Every now and then I drop some wise remark about the past. It's getting stronger and stronger every day. The old boy is taking everything for granted."

"Where is he now?" asked Rajah Brahman.

"He had to take a run down to Baltimore overnight," continued Slade. "Some trifling business with an old friend down there.

"He wanted me to go along, but I begged off. I didn't know how much the other bird might know about the past of young James Telford. Besides that, I want a chance to go through that safe while the old man's away."

"Good idea," said Rajah Brahman.

"The old man showed me his will," declared Slade, "and it's all in my favor. I didn't have a chance to read it in detail. I want to know how much he's worth. I will know to-morrow night."

"The old man will be back then?"

"Will he? You're right he will," Slade replied. "You don't think he would miss that swell seance you have scheduled, do you? He wants me to come with him. If he's late coming back from Baltimore, he'll phone me when he arrives in New York. So that's all set.

"Telford will show up, and I may be on hand as one of the fish. I'm going to get out of it if I can on account of some of the people who will be here."

"That's right," agreed the rajah, "but as James Telford, you will be O.K. if you come with the old man. It doesn't matter, though, because Mrs. Garwood is the one I'm working on to-morrow night."

"She believes everything, now?"

"Absolutely. Just waiting for a materialization of her dear husband. She's bringing a certified check for fifty thousand dollars as an endowment to my shrine in India. I happened to mention that Mrs. Furzeman was doing that, and Mrs. Garwood fell for the idea, too.

"There's just one condition - that her husband appears and tells her it is all right. He'll be here - don't worry. Tony knows his stuff, and he has the part down to perfection."

"Has she said anything about Terry?" Slade wanted to know.

"No. She's through with him. She received that letter you mailed from Washington. That stunt was A-1, Slade. It clinched the whole affair.

"If Nephew Terry didn't think enough about her to stay in New York a while, his opinion doesn't amount to anything, in her estimation!"

"AND what about Dykeman?" asked Slade.

"He's fallen for the greatest stall of all," laughed the seer. "Ever since the spook of his daughter went away with those jewels, he's had an idea that money would count for something on the astral plane, too.

"He's out to supply capital to the spirit world. He's likely to sink close to half a million before he gets away from New York - in big installments, too."

"How about Coronado Copper?" questioned Slade.

"Doing nicely," interposed the quiet voice of the chief. "But if your new father begins to talk about buying stocks, shift to Mutual Industries. That's the next buy on the list. Bert is going to send word to the different cities very shortly."

There was a short silence; then the quiet voice of the man behind the spook racket spoke in a deliberate tone.

"Tell Slade about the trouble in Chicago," were the words.

"Trouble in Chicago?" questioned Slade.

"Yes," said Rajah Brahman. "Joe Cardona is out there."

"Cardona! How did he get into it?"

"We don't know. He dropped into one of Madame Plunket's seances, a few days ago. He's been coming every night since.

"She spotted him for a dick, and at last she got him placed. Sent a letter here to me. She's worried, because she was working strong in Cincinnati. She wants to know what to do about it."

"When is her next seance?"

"Tonight - and she thinks Cardona will be there."

"Hm-m-m. What do you think about it, Bert?"

"I think it's the Little Flower angle, Slade," said Rajah Brahman seriously. "We've been working it too strong. It was a great racket, because it linked up one place with another, so that the visiting suckers would feel at home.

"But Jacques was using Little Flower - and that means Cardona may have heard about it. If he's traveling the whole circuit, he's liable to strike a clew that will bring him back to New York."

"To find Rajah Brahman."

"Yes. If we could get him out of the way for a couple of weeks - even for one week - I'd have time to clean up here. Then off for the tall timber of the Himalayas. The old stuff; not a trace behind me."

"It's pretty dangerous business monkeying with Cardona," began Slade.

"Here in New York, yes," interposed Rajah Brahman. "Out in Chicago, no. You know some mobsters out there, Slade. You can fix it like you did for Dick Terry.

"The stunt is to make Cardona talk. If he knows nothing, they can let him get away. If he knows a lot - curtains for him!"

"It might have a bad come-back -"

"Not on us. Cardona's working alone. He hasn't reached the end of the trail yet. What would it cost to fix it?"

"Five grand. Through Snooks Milligan."

"What do you say, chief?" asked the rajah.

"Go ahead," declared the quiet voice.

"All right," said Rajah Brahman. "You make the call, Slade. They can watch for him at Plunket's. It's only a little after eight, now. That's about seven in Chicago. Madame Plunket usually starts her seance at eight -"

His voice broke off suddenly. Rising in the dark, Rajah Brahman strode rapidly across the room and threw aside the curtain into the anteroom. He stood there, staring.

The others could see his form in the dim light that came from the anteroom. Rajah Brahman was attired in a dressing gown. In his hand he held a revolver.

"Tony," he called.

The white-clad form of Imam Singh appeared from the outer door.

"Have a gat ready," ordered Rajah Brahman. "Stay by the front door of the apartment. I've got a hunch that some one is around this place. I'm going to find out!"

As Tony departed, Rajah Brahman dropped the curtain and stepped back into the sanctum.

"I saw the curtain move," he explained quickly. "Come on - we'll make a round-up. You stay here, chief. Slade, you cut in by the seance room, I'll go through the anteroom."

RAJAH Brahman's theory was incorrect. As he stood with his back toward the anteroom, a tall form clad in black emerged from beside the curtain, and moved through another entrance.

It did not take the path toward the outer door where Imam Singh was on guard. Instead, it was headed directly toward the reception room. Reaching that apartment, it turned toward the seance room - the very place where Rajah Brahman intended to make search!

None of the three men in the sanctum were cognizant of what had taken place. The curtain which Rajah Brahman had dropped now obscured their view. The rajah lifted the curtain again and gave his last word to Martin Slade.

"Wait about a half a minute," he said. "Then cut into the seance room. I'm going around the other way. We'll meet there."

As the seer left on his search, Martin Slade nervously drew a revolver from his pocket. He did not like this job. He was too worried about the possible identity of that invisible presence.

Could The Shadow be here?

Slade did not voice his thought, because of the chief. Steadying himself, he started toward the seance room and cautiously opened the door from the sanctum. He waited, revolver in hand, then slipped through the door.

The seance room was empty. Its indirect light showed every spot, and there was no sign of a hidden person.

A man appeared from another door. It was Rajah Brahman. He shook his head as he saw Martin Slade. Together, they searched the room.

"Guess I'm the goat," declared Rajah Brahman. "Not a chance of any one being here. I looked all around."

"How about there?"

Slade made a significant gesture toward the center of the room. Rajah Brahman laughed.

"Not a chance," he declared. "Not a chance. You're the only person outside of the chief who knows how Tony and I work. That's as safe as a solid wall. Come along - let's find Tony."

They went to the entrance of the apartment and found the turbaned man awaiting them. Tony shook his head in the characteristic fashion of Imam Singh. He had seen no one.

Rajah Brahman and his companion returned to the inner sanctum. The smooth-faced seer was laughing at his own suspicions.

"Guess I'm seeing spooks myself," he declared. "I thought that curtain moved - but it must have been that something distracted my attention at the time. There's no one here. What's more, there's not going to be."

He called Tony, and the assistant received orders to keep a careful watch.

"I ALWAYS get a bit keyed up when the big time is here," declared the rajah apologetically. "It's hard for you to understand my end of the game.

"You have to sell yourself when you're doing these spook stunts. Make yourself pretty near believe it. That's what makes it look sincere.

"You know what I've told you about these small-fry mediums, who think that the big shots may have genuine psychic powers. There's nothing strange about that. These dollar grafters go into fake trances so often that they begin to get woozy.

"Some of them really imagine they see real spirits. When they get that way, they're impossible. Claim they only do the fake stuff to help the spirits along. They really think they're genuine."

"And now you're getting that way?" asked Slade.

"Not quite," laughed Rajah Brahman, "but this consulting work has put me in a funny mental state. I wouldn't be surprised if I did see a real spook, some night!

"Let's drop that, now," he changed the subject. "You've got a job to do, Slade. Are you sure you can reach this gunman out in Chicago?"

"Snooks Milligan? Easy. He hangs out at the Napoli Hotel. He's in with Gallanta's crowd. They'll do anything, particularly after I feed Milligan some soft soap.

"They've been worrying about some sort of a hook-up between the police in New York and Chicago. They'll be more anxious than we are to grab Cardona, if I give them the right kind of a tip."

"Do they know anything about our racket?" Rajah Brahman's voice was apprehensive.

"Not a thing!" declared Slade. "They think I'm out for blackmail. If they find out what Cardona's there for - and they know how to do it - they'll send me all the dope. If they bump him off, so much the better."

All three men seemed in accord on this last point. Martin Slade left, and Rajah Brahman accompanied him to the door of the apartment.

This time, Slade felt no apprehension. He had no feeling that hidden eyes were watching from the dark as he passed through the anteroom.

Leaving the Callao Hotel, he went to the Grand Central Station and put in a telephone call for Chicago. He was quickly connected with "Snooks" Milligan, at the Napoli Hotel.

In well-couched words, Slade explained his purpose. He phrased the conversation so that it might bring alarm to Snooks Milligan.

Leaving the phone booth, Slade started for Long Island, completely satisfied. He chuckled as he drove along. There would be trouble for Detective Joe Cardona tonight!

While Slade was riding leisurely eastward, a giant monoplane was zooming west at a speed of more than two hundred and fifty miles an hour. Its mighty wings cast a strange, moving shadow across the moonlit countryside.

At the wheel of the roaring plane was a man who laughed!

CHAPTER XVII

IN CHICAGO

A QUIET, well-dressed young man entered the lobby of an old hotel in Chicago. He noticed a bell boy standing by the wall. The young man approached him and gave him two objects - a small pasteboard box and a fifty-cent piece.

"Will you deliver this package to Room 414?" he questioned. "Do it right away."

"Sure thing!" exclaimed the bell boy. "On my way now, sir!"

He entered the elevator and rode upstairs, juggling the half dollar - an unusually large tip in that decadent hotel. The bell boy was bound on an important mission, although he did not know it.

The man who had given him the package was Harry Vincent, an agent of The Shadow. He had prepared a warning message in response to a special telephone call from New York.

The speaker at the other end had been Burbank, a quiet-voiced man who worked at The Shadow's right hand.

The message which Harry had arranged was in the package that was going to Room 414. The occupant of that room was Detective Joe Cardona.

On the fourth floor, the bell boy hesitated. He had forgotten the number of the room. He seemed to remember it as 418.

He was not sure. He knocked at the door that bore that number. A man opened it.

"Were you expecting a package, sir?" inquired the bell boy.

"Yes," growled the man. "Is that it? Let me have it."

He slammed the door, and the bell boy went away. The man opened the package in a hurry. It was time it had arrived.

Half an hour before, he had called the desk and ordered a safety razor and a tube of shaving cream. He had been waiting for the articles ever since.

The hotel guest emitted an angry growl when he saw the contents of the box. He drew out a bunch of violets!

What was the idea of these? He threw the flowers on the writing desk and went to the telephone. He tried to get the operator, but failed.

The bell boy had returned to the lobby. He saw no sign of the man who had given him the package. The hotel attendant was sure that he had delivered it where it was intended.

Ten minutes later, Joe Cardona left Room 414 and went downstairs. Out on the street, he walked through the Loop, and mounted the steps to an elevated station. He was bound for the suburban home where Madame Plunket was conducting her seance tonight.

JOE CARDONA was satisfied that he was getting somewhere. He had spent some seemingly useless days in Cincinnati. He had looked through some back files of the newspapers, and had discovered that a girl named Stella Dykeman had been killed in a serious automobile accident during the month of March.

The brakes of her car had given way on a steep hill leading to her father's estate, and she had crashed into a stone gateway at the bottom of the incline.

Inquiry into the affairs of Arthur Dykeman, her father, had proved that the man was away from Cincinnati at present. But, by a lucky chance, Cardona had learned that the man was a spiritualist, and that he had been receiving messages from a woman named Madame Plunket.

Cardona discovered that she had left town some time ago, and there was no way of tracing her new address.

While the detective was working on this, he had received a bunch of violets at his hotel. They carried the usual disk. Cardona had it in his pocket now. He brought the disk from his vest.

MADAME

PLUNKET

CHICAGO

Those were the words inscribed upon the disk. They had brought Cardona to Chicago. He had located the medium.

At the first seance, Little Flower had spoken to the sitters!

Chicago was a long way from New York, but Cardona felt positive that there was a connection here.

Anita Marie, of Philadelphia and Madame Plunket, of Chicago! Two birds of the same plumage!

There had been no disturbing element at the seances which Cardona had attended in Chicago. But he was getting a line on Madame Plunket, and he was convinced that the medium was the lowest of grafters.

The advice that she was passing out indicated that she must have a fund of information somewhere in her house. Cardona knew the law on fortune telling. It would be no trick at all to get the local police to make a raid, when the proper time came.

The train was nearing the station where Cardona must leave. He arose and waited for the stop.

Descending the steps from the elevated platform, he turned westward along a narrow street. He walked beneath the glaring light of an electric lamp.

Cardona had no idea whatever that his presence in Chicago was known; nor did he suppose that it might be of interest to any one other than the spirit medium. Hence, he did not notice the lurking forms that were behind a signboard near the sidewalk.

Cardona, however, did see a darkened car parked on the other side of the street. Professionally, he eyed it with suspicion.

Gangsters were rampant in Chicago. This might be one of their machines. Cardona started his right hand toward his pocket, then stopped abruptly.

SOME one had planted the muzzle of a revolver against the center of his back! There was no command to raise his hands. Just a low growl to "keep moving." Cardona, recognizing the threat, obeyed.

Simultaneously, the car on the other side of the street approached. Cardona felt himself being urged toward the curb. A minute later, he was between two men in the back seat of the sedan, and the car was heading for parts unknown!

Well did Joe Cardona realize his predicament. He fancied that he had been mistaken for some one whom these gunmen intended to put on the spot.

It was the tightest place in which the sleuth had ever found himself. He could only hope that he might find some way to bluff it out with these intended killers.

He knew well enough that silence was the game for the present. Any attempt at conversation might mean immediate death. No killer would permit the beginning of an outcry. The question lay in what would follow.

When the gunmen found that they had the wrong man, they might let him go. Cardona speculated upon what they would do if he revealed himself as a detective. Gangsters did not go out of their way to war with the police. In that, he might find salvation.

The car traveled a long way. Cardona had lost all sense of direction. They were away from the city now. The detective could hear the waters of Lake Michigan. It was a windy night, and the sound indicated that the waves were high.

The car swung toward the lake and stopped at a low, sloping building. Cardona was forced out, and his captors led him to a door in the side of the building. They went down four steps, and entered a low-roofed room. One of the men switched on the light.

Three men had captured the detective. They were a hardy, sullen-faced crew. Cardona, himself the possessor of a poker face, stared steadily as they frisked him of his police revolver, and backed him up against the wall.

One of the men - a big fellow - faced Cardona. He was the leader of the gang. He addressed the sleuth in no uncertain terms.

"All right," he said. "Spill it. What are you nosing about in Chicago for?"

"Do you know who I am?" questioned Cardona quietly.

"Sure I do," retorted the captor. "You're a New York flatfoot, named Joe Cardona. To square it, I'll tell you who I am. Did you ever hear of Snooks Milligan?"

Cardona nodded. He knew that Snooks Milligan was a survivor of an extinguished gang. Snooks and a few others had joined up with Gallanta's outfit.

"Well," said the hard-faced captor, "I'm Snooks Milligan. And when I want a guy, I get him. I wanted you tonight - so I got you!"

Cardona shrugged his shoulders. He saw no connection between his present investigation and the affairs of Chicago gangsters.

"Come on!" growled Milligan. "Spill it! Why are you out here? Talk quick, or it's the works for you!"

"I'll tell you why I'm here," declared Cardona plainly. "I'm looking in on a bunch of phony spirit mediums. That's where I was bound tonight. There's a woman named Plunket who runs a fortune-telling graft right near where you grabbed me."

"Yeah?" questioned Milligan, in derision. "You can't get away with that stall, Cardona. That may be your blind. But I've got a tip that you're out here to make trouble for us. What do you think of that?"

"You've got the wrong lay," declared Cardona frankly.

"I have, eh?" quizzed Milligan angrily. "Well, I'm going to find out about it! Savvy?? Bring him along."

The last words were addressed to the other gangsters. One opened a door and turned on a light. Cardona was forced down another pair of steps into a cellar room.

There was a small platform in the corner; above it was a horizontal rack with a roller and a handle that resembled a clothes wringer.

While one of the gangsters held an automatic against Cardona's ribs, Milligan advanced and pressed a knob on the wall some distance from the rack. The platform tilted forward and extended into a black hole on the floor. Milligan pressed a second knob. The platform moved up again.

THE gangsters were binding Cardona's arms with ropes. They shoved the detective onto the treacherous platform, and hooked the ropes to the roller by the wall. One man turned the handle, and the ropes tightened, drawing Cardona back, almost to the wall.

"You've heard it said that gangsters don't talk," declared Milligan, to Cardona. "You're going to learn different, now. This is the place where they talk - when that roller begins to work. And when we're through with them" - the gangster motioned significantly to the knob on the wall - "that's the end.

"That hole underneath you is big enough, Cardona! Big enough to hide you along with others that have disappeared!"

Cardona knew well that a certain number of gangsters disappeared annually in Chicago. It was supposed that they were bumped off and left in vacant lots and other spots, in accordance with the usual scheme of things.

The usual idea was that only a certain percentage of the slain victims were discovered; for bodies frequently came to light in obscure places.

But now Cardona had inside knowledge of one of gangland's burial grounds, where bodies of murdered gunmen were lost forever.

The thought chilled him; for he realized that with the knowledge he now possessed, he was doomed to die.

Hence, Cardona shut his lips grimly when Snooks Milligan began a new questioning. The detective's only course was to let the mobsmen believe that he actually knew something that he would not tell. Something the mobsters wanted to know. That would at least give time to live - even though existence would be strained by torture.

Seeing that Cardona would not talk, the gang leader signaled one of his underlings to turn the winch. The man obeyed.

Cardona felt a terrific strain upon his shoulders. He resisted the tightened pressure. Another turn, and it seemed as though his shoulders would be wrenched from their sockets. Still, Cardona was obdurate.

Minutes of agony went by, while Snooks Milligan glowered in amazement. This iron detective was resisting as Milligan had never seen a man resist before!

At last, the strain became too great. Cardona yielded - but not by word of mouth. He gasped, and his head slumped forward. He had lost consciousness under the terrific strain.

An oath came from Snooks Milligan. This was something that he had not anticipated. He ordered the man to release the winch. Cardona's form slumped loosely forward. It was a long while before he revived.

Determined to make his captive speak, Snooks Milligan ordered a new, slow torture. Cardona took it smiling. He showed a physical endurance that seemed impossible.

At last, the result was the same. Once more the detective lapsed into a state of senselessness. The winch was again released.

A full hour passed before the captive had revived sufficiently to suit Snooks Milligan's purpose. The gang leader glanced at his watch. It was well past midnight. Milligan made a gesture of impatience.

"We can't be here all night," he growled slowly, making sure that Cardona understood his words. "But we'll try once again. Wait about fifteen minutes; then take it slow.

"We'll work on him easy. If he talks, all right. If he passes out, we won't waste any more time. We'll give him the works and let him drop!"

Joe Cardona understood. One more round of torture would be his finish. He knew that the result would be the same, whether he framed a trumped-up story to explain his visit to Chicago, or whether he refrained entirely from speech.

At the end, this merciless tiger of the underworld would have no further use for him. Joe Cardona alive, would be a menace. Dead, he could make no trouble.

Those ropes would tighten once more. When their task was finished, they would be released. Guns would bark a message of death, and the captive's body would drop through the opened platform into oblivion!

Still Joe Cardona was game. Although he was sure that help could never arrive in time to save him, he was determined to hold on to life as long as he could.

He set his lips grimly, resolved to yield no cry for mercy.

The carelessness of a bell boy had kept The Shadow from warning Cardona of this trap.

Now, he was caught!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MAN FROM NEW YORK

THE Napoli Hotel was the new hangout for Mike Gallanta's mob. A small, but fairly modern building, it had been purchased by the notorious gangster, and had been kept as headquarters.

A year before, the Chicago police had worried about events that occurred at the Napoli, but now the place was an extinct volcano.

Mike Gallanta was doing time in a Federal prison, along with other income-tax dodgers. His principal lieutenants were going about their business in a wary way, during the absence of their chief.

Control over such men as Snooks Milligan was exerted by Al Barruci, who had once been the right hand of Mike Gallanta. At present, Barruci was leading a peaceful existence. Still quartered at the Napoli, he kept an eye upon the tempestuous mobsmen.

Al Barruci was a diplomatic personage. As a result, he worked well with the former vassals of Gallanta. He, alone, knew their doings, and they followed his advice in all matters.

When Barruci advised, he was actually giving orders. But he was crafty enough to make it appear otherwise.

Tonight, Al Barruci was comfortably ensconced in his suite at the Napoli. The prestige that he had gained through Mike Gallanta was serving him well.

By being conservative, Barruci encountered very little trouble. But as the right bower of the absent big shot, Barruci was still a power to be feared.

It was a known fact that he seldom stirred from his comfortable abode. It was that very fact that made prospective enemies wary of him.

The telephone rang, and Barruci answered it. He listened in mild surprise as a name was announced from the desk downstairs.

"Tell him to come up," he ordered.

There was a rap at the door a few minutes later. Al Barruci opened the portal and a tall, hard-faced man entered. It was the visitor - Jake Quellan - a noted New York racketeer.

Barruci had met the man before, when Quellan had conducted secret negotiations with Gallanta. He was puzzled by this surprise visit.

"What brings you to Chicago?" he questioned affably, as they sat down in the living room.

Quellan lighted a cigarette before he spoke. He looked firmly at Barruci, with cold, staring eyes.

"I'm after a guy that is here in Chicago," declared the New York gangster. "Maybe you've heard of him. They call him The Shadow."

"The Shadow!" exclaimed Barruci. "He can't be in Chicago!"

"Why not?"

"Because" - Barruci paused reflectively - "he was here once before. He made plenty of trouble, then. If he was here, he wouldn't be laying low. So I figure he isn't here."

"No?" Quellan's question was challenging. "Well, you're wrong, Barruci. He is here and he is laying low. That's why I've come to get him. Before he starts more trouble. We don't want him back in New York."

"We don't want him here, either!" Barruci exclaimed.

"Great. Then you can help me get him," Jake replied.

"How?"

Slowly, Jake Quellan began to unfold his plan.

"The Shadow," he said, "is on the run, for once. He does things pretty much his own way. Once in a while he crosses the police, and they never can do anything about it.

"Well, this time, they've got the goods on him - and there's a man on his trail who is outsmarting him."

"Who?" quizzed Barruci incredulously.

"A New York dick, named Cardona," declared Quellan. "He's working alone out here - and from what I hear, The Shadow is keeping under cover, for fear Cardona will find him.

"The Shadow's quick when it comes to battling with mobs, because he knows their ways. But he's yellow when the police get on his trail. Take it from me. I know."

"You think Cardona knows where The Shadow is?" Barruci questioned.

"Yes," Jake answered. "But there's only one guy can make him tell."

"Who?"

"You're looking at him."

Al Barruci was thoughtful. He wished that Jake Quellan had arrived a while ago. Still, it might not yet be too late. Barruci wanted to know more.

"We heard that Cardona was here," he said. "But we weren't tipped off to the lay. We heard just enough to let us know that there was trouble coming. That was all."

"I'm telling you what the trouble is," declared Quellan emphatically. "What's more, I know where Cardona is located. He's staying at a hotel, here in town. I came out alone, so as not to let the New York cops get wise."

"Here's what I want to do: I want to grab Cardona - with your help - and then I'll make him spill the whole story."

"How?" Barruci asked.

"Easy enough. I know part of it. What I know will make Cardona tell the rest. But I'm telling you straight, nobody else could make that dick squawk!" Jake was emphatic.

"You know where Cardona is?"

"Yes - at a hotel."

"YOU'RE wrong," declared Barruci, with a broad smile. "We've got him right now. One of my men is making him talk. When he gets through, there'll be one less flatfoot to bother you in New York."

"You aren't bumping off Cardona!" exclaimed Quellan, in consternation.

"That's just what we are doing," returned Barruci. "After he talks, or if he doesn't talk."

Quellan drove his right fist against his left palm.

"You're pulling it wrong!" he exclaimed. "All wrong. Cardona is too wise! He'll either keep mum, or he'll give a phony story. Then you've lost the chance to get the lay on The Shadow!"

"Will that matter much?"

"Matter! Don't you see what it does? The Shadow is bottled while Cardona is hot after him. With Cardona out, The Shadow is loose again."

"You don't know The Shadow, Barruci. He spots mobs like a hawk spots a flock of pigeons. He'll be loose, I tell you - loose, here in Chicago!"

"Well" - Quellan settled back with a deprecating gesture. "I should worry about it. The Shadow will have enough to keep him busy here. We'll have things easy, back East."

It was the final statement that brought a worried frown to Al Barruci's forehead. He saw the logic in the New York gangster's argument. He stroked his chin reflectively, then said:

"We've gone pretty far with it now. Cardona's got to take the bump. That's all."

"Let him take it," declared Quellan. "He's no friend of mine. But I want to hear him talk before he goes out - and it's more to your advantage than to mine."

Al Barruci was a man who made quick decisions when the occasion called for it. Moreover, he was naturally conservative. Also, he had been somewhat apprehensive about Snooks Milligan's quick action with Joe Cardona.

He realized now that they had worked too hastily. Without more ado, he arose and faced the New York gangster.

"Come along," he said. "Maybe we'll be in time!"

Jake Quellan followed him downstairs. Two men in the lobby arose the moment that Barruci appeared. The four left by a side entrance. Barruci and Quellan climbed into the rear seat of a sedan; the others took the front.

The New Yorker knew their occupations. One was Barruci's chauffeur; the other, his bodyguard. The man at the wheel nodded in response to his chief's order. The other man sat sidewise, keeping watch as they rode along.

"Maybe you've heard of this place where we're going," said Barruci, as they reached the outskirts of the city. "It was built to look like a country house, but Gallanta had it fixed as a blind to store hooch."

"Then we had to soft pedal the racket when Gallanta took his rap. So we've been using it to dump guys we don't want. Putting them where the booze was supposed to have been."

The car was speeding rapidly along the shore of Lake Michigan. The New York gangster gave no betrayal of the tenseness he felt.

"No telephone out there," explained Barruci apologetically. "The place is kept empty. If there was a phone, we could have tipped Snooks to lay off for a while. Maybe we'll be in time - I hope so!"

The final words showed that the Chicago gang leader shared the anxiety which he supposed gripped Jake.

The sedan drove up to a low house. The four men piled out, and Barruci led the way down the steps. They crossed a room, and Barruci gave a series of five quick taps at an inner door.

Five taps responded. Barruci rapped twice. The door opened, and the arrivals stepped in to witness a strange scene.

JOE CARDONA, completely unconscious, was drooping from the roller which held his rope-encircled wrists. One man was confronting the arrivals with an automatic. Another was standing by the winch.

Snooks Milligan was at the wall, his hand upon a knob, on the point of giving an order.

"Barruci!" he exclaimed.

"Is that Cardona?" quizzed Barruci.

Milligan nodded.

"This is Jake Quellan," explained Barruci, indicating the New Yorker. "He's out here to make Cardona squawk. Has he told you anything?"

"No. Says he is looking for a spook."

Barruci was close beside Milligan.

"Cardona is after The Shadow," he said, in a low voice.

A look of surprise came over Milligan's coarse face. He motioned to the man at the winch to release pressure. Cardona's form slumped to the platform. Milligan stepped away from the wall.

The Chicago gangsters watched, while the New York gunman strode forward and leaned over the form of Detective Cardona, who was still senseless.

He had shown his mettle tonight. He had borne the racking cruelty with amazing stoicism. His senses were gradually returning, but his eyes were still shut.

"You can't make him talk," growled Snooks Milligan. "He won't open his mouth -"

"Won't he?" rasped Jake Quellan's harsh voice. "I'll make him talk! I'll give you the dope on this guy. He's nervy enough, but he shies away from a rod. Flash a gun under his nose, and if he can't get away from it, he'll quit.

Quellan saw that Milligan was dubious. The New Yorker looked around the group - from Milligan to Barruci, and to the four other mobsters.

"Watch me," Quellan said. "Cardona's coming to. Watch me make him squawk -"

He drew two automatics from his pockets as he leaned over the weakened detective. With one of them, Quellan roughly nudged Cardona's head backward so that the opening eyes were staring toward the ceiling. With the other gun, the New Yorker struck against the ropes that were dangling from the roller.

Cardona's hands were bound, but he was free of the rack. His body slowly turned until it lay sidewise on the platform.

Stooping beside the platform, Quellan brandished one automatic close to Cardona's face. The detective's eyes opened; then closed. Rising slowly, Quellan turned toward the other mobsmen.

It was Snooks Milligan who sensed what was about to happen. He caught the strange gleam in Quellan's eyes. In a flash, a complete understanding came to his startled mind.

He had no chance to utter his suspicion. He sprang forward with a sudden cry, drawing his gun.

It was a futile effort. Quellan, hardly noticing Milligan's action, held his aim as well as his fire until the threatening gun had swung almost to a level. Then the New Yorker's automatic spoke.

Milligan suddenly sank to the floor to avoid the shot, but it was too late. His gun rattled ahead of him. He had been shot just above the elbow.

The whole episode was a revelation to the other Chicago mobsmen. As they saw the New Yorker step back so as to protect Cardona's body - as they heard the peal of insidious laughter that rang from those firm-set lips - they knew the menace that confronted them.

The man who called himself Jake Quellan was The Shadow!

With cool indifference, this strange avenger had delayed his attack against the six enemies. The gangster at the door was his greatest danger, for that man was ready with his gun the moment that Snooks Milligan fell.

The Shadow's left arm bent before his body. Simultaneously, his right let its automatic rest upon the left fore-arm.

With precise, quickly gained aim, The Shadow pressed the trigger, and the threatening gangster slumped to the floor, his gun unfired.

Four men were coming up with their weapons. Al Barruci and his three henchmen were acting individually but simultaneously. They hurled themselves upon their enemy, and the barks of The Shadow's automatics sounded another note of doom.

There were reports on both sides now; but even at that close range, The Shadow remained unscathed. One gangster toppled before he could fire a shot. The Shadow, leaping forward, seemed to grapple with the body.

It formed a momentary bulwark against Barruci's quick fire. Then one of The Shadow's shots dropped Barruci.

A strange, short fight - unexpected in its beginning, amazing in its climax. Barruci and the man at the door lay still. Milligan and two others were writhing on the floor. The sixth gangster lay sprawled against the form of The Shadow.

CARDONA, eyes wide at the sound of gunfire, saw his rescuer step aside. The leaning form of the gangster fell when the support was removed. It fell face downward on the floor. The Shadow's quick eyes were everywhere, looking for lurking danger.

Snooks Milligan was crawling helplessly away. His gun was by The Shadow's feet. Then another mobster, coughing blood, rose to his knees and made a futile dive for a weapon that lay on the floor. His effort ended in a helpless sprawl.

Realizing only that this man was a friend, Cardona tried to call a sudden warning, but the shout was no more than a vague rattle in his dry throat.

The Shadow heard, but did not receive the meaning. That was unnecessary. The quick eyes of The Shadow saw, and understood.

Snooks Milligan was raising his body against the wall. His left hand, dripping with blood from the wound, was gripping the knob against the wall. As it gained its mark, The Shadow fired.

The gangster slumped forward, and lay pressed against the wall, but his dying fingers were turning, twisting at the knob.

Another shot would have meant his doom. But even in the last futile moments, the reflex action of his dying clutch could have succeeded. The Shadow did not fire again.

Turning, he dropped his automatics and stepped upon the platform, to seize the body of Joe Cardona.

The platform was moving as The Shadow, with long, powerful arms, drew Cardona toward him. The Shadow's feet were on the solid floor; his body was flinging backward as the platform fell.

For a split second, Cardona's body hung over a black abyss as it was being swept to safety. Then the detective struck the floor and lay there, utterly helpless.

The Shadow stooped and picked up his automatics. He looked toward the wall, and watched the form of Snooks Milligan as it swayed in convulsive gyrations. The gangster sprawled upon the floor, dead.

Cardona's bonds were cut. Supported by his rescuer, the detective staggered out into the night, and was helped into the waiting car. The cool air revived him; but as his mysterious companion took the wheel, and headed back toward the city, the aftermath of the terrible strain had its effect.

Cardona lay in a stupor that was only momentarily broken when he found himself being urged through the darkened lobby of his hotel.

THE ringing of a telephone awakened the detective. It was broad daylight. Groggily, he answered the call. It was the clerk, telling him it was ten o'clock.

Ten o'clock! Cardona could not understand why he had been called. His mind was groping dizzily, trying to recall the dreamlike events that he had encountered the night before.

He remembered his capture dimly. The torture was a vivid recollection. Cardona's weakened, aching shoulders were a strong reminder.

But the rescue was a haze. A tall man, whose face Cardona had only glimpsed, had effected his delivery from death. Cardona awoke to the knowledge that only one man could have accomplished it - The Shadow!

Cardona spied a small package lying on the desk. With numbed fingers, he opened it. From within, he produced a bunch of violets.

A new message from The Shadow!

It was the first since Cincinnati, Cardona thought. He did not know that a warning message had gone astray the night before - a message with three brief words that would have kept him from walking into the unexpected danger which had beset him.

With fumbling fingers, the detective found the disk. It bore these words:

TONIGHT

HEADQUARTERS

NEW YORK

Cardona realized now why he had been called at ten o'clock. He could reach New York by eight tonight, if he took the noon plane from Chicago.

Hastily, the detective dressed and packed. He reached the airport in time for the plane. Still dazed, he watched the outskirts of the city drop away, and saw the broad expanse of Lake Michigan spread away into the smoky haze.

In Cardona's pockets were the notes of all the information he had gathered on this trip. Scattered facts, which had significance, yet which required

more to make them complete and useful. Cardona's thoughts flew ahead of him to New York. What awaited there?

A newspaper lay beside him. Cardona looked at the front page. Then he temporarily forgot his problems. He was reading the account of a gun fight in a house on the shore of Lake Michigan.

Al Barruci and Snooks Milligan, noted gangsters, had been slain. A death trap had been discovered. Two other gangsters had died in the fray. The police, brought to the spot by a mysterious telephone tip, had carried away two more who were wounded.

The news of the affair was causing consternation in gangland. The two men who lived would not talk. It was believed that a quarrel had taken place between the two gang leaders and their underlings.

That was all.

Joe Cardona grinned. The account bore no reference to the surprising rescue of a captured New York detective. Nor did it mention the fact of a rescuer.

The Shadow had come and gone, leaving no trace of his mysterious, timely presence!

CHAPTER XIX

SLADE SIGNS

MARTIN SLADE, posing as James Telford, was on the front terrace of the Long Island bungalow. It was late in the afternoon. His adopted father had not yet returned from his trip to Baltimore.

Slade was in a mood of elation. He had gone through the safe during Thomas Telford's absence. He had learned facts regarding the old man's wealth and holdings.

Had there been valuables in the safe, Slade might have had difficulty in resisting the temptation to purloin them, for he was a crook through and through.

He had learned, however, during his stealthy search, that Thomas Telford kept all stock certificates and valuable items in safe-deposit vaults.

A taxi wheeled up to the bungalow, and Thomas Telford alighted. Slade advanced with a warm greeting, to help the old man with his suitcase.

Thomas Telford shook his head and strode directly into the house. Slade, watching in surprise, saw the old man enter the room where the safe was located. The door slammed behind him.

What was the meaning of this? Martin Slade's brow became furrowed. Had Telford learned something that had put him wise to the deceptive game that Slade was playing? It seemed a logical explanation of the old man's action.

Slade strolled about the terrace, wondering what would be the best course to follow.

The sun had set. Long, flickering streaks of darkness were on the lawn. Early evening, and still Martin Slade paced up and down. Thomas Telford had not left that room. Slade sensed that it would be a bad mistake to interrupt him in his present mood. The crook was playing a crafty, waiting game.

The gloom of night felt oppressive. Slade was ill at ease, almost as unexplainably nervous as he had been on the night when he had first entered this bungalow.

He stopped pacing to listen outside the screen door. He saw Thomas Telford come from the closed room and go upstairs to the small second floor. The old man did not glance at the screen door as he passed.

This was Slade's cue for action. Quickly, he slipped into the house, and entered the room that Telford had left. The door brought him in past the safe. He stopped at Telford's desk in the corner and looked about. The room did not seem oppressive now.

On the desk, Slade saw some typewritten sheets of paper. He scanned the upper one, and certain words caught his eye immediately. This was evidently a statement that had been dictated by Thomas Telford. Slade read:

This day, in Baltimore, I have received proof positive that my son is dead, and the man posing as my son is an impostor. Should I be unable to rid myself of him, keep this statement as evidence that I knew he was not James Telford. My will is made out in his name, but I intend to change it when my lawyer returns to New York. Reasons why I do not want the impostor to know that I have suspected him -

Slade had read enough. He did not need the details. He realized that Telford, absentmindedly, had left the paper here. The old man might return at any minute. Slade started to leave the room. Then his eye spotted a silver water carafe, with a glass resting beside it.

With a shrewd expression, Martin Slade drew a small phial from his pocket. He uncorked it and poured a colorless fluid into the glass, which contained a little water.

Telford drank a great deal of water, as a habit of health. Each afternoon, the housekeeper refilled the carafe. Evidently Telford had taken a drink already. It was probable that he would take another.

Slade strolled from the room. Out on the porch, he heard Telford coming down the stairs. The old man called through the screen door.

"Jim!"

"Oh, hello, dad," responded Slade, opening the door.

"Sorry I was so brusque tonight," said Telford. "I was worried - worried about something that occurred in Baltimore. An old friend of mine told me - told me that he was very ill. Incurably ill. It was a great blow to me, you understand."

He was walking toward the door of the room where Slade had been. The shrewd crook followed the old man, and stopped by the door as Telford entered. The old man reached the desk, and swung around to see his pretended son at the door.

"Were you going to the city, Jim?" he asked.

"Yes, dad," replied Slade.

"Why don't you go now, then?" inquired Telford. "I can meet you at Rajah Brahman's meeting, tonight. I have work to do here, for a while."

"A good idea, dad," said Slade. "I'll see you then."

He hesitated momentarily as he saw Thomas Telford reach for the carafe. The old man filled the glass, and raised it to his lips. He walked over toward the door, and patted Slade on the back.

"See you later, Jim," he said, in an odd tone.

SLADE turned and left the room. He threw a parting glance, and saw Telford, one hand on the door, the other holding the glass to his mouth. The old man was drinking the water.

Going upstairs, Slade began to scheme. He was figuring an alibi. He did not believe that any one had seen him here at the bungalow. The old man had dismissed the cab driver before Slade had come forward to help him with the bag.

Therefore, it could easily be proved that young James Telford was in New York all afternoon. Slade knew well how alibis could be arranged.

The liquid that Slade had poured into the glass was a strong, tasteless poison. Slade had used it on previous occasions.

There would be good reason for the investigators of Telford's death to suppose that Telford had been poisoned prior to his return to Long Island. The poison was a subtle one. Its action and its effects had been puzzling to investigators in the past.

Martin Slade had no qualms at all about the outcome. Too often had he resorted to such evil measures.

Right now, he had a very simple course to follow. The old housekeeper had gone out. He could wait ten minutes - or fifteen. By that time, Thomas Telford would be dead. Then a visit to the room where the old man lay.

Slade could picture the body now, slumped on the floor, by the desk. He must make a getaway with the telltale glass, and that statement that Telford had prepared. Then all would be well.

As for the future, Slade was sure that he could bluff it out as James Telford. He was a man of cool nerve - of persuasive speech that had often deceived the shrewdest detectives.

He had taken a drastic step, but it had been necessary. By his deed, he had saved himself and his associates from exposure - exposure which would certainly have clipped the schemes of Rajah Brahman and his chief.

With brain working rapidly, Slade strolled downstairs at the end of ten minutes. He knew that this news would come as a bombshell to his associates, but it was the only way by which destruction could have been averted, Slade felt that he deserved congratulations for his prompt effort.

He was at the door of the room. He opened it softly. He looked about, expecting to see the body of Thomas Telford. But the room was empty!

Slade stared, bewildered, toward the desk. There was the glass, half empty. Thomas Telford had drunk the poison and had left the house!

Slade cursed himself for having remained in the back room upstairs. He should have been on watch!

Then he smiled. He saw the typewritten paper still on the desk. If Telford had taken it with him, the situation would have been bad. But Telford had left it here. That meant sure success for Slade.

Slade realized that the effects of the poison, while deadly, were slower with some persons than with others. As a result, Thomas Telford had survived longer than anticipated.

There was no telling where he might be now. On his way toward the station, perhaps. He might be lying beside the road, dead.

Whatever the case might be, Slade's course was to act quickly. He went to the desk and reached out for the paper first. At that moment he had an uncanny sensation of being watched.

He glanced nervously about the room. No one there. He braced himself. Perhaps it was this light - all from the single lamp on the desk. He would forget the passing worry in a moment, Slade decided. He picked up the paper and glanced at it.

It was not Telford's statement.

Slade stood completely stupefied.

The paper which he held bore this heading:

The Confession of Martin Slade.

Slade began to read, like a man in a dream. Here was a recounting of crimes that he had committed!

Who had learned these facts? Who had put this paper here?

Slade's hand was instinctively reaching toward his coat pocket, when a low laugh stopped the action. Glancing upward, Slade's eyes saw the end of the large bookcase.

A long, spreading shadow extended from that spot. It formed a blot of vengeance on the floor.

Then came the form to which it belonged. A being in a black cloak, his features hidden by a broad-brimmed slouch hat, stepped toward the cringing crook.

"The Shadow!" Slade breathed.

Slade knew the identity of this avenging figure. Cowering, weakened in nerve and body, he tried to shrink away. But the eyes that burned from beneath the broad-brimmed hat held him transfixed.

"The Shadow!"

Again Slade uttered the dread name. The answer was a low, taunting laugh from unseen lips.

"Martin Slade," declared a solemn, whispered voice, "you must pay the penalty for your crimes. Tonight, you sought to add another murder to your list."

SLADE'S fingers began to creep for his gun; but The Shadow's black-gloved hand brought an automatic into view. Slade made no further motion.

"Tonight," said The Shadow, "your evil design was thwarted. Thomas Telford, the man you sought to kill, did not swallow that poisoned drink. I warned him, and he is safe. He stopped on the brink of death. He will be at the seance tonight. You will not be with him."

The stern voice paused, then resumed in an accusing tone:

"Thomas Telford has gone. I, The Shadow, am here in his stead. I have been watching. I have come to make you sign your confession - the document that will prove your evilness."

A black-clad finger pointed to the paper on the table.

"Sign."

Slade did not move.

"Sign!"

The automatic was threatening. Slade, with trembling fingers, picked up the pen that lay beside the paper. He inscribed his name. The pen fell from his clutch as he looked up, like a frightened rat.

"You have signed your death warrant," declared The Shadow. "That paper shall bring you death. Death - Martin Slade!"

The grim picture of the electric chair arose in Slade's mind. Bold on the surface, he was a coward at heart.

The Shadow was approaching closer. His sinister whisper carried a tone that held the knell of doom.

"Death will come to you, Martin Slade! Death that you cannot escape. You will linger in the death cell, waiting - waiting - for your day of doom!"

Slade gasped; then, in madness, he reached for his revolver. His hand came swinging from his pocket. Then, as the man's weapon was moving upward, The Shadow discharged his automatic.

Its bullet smashed against the revolver in Slade's hand. The crook's gun hurtled toward the wall. Slade was holding his numbed hand helplessly.

"Death," said The Shadow slowly. "Death by the chair - if you prefer to wait. Death now - by my hand, if you choose to struggle. Death - of your own design, if you wish it. Death that you designed for others should be good enough for you, Martin Slade!"

THE crook understood. The glass on the table! The glass with its half quota of liquid that carried sure death! Slade shunned the thought.

Then, he caught the gleam in The Shadow's eyes. He saw the black finger resting on the trigger of the automatic.

Slade's game was ended. He must fight now, or yield. Bullets from The Shadow's automatic - bullets that might wound and leave him here, dying. The liquid in the glass - sure - positive.

"You prefer to wait?" inquired The Shadow.

His left hand advanced, and Slade cowered. The Shadow picked up the confession and placed it beneath his cloak. His free hand reached for the telephone.

Slade knew what the gesture meant. A tip to the police. They would be here - to find him. They would receive his confession, learn his crimes!

Slowly, the man's hand crept across the desk. He picked up the glass, with its poison. He brought the glass to his lips. The liquid had no taste. Even though he had poisoned it, Slade could not tell it from water.

He started to put the glass away; but his hand stopped, unmoving, as he saw The Shadow's pistol move.

"You have made your choice," came the sinister whisper. "Abide by that choice, or I shall act as I choose."

The glass went back to Slade's lips. The man did not see it. His eyes were on The Shadow's hands, unconscious of the glass. The black finger trembled. Slade knew that if he hesitated longer, his fate would be decided by his enemy.

In desperation, he shut his eyes and gulped the liquid. He remained, seated with bowed head. He felt no ill effects for the moment. He had a sudden rev of hope. Perhaps the poison - for once - might be impotent!

Slade's eyes opened. The Shadow was gone! Exultant, hopeful, Martin Slade started to arise from his chair. A terrific pain gripped him. He slumped back in agony.

Thomas Telford's old clock on the bookcase ticked off seven solemn minutes, while a man writhed and moaned in torture. At the end of seven minutes, the room was silent.

Martin Slade, sprawled over the desk, was dead.

A silent, black-clad form reentered the room. The Shadow laid the dead man's confession on the desk beside the body. A black-gloved finger rested on the final paragraph - words which Slade had not read.

There appeared this statement:

Because my crimes will be known, I have taken my own life.

Underneath the sentence appeared the signature of Martin Slade.

CHAPTER XX

IMAM SINGH PREPARES

RAJAH Brahman was seated in his sanctum. Imam Singh was beside him, listening to final instructions. The rajah, despite his Oriental appearance, was talking in the shrewd tones of Bert Clutten.

"You know how we're working tonight, Tony," he said. "I'm going to work this materialization strong. A long talk, spirit guides and all that - before the fireworks.

"Get going as soon as we set the cabinet. I'll do the rest. Take plenty of time with the make-up. You've got to do the part right."

Tony nodded.

"Show them in," said the seer.

He went into the seance room, and was seated on his throne when the sitters were ushered into his presence. Rajah Brahman looked about with secret satisfaction.

Here were the real believers - ones who had the money. Arthur Dykeman would turn in his cash after this seance. Mrs. Furzeman, from Chicago, was a good believer. There was Thomas Telford - the seer noted that his newfound son was not with him. That was just as well.

Beside Telford sat the one member of the group who might be classed as a skeptic - Benjamin Castelle. The dignified man was very serious tonight, and it pleased Rajah Brahman. After this seance, Castelle would serve a most useful part in the scheme of things.

For Rajah Brahman, with the knowledge of the seer, was sure that tonight Castelle's skepticism would drop away. He was sure that the man, as a new convert, would be high in his praise of Rajah Brahman's psychic powers.

Best of all was Maude Garwood. Tonight, she would gain her long-cherished desire. From the vast spaces of the universe, a spirit would come to greet her - a spirit whom she would recognize. Rajah Brahman glanced toward Imam Singh. A great assistant, Tony!

The seance began impressively. After the usual discourse, Rajah Brahman signed for the spirit cabinet. It was brought to the center of the floor by Imam Singh.

Rajah Brahman commenced a discussion of the higher planes. While he spoke, his mind was thinking of other matters. All was well in Chicago. Slade had arranged a good job there. Joe Cardona was out of the picture.

All was well here in New York. There must be no trouble, tonight, of all nights. Again Slade had proven useful. He had arranged for Barney Gleason and his chosen mobsmen to be on watch, tonight. That would prevent any interference by The Shadow!

Imam Singh was no longer in the seance room. He had glided into the reception room, and thence, to the outer door.

There, the white-clad man uttered a low signal. Four men appeared and came through the door. One was Barney Gleason. The others were his chosen gunmen.

"In here," whispered Imam Singh.

He stationed two men in the reception room. He led Barney Gleason and the remaining thug through the anteroom, into Rajah Brahman's private sanctum.

"O.K.," said Barney Gleason.

Imam Singh nodded. He went through the empty anteroom and traveled to the outer door of the apartment. There, he peered cautiously into the hall. He closed the door and let it latch behind him. It was only a few steps to the fire tower. There, Imam Singh descended, and reached the floor below.

He peered from the tower into the hall. No one was in sight. Imam Singh hurried to a door directly beneath the entrance of Rajah Brahman's apartment.

He unlocked the door and entered. He turned on a single light in the hall, and made his way to the door of a storage room. He unlocked this door, and entered.

The storage room was fairly large. It contained various articles of furniture. A large square box was in one corner - beside it the properties of Professor Raoul Jacques, which had been partially unpacked. Imam Singh laughed as he looked at a chair which had come from the Hotel Dalban.

He adjusted a stepladder in the center of the room, directly between two beams in the ceiling. The ladder was an unusual one. It was very firm, and had a large platform top. It reached almost to the ceiling.

IMAM SINGH went to a closet. He divested himself of his white robes, and put on a garment of jet black.

This was close-fitting, and, with it, Imam Singh took out a black hood, which he did not don. Instead, he placed it upon a dressing table that stood beside the box in the corner.

Imam Singh turned on a light by the table. He produced make-up materials, and began a transformation of his own face.

A picture was lying on the table as he worked. It was a portrait of Geoffrey Garwood, the dead husband of the Philadelphia woman.

Gradually, Imam Singh's countenance assumed the features of the departed millionaire. Satisfied with his final touches, Imam Singh laughed and leaned back in his chair. His task was done; but there would be long to wait.

Tonight, Rajah Brahman was doing preliminary work with the trumpet. The materialization of the wealthy Garwood would be the last number on the spooky program.

As Imam Singh leaned back, with eyes half closed, a pair of hands emerged from the box behind his chair. A man's form followed. The man suddenly hurled himself forward and landed full upon the unexpectant Imam Singh.

The struggle was brief, and all in favor of the attacker. A man of strength, he rolled the fake Hindu to the floor, and rammed his head against the woodwork. Within half a minute, the victor was staring at the inert face that resembled Geoffrey Garwood.

He arose and dragged the unconscious man to the far corner of the room, where he bound and gagged his captive. Then he returned to the dressing table in the corner, and took the chair which Imam Singh had occupied.

WHILE this unusual event was taking place beneath the apartment of Rajah Brahman, a group of detectives at headquarters were extending a welcome to Joe Cardona, returned from his leave of absence.

The detective had just arrived from his trip to parts unknown. He looked worn and weary from his journey.

In the office, his comrades, unimpressed by Cardona's tired appearance, were questioning him about his vacation. Cardona saw a package on his desk. Some one spied the direction of his gaze. The banter changed in tune.

"Came in this afternoon, Joe. Were you expecting it?"

"Looks like more violets, Joe."

"Better see what's in it."

Joe Cardona opened the package. He brought out the inevitable bunch of violets. The banter turned to laughs. Cardona made no comment.

He fingered the stems of the flowers, and calmly thrust the bouquet into a glass of water that chanced to be on the window sill.

This action brought more raillery. It also gave Cardona a chance to examine the writing on the metal disk that he had plucked from the flowers:

LONG ISLAND

THOMAS TELFORD

IMMEDIATELY

Repeating the name to himself, Cardona dropped the disk into his pocket, and looked up the name of Thomas Telford in the phone book. He found it. He called the number. There was no answer.

Summoning a squad of men, Cardona lost no time. Two police cars were speeding toward Thomas Telford's Long Island home. The cars were filled with detectives who wondered if their leader had experienced an attack of sunstroke.

The first car pulled up at Telford's bungalow. Cardona clambered out and dashed into the house, with three men at his heels. In the lighted room they found the body of Martin Slade!

Murder!

The detectives were amazed. How had Cardona received the tip? Through a bunch of violets? The ridicule that had attended those ludicrous bouquets of flowers was now a thing of the past.

Cardona was reading the paper that lay on the desk beside the dead man. Its paragraphs were brief and to the point. They told much that Martin Slade had done.

Something in the confession stirred the detective to instant action. Ordering one detective to remain at Telford's home, Cardona turned to the rest of his men.

"Come on," he said briskly. "We're going back to Manhattan. We've got something more important than this to worry about."

The detectives were buzzing as they hurried to the cars in response to Cardona's mysterious command. To the drivers, Joe Cardona gave the order that announced the destination of this quickly formed raiding squad.

"Head for the Callao Hotel," ordered the detective. "Get going and keep going!"

The Shadow had again spurred Joe Cardona on the trail.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SPIRIT APPEARS

THERE was tenseness in the seance room at Rajah Brahman's. Behind the closed curtains of the spirit cabinet, a shade from the astral plane was seeking to regain earthly form. Not a person present disturbed the impressive silence.

"A woman in our midst," declared Rajah Brahman solemnly. "A woman who has lost a loved one. Soon she shall see again the face of the person whom she knew.

"The spirit is speaking. I can hear its voice. It says the name of Garwood - Maude Garwood. Will she answer?"

"I am here!" exclaimed Maude Garwood, in a breathless tone.

The curtains of the cabinet were open. A luminous spot was showing, several feet above the floor of the cabinet. The spot enlarged. It became a moving face. Slowly, the complete head and neck appeared. The face was turned toward Maude Garwood.

"The spirit shall speak!" declared Rajah Brahman impressively.

A terrific scream came from Maude Garwood. The woman collapsed and fell to the floor. Rajah Brahman sat startled on his throne. The spirit was speaking - and its words were plain.

"I am the spirit of Dick Terry," came the voice. "Not long ago I was here with you - on the earthly plane. Now I have gone to the other world. I was murdered - murdered and there is the man who decreed my death!"

A hand appeared beside the floating face. Its long, shining finger pointed directly toward the enthroned mystic!

Gasps and cries sounded about the circle. All had seen Dick Terry alive. They recognized his features now. To Rajah Brahman, the thing was incredible!

Had Tony double-crossed him? No - that could not be possible! This looked like Dick Terry - it must be Dick Terry!

Yet Dick Terry was dead. His slayer, Barney Gleason, was here tonight. Martin Slade had been sure that Dick Terry was dead!

A sudden fear swept over the astonished faker. Reaching beneath his cobra robe, he drew a short, stub-nosed revolver. He paused, remembering the mistake of Professor Jacques.

He had stopped just in time. To test this accusing form with a bullet could do no good. This was The Shadow's doing! Was this The Shadow, playing the part of Dick Terry?

Gaining sudden decision, Rajah Brahman leaped from his throne and hurled himself across the room, away from that head that floated in the darkness. He reached the wall switch, and was about to press it. Suddenly he realized that this would end his well-laid plans of many months.

He must face this issue - face it without revealing the fact that he was a faker and a rogue.

"Back! Back, evil spirit!" he ordered, advancing through the dark. "Back to the other plane! Depart, thou lying spirit -"

A peal of mocking laughter resounded through the seance room. Wild, taunting, and uncanny, the rollicking mirth seemed like a cry from the dim beyond. It threw an atmosphere of realism into this scene that surpassed imagination.

"Back - depart -"

Rajah Brahman's cries were pitiful as their quivering tones were drowned amid another tremendous burst of merriment that seemed to come from the walls and ceiling. Dying, shuddering echoes followed that laugh. Then, at the most terrifying moment, the lights came on.

Stepping from the cabinet was Dick Terry, his arms folded, his living, accusing eyes staring straight at Rajah Brahman. The mystic, backing away, began to draw his revolver from his robe. Then a solemn voice came from the side of the room, by the wall switch.

Rajah Brahman turned. All the members of the circle - some standing; others crouched upon the floor - stared in the direction of that voice.

Thomas Telford was standing at the wall. His face, no longer old, was gleaming with a sinister smile. His eyes were like living coals. In each hand he held an automatic.

"You have reached the end," he said coldly, to the bewildered seer. "Rajah Brahman, thief and murderer, is finished. You sought to deceive me as you have deceived others. Your companion in murder, Martin Slade, has paid for his crimes with his life.

"You are doomed, Bert Clutten" - the Hindu garbed seer winced at the name - "and your evil work is ended! You have known me as Thomas Telford. That is a false identity. Thomas Telford does not exist.

"Know me now! I am -"

Before the tall man could deliver the name that Rajah Brahman feared - the name of The Shadow - a hand was raised amid the cowering circle.

A revolver gleamed as a finger pressed against its trigger. But The Shadow - ever alert - had been waiting for the action. Flame burst from this right-hand automatic. The pistol shot resounded through the seance room.

BENJAMIN CASTELLE sprawled headlong on the floor, his revolver sliding and jouncing ahead of his finger-spread hand.

"Your companion in crime," announced The Shadow coldly. "The man you called your chief. Benjamin Castelle, the pretended skeptic. The promoter of your swindle schemes.

"He, too, is a murderer" - the voice paused, then corrected itself mockingly - "was a murderer!"

The words were true. Benjamin Castelle lay dead. The Shadow's well-aimed bullet had found his evil heart.

Rajah Brahman backed away toward the end of the room, a cowering, helpless figure. But his evil brain was seeing its chance of escape. With the shot fired by The Shadow, the door at the corner had opened slightly, and Barney Gleason was peering into the seance room.

He could see the form of Dick Terry standing by the rajah's throne. He could see the dead body of Benjamin Castelle. He could see the sitters drawing away in fright to the farther corner of the room.

He could not see the tall form of The Shadow, in the guise of Thomas Telford. But he did see Rajah Brahman cowering away from a menace, and he caught the hunted gleam in the mystic's eyes.

Slowly, cautiously, the mob leader peered around the corner of the doorway. He was seeking to discover the form that he knew must be beside the wall. His automatic was dark and sullen. Did The Shadow know the danger that was coming?

The question was never answered, for Dick Terry acted at that moment. Gleason, intent upon his purpose, had ignored Dick, who was standing silent and alone.

Dick saw the muzzle of the automatic against the edge of the doorway. He quickly lifted his right arm and his short-barreled revolver responded to the trigger. A bullet crashed the wall an inch from Barney Gleason's hand.

It was the signal of battle!

Barney Gleason dropped back and aimed at the new enemy. Dick Terry made a quick dive for the shelter of the rajah's throne. Gleason, seeing him out of action, leaped into the seance room, the other gangster at his heels.

The gang leader's automatic was aimed toward The Shadow. Out of its mouth came barking, hasty shots, that Gleason hoped would end the formidable foe.

But The Shadow, close against the wall, was safe from those wild shots. His own automatic replied the moment that Barney Gleason leaped out from cover. The gang leader fell, a bullet through his stomach.

Cursing, coughing, he still kept up his futile fire as he lay, half crawling, on the floor. The effort marred his aim. His bullets were wide of their mark.

With one automatic, The Shadow still covered Rajah Brahman at the end of the room. With the other, he calmly fired two quick shots that dropped the man who had followed Barney Gleason.

The Shadow's bullets struck just as the man made a futile leap back toward the other room.

Following The Shadow's shots came quick reports from behind the throne. Dick Terry had opened fire on the other mobsters, coming in from the reception room.

The Shadow fired one last shot that lowered Barney Gleason's weak arm; then he swirled toward the new menace. The gangsters were ducking back to safety. Dick had them covered.

The Shadow's action gave Rajah Brahman his opportunity. Had he attempted to draw his revolver and fire, he would have been clipped by The Shadow. But he performed a different action that was a split second faster.

He leaped for the shelter of the huge metal Buddha at the end of the room. He reached it in safety. The Shadow's pursuing shot clipped the side of the huge image.

Here Rajah Brahman waited. He was safe! But he had not reckoned with his amazing foe. While Terry covered the doorway against reinforcements, The Shadow strode across the room, with both automatics covering the metal idol.

Rajah Brahman took the only course. He swung his revolver past the side of the Buddha, and fired as he raised his hand. His first bullet was a wild hope. The second seared The Shadow's sleeve. The third did not follow.

Crack!

The Shadow's automatic had answered with a bullet that took off the rajah's trigger finger. The revolver dropped to the floor.

The crooked medium was helpless behind the protecting Buddha!

AT that instant, gunfire broke out in another part of the apartment. Cardona and his men had entered. They were encountering the gangsters in the reception room.

The Shadow, turning momentarily, spied a sight that no one else saw - for all eyes had turned in the new direction.

Coming through the floor of the spirit cabinet, revolver in hand, was Imam Singh. The servant had been bound by Dick Terry. He had escaped and had climbed the ladder to the trapdoor that led to the spirit cabinet.

The bottom of the cabinet was a foot above the floor, but it, too, opened, and its broad base obscured a view of the center spot beneath.

Incongruous in the character of Geoffrey Garwood, Imam Singh was nevertheless a figure of hatred as he raised his gun to fire at Dick Terry.

The Shadow ended this menace. He sprawled Imam Singh with a bullet in his shoulder, and as the false Hindu wavered, The Shadow leaped forward and flung him to the floor of the room.

Joe Cardona came dashing in the door. He saw the tall form of Thomas Telford - whom he did not recognize as The Shadow - with the curtains of the cabinet closing about it.

Before he could understand this, Cardona spied Rajah Brahman, grabbing up his revolver and leaping back for the safety of the Buddha. The detective opened a volley. His bullets were sure. Rajah Brahman fell dead.

Dick Terry was struggling with Imam Singh, trying to capture the man alive. But the man broke away, and snatched his gun from the floor. He aimed at Joe Cardona but the detective dropped him with a shot from close range.

The action of Imam Singh showed Cardona that Dick Terry was on the side of justice. The young man dropped his gun when he saw that the detective was safe.

Joe Cardona, seeing no other foes, snatched away the curtains of the spirit cabinet.

The Shadow was gone! He had used Rajah Brahman's own trapdoor to effect his exit.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CLEAN-UP

THE clean-up of the Spook Ring was a natural consequence of the battle at Rajah Brahman's apartment. With Joe Cardona and his men in complete control, the dead bodies and the contents of the apartment were striking proofs of the strength that the evil organization had possessed.

Dick Terry told a valuable story. He recounted his rescue from Barney Gleason's mob. He told how he had been advised to lay low; how Thomas Telford - whom Dick Terry did not name as The Shadow - had arranged the surprise at Rajah Brahman's.

Dick had received a key from Telford. It enabled him to get into the storeroom, where he had lain in wait for Imam Singh.

Telford, whose part had been so great, had simply chosen to disappear. Joe Cardona would have liked him for a witness, but well did he know that the man would never be located.

For Joe Cardona realized that this mysterious man, whose identity proved to be nonexistent, was actually The Shadow. Working alone, he had completely deceived the crafty fakers.

Rajah Brahman was identified as Bert Clutten; Imam Singh as a young Italian named Tony Petrucci. The two had been working a spins graft for years.

Lining up with Benjamin Castelle, the organizer who had raised the racket to the million-dollar class, they had plied their crooked trade to the utmost.

Martin Slade's complete confession had told everything. A crafty murderer, Slade had arranged the deaths of various innocent persons. Rajah Brahman's bluebook and his filing cases gave hints of contemplated deaths that were now frustrated forever.

When Cardona had found the trapdoor to the floor below, and had realized the method of The Shadow's vanishing, he descended. He discovered the storeroom with its equipment. Articles of disguise - false and fraudulent devices - all sorts of paraphernalia that went with the crooked trade.

What interested Cardona particularly was a chair which he recognized as the one that Professor Jacques had been tied in, that night at the Dalban. Now, when the detective examined the chair, he found that one arm rattled. Close inspection showed that the arms lifted off completely; but went back automatically.

That trick chair marked Jacques as the slayer of Herbert Harvey. The medium, caught, confessed what had happened.

Harvey, a confederate who supplied him with information, had carried the luminous knife. Seeing trouble, Jacques had raised his arms in the dark and had obtained the knife from Harvey. The medium's legs still remained bound to the chair.

When Harvey struggled with the unknown assailant whom Cardona knew must have been The Shadow - Jacques struck at the enemy. But a twist in the dark had sent the knife into the body of his own confederate. Losing hold of the knife, Jacques had quickly shoved the chair arms back into place.

Cardona had missed the trick then. He saw it now. For The Shadow had left an arm loose for him to find.

SENSATIONAL headlines told of the raid at Rajah Brahman's. Castelle's mighty racket was exposed. The confession of Professor Jacques followed as a tremendous story. Cardona lifted the lid when he revealed the names of mediums throughout the country.

The greatest sensation was Cardona's statement that he had visited local psychic circles in various cities, and had seen their build-up operate. He had evidence and witnesses to prove how the racket had worked.

Coronado Copper was blacklisted. Castelle's new stock-unloading scheme was ended before it began. Millions of dollars were saved for honest people.

Acting on information from New York, the police of twenty-seven cities swooped down upon fake mediums who had been part of the nation-wide crooked outfit.

Desperate fakers were ready to fight back; but everywhere, the police were aided by mysterious long-distance calls that tipped them off when to attack.

Fakers scurrying for cover were spotted before they could escape. In St. Louis, a group of crooked mediums were ready with a death trap. It failed through some mysterious cause, and the desperate crooks attempted a getaway through a tunnel under the street.

They were stopped by a man in black, who rose like a ghost and blocked their path! With two threatening automatics, he held them at bay until the police arrived and captured them.

Then the man of mystery disappeared, leaving no reminder of his presence other than a sinister laugh that rolled in hollow tones through the vaulted passageway.

The press of the entire country rang with praise for the police officials who had responded with such swift and effective action. Never before had the forces of the law acted with such concerted power.

It seemed as though an unseen hand - amazing and mysterious - had acted with incredible precision against the Spook Ring. And that was as true as it seemed.

Detective Joe Cardona, for his work in cleaning up the murderous fakers, received the congratulations of Police Commissioner Weston. But well did

Cardona know that he had played but a minor role.

The Shadow, that mysterious battler against crime, had worked cleverly. And in the secret files of The Shadow lay the complete details of the racketeers' round-up, even information that the ace detective never dreamed of.

For The Shadow knew!

THE END