

DEATH TOKEN

Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. BATTLE IN MANHATTAN

FLOODLIGHTS showed the Queen Mary, docked at her Hudson River berth. On the pier, dwarfed beneath the towering sides of the mammoth liner, two customs officers were inspecting a long, flat express box. The lid was open; the officers thumbed through documents, and checked with a typewritten statement.

"Contents as represented," declared an officer. "Documents for delivery to Mr. Courtney Radbard. Duty-free."

He replaced the papers, clamped the box shut and affixed a seal. He gave the key to a frail, bespectacled man who had witnessed the inspection. The frail man entered a cab; two stewards put the steel box in after him.

That taxi was spotted before it had gone three blocks. Two men saw it from the front seat of their parked sedan. They recognized the bespectacled passenger.

"That's him, Leo," grunted the man at the wheel of the sedan. "John Sideling, Radbard's secretary."

"Tail him, Beak," responded the other watcher. "Up to where the outfit's waiting. Solo will give the tip-off. We'll block from in back. We're going to snatch that tin box!"

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The sedan started forward. Two of the most dangerous crooks in Manhattan were on Sideling's trail.

Leo Jebbrey called himself a big-slot. "Beak" Hadlett was his lieutenant, when they worked together. The law had often linked that pair; therefore, they were seen together only when big crime was afoot. To-night, a third crook was working with them.

Leo had mentioned the name "Solo," and only one crook in New York carried that nickname. He was Solo Juke, a lone wolf by reputation. Evidently, Solo had foregone his one-man methods to team with Leo and Beak.

Passing lights showed Leo Jebbrey craning through the windshield of the sedan. Long-faced, with drawn cheeks and squinty eyes, Leo watched every jolt of Sideling's cab. Beside Leo, Beak Hadlett displayed a flattish countenance, marked by a wide, bulgy nose. Handling the wheel, Beak kept close to the taxi.

In the rear seat of the sedan were three hoodlums, all with ready guns. They were looking forward to the task of pumping bullets into their coming victim, John Sideling.

On Tenth Avenue, a coupe shot into sight beside Sideling's car. Its driver was Solo Juke, darkish and sullen, a curl on his thick lips. The waiting crook had also spotted Sideling. He was cutting in ahead of the cab; his coupe served as a signal.

A touring car nosed from a street that was partly closed to traffic. It swung straight across in front of Sideling's cab. The taxi driver jammed his brakes, not knowing what the touring car intended. He learned quickly.

Doors slung open. Four thugs piled from the touring car. Brandishing revolvers, they made for the stalled cab.

Sideling saw them from his window; he gulped and dived to the floor. A thug yanked open the cab door; saw Sideling crouched, clutching the steel express box. The triggerman aimed his .38 straight between the huddled victim's eyes.

One-shot alone was needed to end Sideling's life; that bullet, however, was destined to be long postponed.

A STREAMLINED taxi roared suddenly upon the scene, arriving as if from nowhere. Driven by a reckless jehu, it cut in past the sedan, which had stopped fifty feet behind Sideling's cab. Leo Jebbrey and Beak Hadlett saw the arriving vehicle; but it passed them like a whizzing streak, before either crook could realize that it had trailed them from the pier.

The thugs beside Sideling's cab jumped away, to avoid the hurtling juggernaut that was almost upon them. All but the one gorilla who held Sideling covered. He was close enough to the step to avoid the path of the surging cab. His job was to finish Sideling.

He hesitated only long enough to throw a glance at the headlights of the approaching cab. An instant later, his eyes were again toward Sideling; the killer's finger was ready on the trigger.

That moment's interval changed the climax.

A gun spoke from the half-opened door of the onsurging cab. Despite the fact that the driver was jamming the brakes, the marksman in the rear seat was perfect with his aim. Flame speared for the thug who threatened Sideling. With the blast came a solid slug that found its target.

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The would-be killer jolted; spilled sidewise on the running board of Sideling's taxi.

Three other hoodlums saw their companion drop, his gun unfired. For a moment, the streamlined cab blotted further view, as it came almost to a stop. Then, as if responding to a command, the driver gave it the gas.

The cab careened upon the curb, sped past the stalled touring car. Finding the avenue's paving, it wheeled suddenly to the right, through the partly blocked side street that had been the touring car's lurking spot. Thugs aimed, to fire after the departing cab. A warning shout told them that they had picked the wrong target.

The cry came from the man at the wheel of the stalled touring car. Leaping to the street, he was whipping out a revolver, to aim for a spot beside Sideling's cab. The streamlined taxi had discharged a passenger as it passed. The marksman who had clipped the first thug was standing ready to deal with further foes.

Crooks saw him, blocking the cab door, protecting the huddled man within. Between them and Sideling stood a shielding fighter, a being clad in black. His very garb betokened his identity. The rescuer from the night was The Shadow.

THAT first shot should have told crooks who it was that had intervened. They no longer were in doubt, however; they recognized that cloaked form, with eyes that glowed beneath the brim of a slouch hat. They saw the muzzles of formidable automatics, unlimbered for action, looming from gloved fists. They heard a peal of strident mockery: The Shadow's taunting laugh that predicted disaster to all whose ways were evil.

A gunshot answered The Shadow's challenge. It came from the driver of the touring car. A bullet whistled past The Shadow's shoulder. A gloved fist swung to deliver its response. One .45 boomed before the gunman could fire again. The hasty thug sprawled beside the front wheel of the cab. Even while the attacker was falling, The Shadow swung to meet new marksmen.

Stabbing quick shots toward the curb, the cloaked sharpshooter clipped the thugs who had heard their pal's quick cry. They were busy with their triggers also; but they were no match for their dread adversary. The Shadow, as always, seemed immune to the bullets that clanged the cab behind him. Thugs were too panicky to realize that the charm lay in their own haste. Crooks of their ilk invariably fired too soon, when they encountered The Shadow.

One rogue floundered; the others took to their heels, one clutching a crippled arm, his companion clapping a wounded gun hand to a thick-lipped mouth. Others could fight The Shadow; not they. One was scurrying for a darkened doorway; the other was heading for the protection of stacked ash carts on the curb.

Just as he had swung away from one falling attacker, so did The Shadow forget these crippled foemen. He sensed further battle; to meet it, he wheeled toward the rear of the cab. His big automatics started a new barrage, and a timely one, toward the sedan where other foemen lurked. The Shadow was in time to meet another surge.

Killers had piled from the stalled sedan. They were loping forward, the trio from the back seat. Close behind the gorillas came Leo Jebbrey and Beak Hadlett, as anxious as their followers to overwhelm The Shadow. Confident that the previous battlers had winged The Shadow, the newcomers expected a kill at close range. Before they reckoned what was coming, the situation was reversed.

Flame leaping from The Shadow's guns sent the attackers fleeing. The withering blasts were accurate; partly protected by the oblique position of the cab, The Shadow could not be reached by answering shots.

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Leo and Beak were caught flat-footed as they saw their underlings stagger. With one accord, the two leaders dived back for the protection of the sedan. As they reached it, they saw The Shadow coming in pursuit.

Victor in the short-lived fray, The Shadow had opportunity for a complete triumph. Leo and Beak were as good as finished; in flight, they could not have rallied to withstand The Shadow's wrath.

It was a lucky aftermath that saved them: the timely aid of a partner who, as yet, had not figured in the battle.

SWOOPING down the avenue came Solo Juke at the wheel of his coupe. Solo swung wide around the touring car, passed the taxi and pulled up beside the sedan.

Leo grabbed for the open window beside the driver's seat. Beak made a long dive atop the closed rumble seat. Solo yanked the wheel, gave his car the gas. With the sedan protecting it against an immediate rear attack, the coupe sped southward down the avenue.

When The Shadow had sprang wide of the sedan, far enough to gain the aim he wanted, the coupe's tail-lights were twinkling a full block away. The range was too great for gunfire, at the speed the car was traveling. Leaders in crime had made their get-away.

A motor roared behind The Shadow. Turning, the cloaked victor saw Sideling's cab jolt backward; then swing forward around the stalled touring car. A few moments later, the rescued cab was speeding northward, taking the opposite direction to the one that the last crooks had chosen. Sideling had rallied sufficiently to stir his driver into action. The secretary was speeding to safety with the express box from the Queen Mary.

Police whistles were blasting from near-by streets. Sirens were delivering an approaching wail. Alone in the avenue which traffic had cleared and avoided, The Shadow waited less than a single second. Satisfied that he had accomplished all that was possible, the cloaked fighter swept swiftly toward the blockaded street. Reaching its darkness, he found the streamlined cab that had brought him to the field of battle.

A whispered laugh marked The Shadow's prompt departure. Though ringleaders of crime had made their getaway, their attack had been frustrated. That was sufficient for the present. Their band thinned, those crooks would make no immediate trouble. Later, The Shadow would find two of them with ease, Leo Jebbrey and Beak Hadlett.

It was through a partial check on the affairs of those two rogues that The Shadow had gained his inkling of tonight's crime. Solo Juke had appeared as an unexpected outsider; but The Shadow was sure that he would find the lone wolf later, along with Leo and Beak.

One fact was certain. In saving Sideling, The Shadow had rescued a hapless man whose death had seemed certain. The Shadow had never seen Sideling before; therefore, he had not learned why crooks had sought the man's life and tried to gain the property that Sideling carried.

That was something that The Shadow would soon discover. When he learned the truth, he would be due for a surprise. For behind the massed attack on Tenth Avenue lay hidden causes that The Shadow did not suspect.

Through this campaign that, so far, involved no more than crude attack, The Shadow was due to meet a master-criminal whose ways were those of subtle strategy.

CHAPTER II. THE SHOW-DOWN

SOON after the Tenth Avenue fray, Sideling's cab arrived at a secluded brownstone mansion; the home of Courtney Radbard. The cab was expected; two brawny servants came from the house and took the express box indoors.

Sideling gave the cab driver a twenty-dollar bill, with the remark:

"Say nothing about to-night's occurrence. My employer detests notoriety, and should not be inconvenienced."

A third servant, beefy-faced and quizzical, was waiting when Sideling entered the house. He asked:

"You ran into trouble, Mr. Sideling?"

"None at all, Moshart," replied Sideling. "We were delayed by heavy traffic near the pier."

The two were standing in a large hallway. The place looked like a museum, with magnificent hangings, huge furniture of ebony and teak, large Oriental vases. Across from the doorway was a huge statue of Apollo that weighed fully a ton; for it was eight feet tall and made of solid bronze.

Mounted on a three-foot pedestal, the Greek god towered like a giant. The statue's size was matched only by the grand staircase beyond it. Sweeping upward on a long curve, the stairway displayed broad marble steps flanked by a massive marble rail.

Sideling went through a large, gloomy library; he passed the returning servants who had carried the express box. The secretary reached the back of the library and knocked at a bulky door. A heavy voice ordered him to enter. Sideling stepped into a small room to face his employer.

Courtney Radbard was seated behind a mahogany desk, upon which rested the steel express box. Past Radbard was a large, modern safe, wide open. On the far wall of the room was a closed door that led to the rear of the mansion.

Radbard was heavy-built, wide of shoulder. His face was broad and rugged; his jaw firm as iron. His eyebrows were overlarge; their bushiness was noticeable, because of the sharp eyes that glistened from beneath them. Radbard was dressed in brown; the color matched his eyes, his brows and bushy hair. His complexion, too, was brownish. His tawny skin, plus his crouchy pose, gave him the appearance of a lion.

"What happened, Sideling?"

Radbard's rumble told that he had guessed that trouble had occurred. Sideling recounted all that had happened. Concluding, the secretary said:

"At least, the express box is safe. Shall I open it, sir?"

Radbard thrust a tawny paw across the desk, clamped it on the express box with the comment:

"Leave the box exactly as it is."

Leaning back in his chair, Radbard sat silent, while Sideling stood by and watched him. Five minutes passed. There was a rap at the door from the rear of the mansion. Radbard commented:

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"We have visitors, Sideling. Admit them."

THE secretary unlocked the door. Three men filed through and calmly seated themselves, while Sideling watched with strained expression. The first two who entered were Leo Jebbrey and Beak Hadlett. The third, slouching behind them, was Solo Juke.

The very crooks who had tried to murder Sideling and carry away the express box were visitors in Courtney Radbard's home!

Leo Jebbrey squinted toward Radbard, and decided to open the conversation.

"We hear Sideling got into a jam," gruffed Leo, "while he was coming up here from the dock."

Sideling shot a look toward Radbard, to indicate that the visiting crooks were the men responsible. Radbard ignored his secretary's glance. Calmly, he remarked:

"Bad news seems to travel fast."

"It does," asserted Leo, "especially when The Shadow is hooked up with it. He was the bimbo who smeared those mugs!"

"Tell me about these 'mugs,' as you term them. Who were they, Leo?"

"I don't know. But they were after this tin box of yours."

"Why should they want it?"

Radbard's question came with velvet purr. It brought a stare from Leo. The crook thudded the desk with his fist.

"It's time for a show-down, Radbard!" snapped Leo. "We're all in the same racket. We've shipped swag across the Atlantic, to big-shots on the other side. We've expected them to pay for it, with jewels that we can unload here. Stuff that they've snatched.

"That's why you're in the deal. You're a big shipping man. You can handle the shipments. You say the sparklers haven't been coming through. Maybe not; but we've seen some rocks that look like foreign stuff. What I want to know is, did they come from Pierre Lebrunne. If they did, who fenced them?"

Leo Jebbrey was savage in tone; it made Beak Hadlett restless. Looking toward Solo Juke, Beak saw the lone wolf puffing a cigarette. Beak reached for a cigarette of his own. Meanwhile, Radbard turned to Sideling, with the order:

"Summon Mademoiselle Lebrunne."

Sideling went out through the library. Returning, he was accompanied by a girl of remarkable beauty. Her hair was jet-black; her attire dark. Her complexion was remarkably clear, its whiteness a contrast to her dark hair and eyes. The perfect mold of her features made Leo Jebbrey eye her with an appraising stare, which Beak Hadlett duplicated. Solo Juke looked disinterested.

"This is Celeste Lebrunne," introduced Radbard, alone rising from his chair. The shipping magnate gave a courteous bow. "Tell us, mademoiselle, why you are visiting in New York."

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"Because of my brother, Pierre," replied the girl, in English. "He wishes that his plans be properly completed."

"You hear from your brother frequently?"

"Yes. Pierre's last letter came today."

"Did it contain a message for me?"

"Yes, Monsieur Radbard. Pierre has said that you must wait some time longer, before he can send any of the jewels."

RADBARD bowed again. Sideling ushered Celeste out through the library. Radbard faced his visitors; his expression indicated that he had given proof sufficient. Leo Jebbrey stared sourly, then gestured toward the express box on the desk.

"Some lugs were after that," reminded Leo. "Guess they found out that you get express boxes regularly from Europe."

Radbard pointed to the unbroken customs seal. He produced the key to the express box, gave it to Leo, with the comment:

"Open the box."

Leo inspected the seal. Satisfied, he unlocked the box. He brought out claim sheets and insurance policies; then studied the empty box. He thumbed the documents and replaced them.

"You win," growled Leo. "No sparklers in this layout."

Smiling, Radbard produced a box of cigars from his desk drawer. He helped himself to one; noting that Beak and Solo were smoking cigarettes, he ignored them and offered a cigar to Leo.

The squinty-eyed big-shot took a cigar and thrust it in his pocket, watching Radbard on the chance that the magnate was simply trying to divert attention.

"Our agreement stands," declared Radbard, in his heavy tone. "You will hear from me when the jewels arrive. Lebrunne will find a method to convey them safely to America. Meanwhile" – Radbard's tone was hard – "we must take action against the person who attacked Sideling to-night. Whoever instigated that attempt must die! Do I have your agreement?"

Leo Jebbrey met Radbard's gaze, and grunted: "Sure! I agree."

Hearing Leo's statement, Beak Hadlett nodded. So did Solo Juke. Radbard waved to the rear door. Sideling opened it.

"Be cautious about future visits," remarked Radbard, dryly. "I prefer to have you come here separately. However, such a reminder is hardly necessary. I feel quite sure that all three of you will not come here together in the future."

AFTER leaving Radbard's, the three crooks headed for a large apartment house, owned by Leo Jebbrey. Once there, they were in their own domain. The doorman was a husky thug, garbed in uniform. So was the elevator

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operator. On the fifth floor, the trio was met by an ex-pug called "Hustler," who served as Leo's inside guard.

Leo led the way through a room stocked with cheap art objects: taborets, vases, imitation statuettes and drapes. It was Solo's first visit; as they walked through the room, Beak whispered to him:

"Leo thinks this junk is the real McCoy. My guess is that he's a sucker to buy the stuff."

Going through a short passage, they reached a billiard room where two blocky hoodlums in shirt sleeves were shooting pool on a full-sized table, beneath the glow of a green-shaded lamp. Leo gestured the bodyguards through a far door. As soon as they were gone, he began discussion.

"Radbard's a fox," gritted Leo. "He showed us up for a bunch of monkeys, having that box waiting for us."

"Radbard is wise," put in Solo. "He knows it was your idea, Leo, trying to rub out Sideling and snatch the box."

"What if he is wise?" demanded Leo. "It's time he knew I wasn't satisfied. He's supposed to be smart. If he is, why hasn't he brought in that swag? Lebrunne has it ready to ship."

"You heard what the French moll said," remarked Beak. "She'd know. Pierre sent her over here to keep things on the up and up."

"Yeah?" quizzed Leo. "Maybe Radbard's bluffing the mademoiselle. Maybe Lebrunne made a deal to ship to Radbard without his sister knowing it. Having the moll there at Radbard's is meant to kid us. That's all!"

Leo brought out the cigar that Radbard had given him. He gave the tip a savage bite; struck a match and lighted the cigar. Pacing the floor beside the pool table, Leo chewed at the end of the cigar and puffed clouds of smoke.

The three crooks had forgotten Hustler, the rowdy who guarded the entrance from the elevator. At that moment, Hustler was finding trouble. He saw the door of the elevator start to open; he heard a harsh whisper and thought that the operator had a report. Hustler stepped close.

The door slid open. Out surged an avalanche in black. Hustler saw The Shadow. Before the guard could yank his gun, a gloved hand caught his gun arm with a steely grip.

Hustler wrenched away; a fist came upward to his jaw. The big thug took a punch as tough as any that he had received during his ring career. He wound up huddled on the elevator floor.

Beside Hustler lay the elevator operator, bound and gagged. The Shadow tied up Hustler; he closed the elevator door and started through the garish living room.

IN the billiard room, Leo Jebbrey ceased his angry pacing. He leaned across the pool table, wagging his right forefinger while his left hand held the half-chewed cigar.

"If Radbard's getting sparklers from Lebrunne," asserted Leo, "the stuff has got to be around that joint of his. That's a sure bet, isn't it?"

"Yeah." It was Beak Hadlett who responded. "I've had a couple of guys case the joint, like you told the to, Leo. Every time Radbard's gone out of town, he's been trailed."

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"While he's been gone," added Solo, "I've been in the joint. I tapped the walls, the floors, the bookcases. Fished in those big jars; and took a gander in that safe that Radbard likes to leave wide open. Nothing there that we've wanted."

"The stuff's coming in, though," assured Leo. "The express box is a dud. But we've got another bet. Luff Barrago."

Beak and Solo began to shake their heads.

"Wait a minute," argued Leo. "I know Luff's on the level. He's all for us. But he's the one guy who's seen Lebrunne and Radbard both. Maybe Luff knows something."

Leo shoved his cigar in his mouth. He was standing with his back toward the door that the trio had entered. His companions were waiting for more.

"Luff's a gambler," declared Leo, as he lowered his cigar. "He plays the boats between here and Europe. He knows Lebrunne, and he sees Radbard every trip. We missed him the last couple of times because he don't stay long. Even if he hasn't brought in any swag, he may be piping news that the French moll don't know about."

Leo's face showed a gleam, while Beak and Solo watched him. The squinty-eyed big-shot was getting an idea, once he had started thinking about "Luff" Barrago.

"I'll tell you the whole lay," began Leo "the way I'm seeing it, right now; and it's close enough to be right. If _"

LEO stopped abruptly. Beyond him, the door from the passage had begun to inch inward, its motion barely discernible by the light.

It was not that movement, however, that had made Leo pause; his back was toward the door. Nor did the motion of the barrier cause the stares that came to the faces of Beak and Solo. Their eyes were fixed upon something closer; they were viewing Leo Jebbrey's face.

Over that leering countenance had come a sickly expression. Long features had whitened; they were drawn in pain. Doubling against the pool table, Leo pressed his hands to the pit of his stomach. With a gasp, he rolled forward, spat a cough of agony as his arms floundered away from his body.

Leo's fingers clawed the green cloth of the pool table, then spread rigid. With a spasm, the crook lurched forward, half climbing the table edge. The convulsive effort ended with a sprawl. Leo's head dropped; his face stared sidewise from the table top.

Beak Hadlett sprang to his pal's side. Wildly, he stared into Jebbrey's glassy eyes. Retreating, Beak faced Solo Juke, to gulp the announcement:

"Leo's croaked!"

Solo stepped to the table end, his sullen face furrowed. He looked at Leo's dead visage; saw a greenish tinge of the lips, and the swollen, protruding tongue. Beside Leo's rigid hand, Solo spied the fallen cigar butt. The same ugly green showed from the clumpy tobacco that Leo had chewed.

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Solo's eyes hardened. He knew how death had come. He remembered Courtney Radbard's decree. Death to the man who had engineered the attack against Sideling! Leo Jebbrey had himself agreed to the death sentence. He had given his accord contemptuously; but Radbard had taken him at his word. Knowing Leo to be the crook behind the attack, Radbard had given him a poisoned cigar.

THOUGH the case was plain to Solo Juke, Beak Hadlett had not grasped it. Beak was a rogue who counted death in terms of knives and bullets. He had looked for a blade in Leo's back; seeing none, Beak's chain of thought had jumped to the possibility of a silencer-equipped gun.

Stepping to the far wall, Beak looked toward the one spot from which a bullet could have come. He saw the door of the passage; close at hand, he noted that it was partly opened.

Crouching suddenly, Beak whipped out a revolver; then made a spring that Solo Juke heard.

Solo spun about; instinctively, he reached for his own revolver, just as Beak gained the door and yanked the barrier wide. In one instant, both crooks forgot Leo Jebbrey and all others who dealt in crime.

Beak's sudden move had produced a revelation. It brought Beak and Solo face to face with an enemy whom they had met before. Upon the threshold of the opened doorway stood a figure that neither crook had expected to find in Leo Jebbrey's lair; a cloaked foeman from whom they had fled upon this very night.

Here, in the heart of their present stronghold, the two crooks were confronted by The Shadow!

CHAPTER III. CROOKS IN THE DARK

THE SHADOW'S arrival outside the door of the billiard room had been anything but timely. Instead of fitting his intended plans, it had completely ruined them. That was due entirely to a circumstance that neither The Shadow nor the assembled crooks had expected; namely, the collapse and death of Leo Jebbrey.

The Shadow was working solely upon the knowledge that Leo Jebbrey and Beak Hadlett were engaged in deep crime. Quick arrival had seemed unnecessary; for The Shadow was sure that he could learn all vital facts after the talk was well under way.

That supposition had been a good one. The Shadow had reached the billiard room at the very moment when Leo had started to summarize the whole situation that concerned Courtney Radbard. Death had intervened to halt Leo's statement.

Thus The Shadow was too late to learn of Radbard and the French crook, Pierre Lebrunne. He was even too belated to hear mention of Luff Barrago, the possible link between Lebrunne and Radbard. Some information might have come if Solo Juke had gained a chance to express his theory of Leo Jebbrey's death; but that had been ended by Beak Hadlett's wild surmise regarding a silent bullet from the door of the connecting passage.

The game was ruined when Beak ripped the door inward. In addition, the crook's frenzied move put The Shadow in a tight spot.

Half turned in the doorway, The Shadow had his left side toward Beak. Beak, his gun in his right fist, was aiming point-blank for The Shadow's heart, even before he spied his cloaked opponent.

Hesitation would have been The Shadow's finish. There was another course; one that The Shadow might ordinarily have taken: to whip his right hand forward, bringing up its gun. That move, however, required a half turn. In the time lost, Beak could have beaten The Shadow to the shot.

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In that instant of emergency, The Shadow chose an alternative – a long–shot move that was his only chance. He lunged his left side toward Beak, made a hard jab with his left hand, his fingers driving for the crook's gun. In one amazing clutch, The Shadow plucked the weapon and shoved it upward, Beak's fist rising with it.

THE very unexpectedness of the move caught Beak unprepared. To Beak, it seemed as though a grasping piston had driven up from nowhere, to turn the aim of his pointing gun. His finger still on the trigger, Beak fired. The bullet bored into the ceiling.

Beak was rolling backward, impelled by The Shadow's drive. Bringing his right hand into play, The Shadow flashed a .45 automatic. At that moment, death seemed certain for Beak. The looming muzzle stopped, however, before it reached Beak's eyes.

The Shadow, half clear of his foe, was faced by Solo Juke. Beak's backward reel had given Solo a chance for aim, and he was taking it. That was why The Shadow's gun halted; to cover Solo before the latter could fire.

As he aimed for Solo, The Shadow gave a mighty lunge that sent Beak farther backward. Still clutching his revolver, Beak clattered against a chair beside the billiard table and did a back dive to the floor. He lost his revolver as he somersaulted; the weapon hit the wall, six feet beyond him.

Solo performed a double move. He fired while still aiming, and at the same time dropped below his side of the billiard table. His quick shot was two feet wide of The Shadow; but his quick drop saved him from disaster.

The Shadow's big gun spoke while Solo was making the dive. The bullet chipped the table edge, a scant inch above Solo's shoulder.

With long stride, The Shadow gained the billiard table. His purpose was to reach the other side and pick off Solo before the gunman could scramble to safety at the far end. By eliminating Solo, The Shadow would be free to handle Beak before the disarmed crook could regain his lost gun.

It was Solo's turn, however, to benefit from the aid of others. Just as The Shadow reached the near end of the table, the door across the room swung open and Leo's two bodyguards – the ones who originally had been shooting pool – appeared.

The Shadow heard the clatter of their coming; stopped short because of the reinforcements. Again, he launched a swift, protective move. His left hand grabbed the cloth at the back of Leo's coat collar. With a quick jerk, The Shadow pulled the dead body toward him.

Guns blasted from the distant floor. They barked just as Leo's body bobbed upward as The Shadow's shield. Well–aimed bullets stopped short of their black–clad target. Those whizzing slugs found lodgment in the corpse of Leo Jebbrey.

The Shadow's mocking laugh sounded in defiant challenge amid the echoes of the thwarted shots.

Despite the gibe that he uttered, The Shadow knew the menace of the situation. Cramped in close quarters, he had four enemies instead of two. They were scattered; the billiard table served them as a bulwark. The freak conditions gave the enemy the odds. The Shadow's only policy was to end the advantage. He had a simple method by which he could accomplish it.

IGNORING human targets, The Shadow aimed for the large light above the table. The automatic boomed; glass shattered. The room was in darkness.

DEATH TOKEN

Revolver flashes stabbed through the gloom. The bodyguards moved forward as they fired, rounding the heavy table, seeking to trap The Shadow at close quarters. Their move was folly.

Up from the floor speared tongues from The Shadow's automatic, delivered from an unexpected corner to which The Shadow had faded. One bodyguard howled as he took a forward dive. The other, clipped by a second shot, stumbled headlong across the first man's felled form.

There was a clatter at the passage door. One attacker, too wise to fight in darkness, was making a get-away. It was Beak Hadlett; he had seen too much of The Shadow.

Hardly had Beak gone before another figure scrambled through the passage door. Solo Juke, crawling under the billiard table, had seen his chance to slip away. Coming over the table top, The Shadow delivered a last shot. Again, his bullet was too late to wing Solo.

Shoving his emptied gun beneath his cloak, The Shadow sped in fresh pursuit. He whipped out a fresh automatic, as he reached the passage. Heading for the living room, he had every chance to overtake Beak and Solo before they reached the elevator. The chase was due for an abrupt ending.

As The Shadow neared the door of the entry he heard the clang of an elevator door. He dropped back into the living room, just as a trio of thugs surged forth. The Shadow heard shouts from Beak and Solo as they pointed the path for these reserves to follow. The three reached the living room, pounced hard upon The Shadow before he could swing away.

An entering thug had found Hustler, who was still unconscious, and the bound elevator man, and had released the latter. They had summoned the doorman. Coming up in another elevator, this vengeful trio had arrived for battle with The Shadow. In their united attack, they had boxed the enemy they wanted.

Close-pitched fray was The Shadow's choice on this occasion. He gave it with a fury that stopped his foemen short. Driving squarely into the midst of the attackers, The Shadow jabbed two guns aside and slugged the crook who held the third. Wheeling, he grappled with the first of the trio; used him as a ram to back the second thug into a corner.

Guns roared, muffled by the grappling bodies. The Shadow's automatic spoke among them. Bullets whistled through the folds of The Shadow's cloak. One slug stung a deep flesh wound in the shoulder beneath. But the deadly bullets were those from The Shadow's automatic.

After the big gun spoke, floundering thugs sank away. Reeling sideward, The Shadow shook off the weight of the last attacker. His fingers, number by the pain that ran along his arm, lost their grip upon the automatic.

RESTING against the wall near a corner, The Shadow could see the entry. Two elevator doors were open. Beak and Solo had released Hustler, who had just come to his senses. The bruiser was coming for the living room, confident that The Shadow lay badly crippled. Behind him were Beak and Solo, ready to follow once the inside guard showed the way.

For the moment, Hustler did not see The Shadow. He stumbled over the slugged crook by the living-room door; stopped suddenly as he regained his footing. Hustler had heard a clatter by the wall. He swung in that direction.

He saw The Shadow, swinging with a left-handed lunge; from the grip of the black-cloaked arms came a huge mass of whiteness. Hustler ducked as he aimed; he dodged too late, for he was flat-footed when he started.

DEATH TOKEN

Through the air hurtled one of Leo Jebbrey's prized vases, forty pounds of crockery in a single lump. The massive jar caught Hustler on head and shoulders; its crash was as hard a stroke as the punch that The Shadow had delivered in the elevator. Hustler went down with a thud, rolled over amid a mass of shattered china. His revolver bounced from his hand, unfired.

The Shadow made a grab for the gun; snatched it up and aimed for the doorway. Beak and Solo might have had a chance to down The Shadow, if they had waited; but they were on the move in the opposite direction. The huge crash that had stunned Hustler was proof to them that The Shadow was still in action. They thought that he was reserving bullets for them.

Reaching an elevator, the crime duo slammed the door as The Shadow opened fire with Hustler's revolver. Bullets spanged the metal door of the elevator shaft. The Shadow ceased his useless fire. Finding his own gun by the wall, he made for the second elevator. He descended to the lobby, to find the door of the first elevator open. Beak and Solo had fled to the front street.

Wisely, The Shadow followed. Swift though the upstairs fray had been, the neighborhood was aroused. Police would soon arrive at Leo Jebbrey's apartment, to find the dead crook and his badly battered tribe.

ONE hour later, Beak Hadlett and Solo Juke ended a long circuit that they had made in various cabs. During their ride to escape pursuit, they had discussed their situation. Beak summed it, as they were ready to part.

"Radbard had a right to croak Leo," growled Beak. "Leo agreed to it. We heard him. We gotta lay off of Radbard, though, until we get the straight dope on him. We gotta dodge The Shadow, too. That's why I'm heading for my old hide-out. The bulls won't find me, if they look for me on account of Leo."

"I've got a hide-out of my own," returned Solo. "You know where it is; that's where you'll find me. Your job is to get to the pier when the Normandie docks. Talk to Luff Barrago before he's off the ship. Find out what he knows about Pierre Lebrunne and Courtney Radbard."

The two stepped from the cab, paid the driver and muffled their overcoats about their chins. They sidled away in opposite directions. Over his shoulder, Beak watched Solo turn a corner. Beak grinned. Solo had a mile to go before he reached his hide-out. Beak had only a couple of blocks to travel.

Shuffling along the windy, almost-deserted street, Beak reached an alleyway. He passed several dilapidated houses; stopped at one and looked about. Satisfied that no one was watching him, he unlocked the door and entered. A few moments later, a dim line of light appeared from the edge of a window blind in a side room on the second floor.

Eyes from the darkness saw that streak. Across the street, a blackened figure moved from a pitch-dark doorway. The March winds drowned the whispered laugh that came from invisible lips.

The Shadow had long known the location of this abandoned hide-out. Watching, he had witnessed the return of Beak Hadlett. The Shadow had regained the trail to men of crime.

CHAPTER IV. RADBARD PREPARES

TWO days had passed since the death of Leo Jebbrey. The newspapers had headlined that event, for Leo had long been classed as a big underworld figure in Manhattan. After one brief flare, however, the news had ceased to be of front-page interest. That was because neither the police nor the press had gained the real reasons that lay behind Leo's murder.

DEATH TOKEN

These printed reports were pleasing to one man, who chuckled when he read them. Courtney Radbard, comfortably ensconced in the office that formed a portion of his mansion, was confident that the law would never link him with Leo Jebbrey's death. On this particular evening, the tawny-faced magnate made mention of the fact to his secretary, Sideling.

"Leo Jebbrey is as good as forgotten," rumbled Radbard. "The only men who know what happened to him are Beak Hadlett and Solo Juke. Perhaps one other." Radbard paused reflectively, then shook his bushy head. "No. Even The Shadow does not know the circumstances."

Sideling blinked uneasily at mention of The Shadow's name. The bespectacled secretary knew that he owed his own life to the black-cloaked fighter. That did not make Sideling feel conscience-stricken, because he served Radbard. Through long association with the master-crook, Sideling had become fully inured to crime. All that worried Sideling was the possibility that The Shadow, once in the game, might enter again.

Radbard, with uncanny precision, must have noticed his secretary's worryment, for he snorted his immediate contempt.

"Why fear The Shadow?" sneered Radbard. "He has helped us. I counted upon Beak and Solo to cover up the cause of Leo's death, purely to save their own faces. Instead, The Shadow stepped in and made it look like a death by gunfire. I heard from both Beak and Solo, while you were out to-day, Sideling. They told the details."

"They called by telephone?"

"Yes. To assure me, individually, that they had nothing to do with that attack on Tenth Avenue. I knew that they lied; but it was good policy not to suggest that fact. They are both in hiding; they did not mention where. I invited them here to visit me; but they excused themselves, saying that they feared The Shadow might trail them.

"The Shadow! Bah! He has lost the trail entirely; otherwise, Beak and Solo would not be alive. I am the man whom they fear! They saw how Leo died! They can live, though, those two, as long as they do not try to interfere with my plans!"

RADBARD'S voice had risen. As it subsided, the shipping magnate heard a cautious rap at the door. He glared angrily at Sideling. Radbard did not like eavesdroppers and it was part of Sideling's duty to listen for persons who approached the office.

Fortunately for Sideling, this rap had sounded from the door that led to the library; therefore it had been given by some one in the house, not by an outside visitor like Beak or Solo.

Sideling opened the inner door. Moshart was standing there. The beefy-faced servant bowed apologetically.

"Sorry to trouble you, Mr. Radbard," said Moshart, "but Mademoiselle Lebrunne is going out this evening. She wanted to see you before she left —"

"Show her in, Moshart."

The servant went through the library and returned with Celeste. The girl approached the desk and passed a letter to Radbard.

"From my brother," she explained. "It came this afternoon. It says nothing important, m'sieu'."

DEATH TOKEN

"Never anything important," grumbled Radbard. "Pierre must be asleep! When do you think we shall receive real news from him?"

"Perhaps to-morrow, m'sieu'. The Normandie arrives to-night. It usually carries a letter from Pierre."

"Let me know if a letter comes tomorrow."

Radbard wore a slight smile, as Celeste departed. When the door had closed, he picked up a newspaper. He glanced at the front page; noted a prediction of a March blizzard blowing in from the West. Radbard turned the pages until he found the shipping news.

"The Queen Mary arrived on the fourth," recalled Radbard. "To-day is the sixth of March. The Normandie should dock this evening, ahead of the storm. That is important, Sideling."

"On account of Luff Barrago?"

"Yes. You know, Sideling, there have been times in the past when I did not exercise proper precaution. I have capable men in my employ" – Radbard smiled grimly – "many of them; but I did not always choose to use them. There were times when you were guarded closely, all the way from the pier, when you were bringing an express box. Two nights ago, you were not protected. That was a mistake. It will not happen again."

Sideling looked relieved. Radbard stroked his chin, then added:

"Until to-day, I have never worried about Barrago. His visits here have seemed unimportant. But with Leo Jebbrey dead; with Beak Hadlett and Solo Juke uncertain as to how they stand, it is better to apply full measures in connection with Luff Barrago. Particularly, when we include The Shadow in our calculations. Although I do not fear him, he might prove a troublemaker."

WITH a gesture, Radbard dismissed Sideling. Opening a desk drawer, the shaggy-eyebrowed man brought out a small black book that looked like a record of personal accounts, for it contained pages written in lettered code. The book's real purpose became apparent when Radbard began to dial telephone numbers.

Speaking in a monotone, Radbard gave terse instructions to all persons who answered his calls. In every case, his statements were identical. All were to be on duty at their given posts.

Beneath the calm surface of Radbard's career as a big businessman lay the bidden mechanism of a secret organization that outmatched any group of ordinary criminals. Leo Jebbrey, when alive, had commanded massed groups of ordinary thugs; but Courtney Radbard was master of a more powerful band.

Whoever his tools might be, it was certain that they were not a lot of hardboiled gorillas wanted by the law. In ordinary life, they passed as men of respectability; they moved to ways of crime only when Radbard ordered them. Even then, their purpose was that of coverage. Radbard had them really for emergencies, rather than active crime.

The Shadow, unwittingly, had helped the master-crook by dwindling the number of Leo's hoodlums. Radbard, pleased by the wiping out of some of his double-crossing henchmen, had followed with a subtle thrust of his own; the murder of Leo. The Shadow, trapped in Leo's headquarters, had completed the rout of the dead crook's henchmen. The net result was all in Radbard's favor.

As matters now stood, Beak Hadlett, as successor to Leo Jebbrey, had no crew to back him. Solo Juke, always a lone hand, was likewise a crook who had no strong-arm outfit.

DEATH TOKEN

If trouble came from either, it would be a one–man proposition. The same with The Shadow, who preferred to move alone.

Strolling from his office, the brown–clad magnate went through the library, where he noted Sideling reading a book. He came into the front hall, smiled his approval when he saw Moshart on duty at the front door.

Radbard turned toward the stairway; he met the bronze gaze of the huge Apollo that stared directly toward the floor. Passing the statue, Radbard ascended the marble staircase.

Pausing halfway up the steps, Radbard looked down into the hall, to see another vigilant servant passing through. Radbard eyed the massive front door, with its heavy bolts – the normal type of barrier that a millionaire would have for an expensively furnished home.

Though fashioned of darkened oak, the door was plainly visible from the stairway, for it stood deep in a frame of lighter–colored wood; and on each side were shallow alcoves, hung with curtains of somber maroon.

All was secure in Courtney Radbard's stronghold; a place where neither crooks nor representatives of the law would uncover evidence of crime. All would remain the same within this mansion, even though Radbard had plotted evil for this night.

For the master–criminal planned no move in person. All that might transpire would occur outside his abode. Radbard, by telephoned commands, had put his outside workers into action. They would offset any enemies who might try to outwit him.

That, at least, was Radbard's opinion. He was sure that his secret men of crime were competent enough to doom The Shadow, should the black–clad fighter try to thwart their moves.

CHAPTER V. DEATH'S CONFERENCE

COURTNEY RADBARD had read the shipping news to learn the exact hour at which the Normandie was expected to dock. He was not concerned with any documents from abroad, for he expected no express box from France. Radbard was thinking only of one obscure passenger aboard the liner; a certain professional gambler named Luff Barrago.

There was another man who was likewise interested in Luff's arrival. Beak Hadlett, in his dingy hide–out, was determined to be one of the first aboard the Normandie when it docked. Cagily, Beak was timing his start from the hide–out so as to reach the pier when the gangplank dropped.

Beak poked his long nose from the house door and peered shrewdly along the street. Satisfied that the thoroughfare was deserted, he stepped out into the blustery night and started for the nearest avenue. At intervals, Beak took a look behind him. He became satisfied that no one was on his trail.

Despite the sharpness of their gaze, Beak's eyes had deceived him. They had looked at blackened patches beside house walls and had classed them as empty. Some of those darkened spaces were vacant; but others were not.

Close behind Beak was a moving figure that paused uncannily every time the crook glanced backward. Always, that elusive shape blended with blackness and became practically invisible when Beak gazed toward it. Silently, like a figment of the night itself, The Shadow was keeping close to Beak Hadlett's trail.

DEATH TOKEN

The crook found a cab at the corner, entered it. As the cab pulled away, a newer cab moved to the corner. The second hackie had spotted Beak and was ready to trail the crook's cab; but for some reason, he paused as he neared the corner.

A moment later, there was a soft click from the rear door. A whispered voice spoke through the partitioned window. The cab driver grinned shrewdly and nodded.

An agent of The Shadow, this hackie – Moe Shrevnitz – had been watching for Beak, in case the crook took a cab. But he had known also that he might expect The Shadow. Therefore, he had waited for his chief. Stepping on the gas, the driver took up the trail of Beak's cab, carrying The Shadow to pursuit.

Beak reached the dock. He saw the hulking hull of the Normandie. The French greyhound, speed rival of the Queen Mary, had docked on schedule. A first flurry of passengers was coming from the gangplank when Beak reached it. Thrusting his way past them, the big-nosed crook hurried aboard the ship.

Beak was not the only person who was going on board the Normandie.

There were others, among them a well-dressed personage whose features were hawklike. The Shadow had left his cloak and hat in his cab. Attired in ordinary garb, he was keeping Beak Hadlett in sight.

BEAK had set a tough task for himself. He had to find Luff Barrago without knowing the number of the gambler's stateroom. Beak, however, had a double bet. Luff always traveled first-class; and he never hurried off a ship when it had docked.

It was part of Luff's racket to make acquaintances on shipboard, and he always stayed around to say good-bye to stickers whom he had not had a chance to trim. Luff always figured them as good prospects for future voyages.

Reaching a lighted first-class deck, Beak moved about hurriedly while he studied faces. Passing a group of passengers, he saw two men shaking hands. One, a stocky fellow with a smiling, darkish face, turned to enter a passageway. Beak overtook him; gripped his arm and gave quick greeting:

"Luff!"

Luff Barrago recognized the arrival and responded with the quick query:

"What's up, Beak?"

"I've got to talk to you, Luff. Where's your cabin?"

"I'm just going there. Come along."

The two moved along the passageway, took to a stairway just as The Shadow emerged from a cluster of passengers. Taking the trail, The Shadow reached the stairway and descended to a lower corridor. He hurried to another stairway and went to the bottom of it.

Beak and Luff were gone; there was no chance that they could have come this far, for The Shadow had traveled far enough to overtake them. Chances were that they had gone off some side passage from the corridor above. The Shadow retraced his route, to begin a search at closer range.

DEATH TOKEN

MEANWHILE, Beak and Luff had reached the latter's cabin. As The Shadow had surmised, it was located on a side passage near the upper corridor. There, behind a closed door, Luff was pouring out two drinks from a cognac bottle. He emptied the bottle and placed it beside a full one that stood on a table; then questioned:

"What's happened, Beak?"

"Let's go in there." Beak motioned to an inner room of the small suite. "It's important, Luff."

They entered the bedroom and closed the door. Beak gulped his cognac in one long swallow. Holding the empty glass, he announced:

"Leo Jebbrey was rubbed out, two nights ago. Courtney Radbard was the guy who fixed him."

Luff stared, incredulous.

"No kidding, Luff," insisted Beak. "Radbard staged the rubout. But Solo and I ain't blaming him. Leo had it coming. He thought Radbard was a double-crosser and tried some gorilla stuff. If Radbard is on the level, he had a right to croak Leo. But if he ain't –"

Beak paused, wangling his empty glass as if in threat. Luff nodded. His expression became quizzical, as he asked:

"What makes you think Radbard may be phony?"

"Leo found out some sparklers were fenced," replied Beak. "He said that they looked like stuff that Pierre Lebrunne might have shoved through to Radbard. We can't pin anything on Radbard, though. Solo and I figured that you might know something."

"Because I see Radbard every time I hit port?"

"Yeah. You bring him dope from Lebrunne."

Luff shook his head.

"I never see Lebrunne," he said, seriously. "That's what I'm supposed to do, if Radbard needs it; but, so far, I've made no contact."

"Then why do you head straight for Radbard's, every time the ship docks?"

"That's easy to explain, Beak. Radbard wanted me to go light on the gambling racket, so's not to get myself in wrong with the steamship lines. I had to have dough, and Radbard showed me a way to make it."

DIGGING into a pocket, Luff produced a small box and opened it to display a dozen coins. All were of foreign mintage; some were of gold, others of silver. The coins were small, except for a large French silver piece, about the size of a half dollar.

"Radbard collects coins," explained Luff. "By buying them abroad, he gets them at half price and pays me the difference. He gives me the addresses of places to go and a list of the rare coins he wants."

Beak eyed the coins suspiciously, as though he thought that diamonds and other jewels might be imbedded in their metal. Then the folly of such a possibility struck him. Beak examined the box; he saw that it was made

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of thin cardboard.

"You're taking these to Radbard, huh?" he demanded. "All right! Talk to him when you're there. Ask him if he –"

Beak paused suddenly; then changed tone.

"No!" he exclaimed. "Don't go to Radbard's! Head for Solo's hide-out instead, and I'll meet you there. Bring these coins along with you. They may mean something."

"I ought to go to Radbard's," insisted Luff. "These coins don't prove anything."

"Leo was croaked," growled Beak. "Ain't that enough?"

"You said yourself that he tried to pull a fast one on Radbard."

"Sure! But that don't clear Radbard. Listen, Luff, I'm leaving it to you. Stick to Solo and me; or jump to Radbard. But remember who your real pals are. Leo made a mistake – but only because he thought that Radbard was phony. If Radbard is –"

Beak stopped; inclined his head toward the door. Luff heard the same sound that Beak had noticed. With a quick spring, the gambler reached the door and yanked it open.

A dapper steward was standing there. For a moment, the fellow looked disconcerted, then his mustached face showed a smile.

"Ah, m'sieu', pardon," he said to Luff. "I think zat you have left. I have wish only to make sure. On account of ze bottle" – he motioned to the table in the outside room; then added: "Vous comprenez?"

"I understand," snorted Luff. "You thought I'd left the bottle, so you wanted to pick it up. Well, take it! I've still got a drink."

POCKETING the box of coins, Luff turned around and picked up his filled glass. The steward, more apologetic than ever, pointed to the glass that Beak held.

"Ze other gentleman," remarked the steward. "He has no drink. You wish zat I should open ze fresh bottle, zat he may have one?"

"All right," returned Luff. "Go ahead."

While Beak and Luff were stepping into the outer room, the steward produced a corkscrew and opened the full bottle of cognac. Bowing, he poured a full glass for Beak; then stood waiting beside the door. Luff waved him out.

"Beat it, Frenchy," ordered the gambler. "Take the bottle with you, if you want it."

With the steward gone, Luff solemnly drank his cognac; and Beak emptied his own full glass. Luff clapped his hand to Beak's shoulder.

"I'm going ashore," declared Luff. "You can slide out later, Beak. Maybe I'll go to Radbard's; maybe I won't. I'll think it over on the way. Anyhow, I'll meet you at Solo's hide-out, afterward. You two are

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straight-shooters. You can count me with you."

Beak nodded and sat down. Luff strolled from the stateroom and reached the corridor. He noticed the steward in another room as he passed. And when he reached the stairway, Luff glimpsed a tall person whom he took for a passenger, standing by a door in another passage.

Luff started up to the desk; then remembered something. His baggage had gone ashore; but he was carrying the key to the cabin. He decided to leave the key back in his room.

Luff retraced his steps. Opening the door to his stateroom, he stopped short. Beak Hadlett was no longer seated in his chair. Instead, the crook was sprawled upon the floor. Beak's face was turned upward; it wore a hideous, agonized expression.

Shakily, Luff moved inward, stopped beside Beak's body. Brief inspection told him that the crook was dead.

BESIDE Beak lay the emptied glass. It had fallen with him; from it had poured last drops of liquid, to form a greenish stain upon the stateroom carpet. The same color tinged Beak's lips.

Instantly, Luff saw the cause of Beak's death. The steward was responsible. The Frenchman had seen Beak with Luff; entering, he had made a switch of bottles, placing a container of poisoned cognac where Luff's filled bottle had been.

After that, the steward had returned to listen at the door. He had heard enough to know that Beak Hadlett was working against Courtney Radbard. To Luff, there flashed the thought that Radbard had actually double-crossed his partners in crime; moreover, he realized that Radbard was the master of many secret henchmen, even to stewards aboard the Normandie.

That meant the very game that Beak had suggested: a tie-up between Radbard and Pierre Lebrunne. Only Lebrunne, clever French crook, could have arranged for criminals to take over jobs as stewards aboard the Normandie.

Luff Barrage had gained the proof that Beak Hadlett wanted. From that proof, Luff made a quick decision. He intended to leave the Normandie, to join Solo Juke at once.

Coming to his feet, Luff turned toward the door. His ears heard a dull click; his startled eyes spotted a mass of whiteness. Before Luff could reach for the small pocket revolver that he always carried, he realized that he had moved too late. A man had entered, closing the door behind him.

Luff was staring at the smug, mustached face of the steward who had arranged the death of Beak Hadlett. The fellow was covering Luff with a stubby revolver.

"It is too bad, m'sieu'," purred the Frenchman, "zat you have come back here. It was better zat you should go to see Monsieur Radbard, as I have heard you say you expect to do. Zat is why I have let you go. But – pouf! – you spoil it by your return, to learn something you should not know.

"Perhaps you have heard of me. I am Raoul Duchand, one friend of Pierre Lebrunne. To me – and to others – Pierre has said zat we should watch, to see zat you learn nothing. But you find out that I kill your friend" – the steward, shrugging, pointed toward Beak's body – "so it is for me to kill you ze same." For a moment, Luff thought that the French crook intended to make him swallow a dose of poison; then he understood that the words "the same" meant death in another form.

DEATH TOKEN

With a smile, Duchand approached, pressed his revolver against Luff's ribs and thrust the gambler toward the door off the inner bedroom. Duchand intended to chance a revolver shot, hoping that it would not be heard; but he wanted his victim as far in the suite as possible.

AT the doorway, Luff tightened. The gambler's dark forehead was beaded with sweat; his voice became a gulped whisper as he pleaded for life.

"I'll – I'll go to Radbard's!" promised Luff. "It's better – best for me to play along with him! Sure – the way things stand, I'll stick with Radbard –"

"It will not do, m'sieu'," inserted Duchand. "I have been given orders to kill all those who learn. One, he is dead. While you did not believe him, you could live. But it is now zat you must die, Monsieur Barrage!"

Luff lost his grip on the door frame, sagged back into the inner room. Hands raised, he faltered as he saw Duchand reach for the doorknob, to close the door and quiet the sound of the forthcoming shot. Luff raised his head, tried to utter a last plea as he met Duchand's gaze. Luff's eyes saw beyond the steward's shoulders.

The gambler's stare became fixed; his trembling lips tightened with hope. At an angle beyond Duchand's white-jacketed shoulder, Luff could see the door to the corridor. Duchand, planning a quick departure, had failed to lock that barrier. Silently, the door had opened.

Upon the threshold stood a tall stranger, a personage whose hawklike countenance was solemn and firm. In one long-fingered fist, the arrival held a heavy automatic; with his other hand, he was noiselessly closing the outer door behind him.

Eyes that shone with piercing keenness viewed the dilemma that confronted Luff Barrage; saw that the gambler was slated for death. Those eyes were merciless as they viewed the unsuspecting murderer, Raoul Duchand, whose crime was proven by the presence of Beak Hadlett's body on the floor.

The Shadow had located the rendezvous where men of crime had met. He had arrived in time to avert a second death!

CHAPTER VI. TRAIL OF DOOM

RARELY did The Shadow intervene in behalf of a man who was linked to crime. To-night, however, he had uncovered a situation that caused him to make exception. Although he had heard none of the brief conversation between Luff Barrage and Raoul Duchand, The Shadow had sized circumstances with exactitude.

He knew that Beak Hadlett, like Leo Jebbrey, had been working with some unknown supercrook. Leo had died by poison because he had made an unwarranted attack upon the occupant of a taxicab. Beak had gone the same route, because he had contacted Luff Barrage aboard the Normandie.

As yet, The Shadow had been unable to learn the identity of Sideling; hence that trail was closed. In place of Sideling, The Shadow saw a new prospect, Luff Barrage, a man who could be made to talk. It was plain that Luff was a crook; but that did not mark him as a murderer, who deserved to die. Luff looked like what he was, a crooked gambler; the sort who would be glad to get away from deeper channels of crime.

Luff, if he lived, would talk; particularly to any one who rescued him.

DEATH TOKEN

To Luff, it was plain that the mysterious stranger in the outer room was ready to save him. Luff did not know it was The Shadow confronting him.

Luff's cue was to stall off Duchand until the rescuer could act.

That was why Luff tried to bluff the Frenchman – and overplayed. By his own eagerness, Luff almost signed his own death warrant.

"Don't shoot, Duchand!" he pleaded. "There's something I've got to tell you! Something that would change things if you –"

Luff hesitated. On the point of mentioning Radbard's name, he feared that it might bring the wrong reaction from Duchand. It was that hesitation that made Duchand suspect the gambler's bluff.

The fake steward jagged his revolver forward, tightening his finger for a quick tug of the trigger. Glaring at Luff's eyes, he saw the wild eagerness of the gambler's gaze.

Instantly, Duchand dropped back; he whipped half about, to see if danger lay behind him, at the same time keeping his revolver muzzle still covering Luff. Duchand would have pulled the trigger to make certain of Luff's finish; but a low-tone whisper, close to his left ear made him complete his turnabout instead.

Duchand saw The Shadow take an immense forward stride; he saw a long arm lift upward. He gaped at the automatic, poised in a ready fist. He saw the hand and arm come downward in slow motion.

Falling for the bait of that slow-timed hand-stroke, Duchand threw his left arm upward to ward off the blow; and simultaneously whipped his gun hand in a wide swing to aim the revolver for The Shadow's heart. In both moves, Duchand was belated.

With seeming laziness, The Shadow's automatic sledged squarely upon Duchand's skull. The weight of the descending .45 beat down the steward's warding arm. Wavering, Duchand sank to the floor and lay there stunned. His revolver clattered beside him.

LUFF stood gaping at the prostrate steward, then looked up to meet The Shadow's gaze. Sight of burning eyes, the echoes of a whispered laugh, told Luff the identity of his rescuer. Fear gripped the rescued gambler.

Then came an interruption to the tableau.

The door from the corridor burst inward. A pair of white-jacketed invaders saw The Shadow above Duchand's prone form. They were the others of whom Duchand had spoken. They were Apaches from Paris, aboard the Normandie as fake stewards, like Duchand. They, too, were tools of Pierre Lebrunne.

The two Apaches differed in their choice of weapons. One gripped a knife; the other a revolver. Puzzled by Duchand's long stay in the suite, they had come to learn the reason. Seeing The Shadow armed with an automatic, they hurtled forward to attack him.

The Shadow whipped to meet them. His long arm swung upward; the barrel of his automatic clipped the wrist of the Apache who was lashing a long knife-stroke. The attacker's white-jacketed arm sailed upward like a puppet's limb. His knife scaled past The Shadow's head and clattered against the wall beside the connecting floor.

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Stopping his upward blow abruptly, The Shadow reversed with a sideward back-slash. The second Apache had stopped short beside him and was wheeling to gain quick aim. The Shadow's side-arm drive ended the crook's effort.

The big automatic clipped the base of the man's skull. The blow felled the new attacker as effectively as a previous stroke had dropped Duchand.

The man who had lost his knife was not yet through. Barehanded, he sprang upon The Shadow and fought to gain the hawkish fighter's gun. The Shadow drove him across the room, swung him beside the wall. The Shadow had opportunity to whip his gun hand loose and deal with this man as he had the others; but he suddenly gave up his chance.

Luff Barrago supplied the reason for The Shadow's change of course.

Luff had grabbed up Duchand's gun. A gleam in his ugly eye, Luff saw an opportunity of his own. That was to finish The Shadow. Sure of the tall fighter's identity, Luff no longer felt gratitude for his rescue. A product of the underworld, Luff's one thought was the fame that would be his if he could spell the end of crimeland's greatest foe.

Canny once more, Luff sprang to the corridor, to gain its security before he attacked. The Shadow saw the leap; knew what Luff was about. When he passed the door and turned, Luff saw that his chance had vanished.

The Shadow had kept the last Apache as a shield. He had the man between himself and the door. Moreover, The Shadow was wedging his gun beneath the Apache's arm, swinging the man's body to bring the deadly muzzle straight toward Luff.

Sight of that bearing .45 was too much for the gambler. With a snarl, Luff dropped farther back into the corridor, clear of The Shadow's line of fire. Through the doorway, Luff could still see Duchand; he thought that the slugged steward stirred.

Realizing that Duchand could talk, Luff aimed for the white-jacketed form and savagely jabbed six bullets for the man's body. The shots roared loudly from the corridor; amid their final echoes, Luff flung the emptied revolver into the room and took to frantic flight.

INSTANTLY, The Shadow concentrated upon the last Apache. He twisted the sagging crook to a corner; gave him a one-handed throat grip that made the fellow's eyes bulge from their sockets. Releasing his hold, The Shadow hissed a sharp demand. His words were in French; they included terms in the Parisian jargon used by Apaches.

The crook understood; holding his aching throat, he gulped the name: "Pierre Lebrunne!"

The Shadow recognized the name of the notorious Frenchman; knew that these Apaches were Lebrunne's followers. In French, The Shadow questioned:

"Who is the American criminal connected with Lebrunne?"

"Only Duchand knew," gulped the Apache. "Duchand is dead!"

The Apache spoke the truth. Duchand's body lay riddled with the venomous shots that Luff Barrago had delivered. Again, The Shadow was balked in his effort to learn the identity of Courtney Radbard. The man who could furnish that clue – Luff Barrago – was gone; but there was still a chance to follow him.

DEATH TOKEN

The partly released Apache started a sudden break for freedom. It merely served to speed The Shadow's departure. As the Apache writhed, The Shadow clamped him beneath the chin, whipped backward and hoisted the Frenchman into a long dive that pitched him to a corner of the stateroom.

When the crook came groggily to hands and knees, The Shadow was gone.

HALFWAY up the stairs to the deck, The Shadow suddenly halted his speedy rush. His climb became a slow one, as a pair of ship's officers appeared above and started an excited descent. Luff Barrago's revolver shots had been reported. The officers were coming below to investigate.

Glancing at The Shadow's unperturbed countenance, the officers took him for a belated first-class passenger who knew nothing of the reported gunfire. They passed him and hurried below.

On the deck, The Shadow reached the gangplank and pointed to some luggage that had not been taken to the dock. A bowing steward carried the bags for him, supposing that The Shadow was their owner.

An officer, dashing up to stop all persons from going ashore, did not include The Shadow in the order. Seeing the steward with the bags, he thought that The Shadow was a passenger who had been on deck when the trouble occurred below.

Going down the gangway, The Shadow looked over the heads of the throng that still crowded the pier. Brilliant lights enabled him to see a stocky man shouldering his way near the exit. It was Luff Barrago. The gambler had met with a delay. The trail was not lost!

Moving through the crowd, The Shadow left the steward in the shuffle. He reached the end of the pier; saw Luff, thirty yards away, looking for a cab. Luff had passed The Shadow's cab; the driver had told him that it was reserved.

With a slight smile, The Shadow boarded the streamlined taxi and spoke an order. As the cab moved forward, The Shadow donned cloak and hat, then settled deep in the back seat.

It was The Shadow's intention to offer Luff a lift, then force information from him at point of gun. But, as The Shadow's cab moved forward, Luff turned toward a coupe that was parked at the end of the pier. The door of the car was open; a friendly voice asked the gambler if he wanted a lift uptown. Luff accepted the invitation by clambering aboard the coupe. He slammed the door shut; the coupe started away just as The Shadow's cab arrived.

The Shadow gave another order. The taxi followed close behind the coupe. The trail was restored; it seemed a simple one. Wherever Luff Barrago alighted from that coupe, The Shadow would be on hand.

Even to The Shadow, Luff's lucky lift from the pier did not seem unusual. With a shortage of cabs on a night when a blizzard threatened, any one might offer an automobile ride to a stranded passenger in from a transatlantic voyage.

Chance, however, was not responsible for Luff Barrago's present position. The coupe had been waiting for the gambler at the pier, even though Luff did not realize it. Luff was soon to learn that fact; and so was The Shadow.

The machinations of Courtney Radbard were in operation. Luff Barrago was unwittingly leading The Shadow along a trail of predestined doom.

CHAPTER VII. VANISHED TOKENS

RIDING in the coupe, Luff Barrago stared anxiously ahead. Snow was flurrying heavily against the windshield. The March blizzard had commenced. The weather, however, did not concern Luff. He was looking for something else during this flight from the French Line pier.

As the coupe swung toward a side street, Luff heard the wail of sirens. He saw traffic split beneath the overhead highway along the river front. Red headlights approached, forming a swift crimson path toward the pier. News of murder aboard the Normandie had reached the law. Police cars and ambulances were coming to the docked liner.

Luff pursed his lips and gave a sideward squint toward the man who was driving the coupe. He saw a stolid face; beneath it a tuxedo collar. The driver's coat was open, his scarf thrown back upon his shoulders.

"Thanks a lot," voiced Luff. "I'd been looking for a cab a long while, before you showed up. Nearly fifteen minutes."

"Don't mention it," drawled the driver. He seemed oblivious to the fading shriek of sirens. "I went down to the pier to meet a friend of mine, but I was too late to find him. So I'm giving you a lift instead. I'm going clear up to 125th Street. I can drop you anywhere along the way."

Luff considered; then decided: "Let me off as soon as we reach Broadway. I can get the B.M.T. subway near there."

Luff had made his choice. Instead of proceeding northward, to reach Radbard's, he planned to take the subway south to Union Square. By reaching Fourteenth Street on the B.M.T. subway, Luff would be within walking distance of Solo Juke's hide-out.

Though Luff's words did not reveal his chosen destination, they proved that he did not intend to go to Radbard's, for a northward ride on the B.M.T. would not carry him near the shipping magnate's residence. Luff, staring through the windshield as he spoke, did not observe the sharp glance that came from the tuxedoed driver.

As the coupe neared a corner, the driver lowered the window and thrust his arm out into the flurrying snow. It looked as if he was giving a signal to turn; but as the car rounded the corner, the driver thrust his thumb downward.

Instantly, a sedan pulled from the curb. It was following the coupe when The Shadow's cab swung the corner.

"If I were you," said the driver of the coupe, to Luff, "I would go to Radbard's! How does that strike you, Barrago?"

Luff started at mention of his own name. For a moment, he was at loss; then he grated the harsh question:

"Who are you? Some stooge that Radbard planted to snatch me at the dock?"

"That covers it," returned the driver. "Radbard wants to see you. It wouldn't be healthy for you to disappoint him!"

LUFF did some quick thinking. It was plain that this man in the coupe was independent of the fake stewards aboard the Normandie. They had been placed by Pierre Lebrunne. Courtney Radbard's own outfit was

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covering the shore. The driver of the coupe looked like the sort of worker that Radbard would use.

Apparently, the fellow had been instructed to go easy with Luff. Luckily, the man did not know of the trouble aboard the Normandie; and had failed to connect the arrival of the police cars with Luff's urge for quick departure from the dock.

"I was going up to Radbard's," growled Luff, suddenly. "I wanted to stop off somewhere on the way."

"That's not your usual procedure," returned the driver. "I wouldn't advise it."

Luff was thinking further. He knew that by the time he reached Radbard's, the supercrook might have news of Duchand's death. That possibility settled Luff's decision. He figured he would be playing it safer if he joined up with Solo.

"Guess you're right," began Luff, to his companion. "Let's head up to Radbard's."

The driver swung another corner. Luff shoved his hand into an inner pocket, grasped his small revolver and suddenly planted the gun muzzle against the other man's neck.

"Get going!" snapped the gambler. "Hit it fast until we spot a hack stand. I'm switching to a taxi."

The tuxedoed driver knew that Luff meant business. He had not expected this opposition. His only course was to follow Luff's instructions. With a grimace, he jabbed the accelerator pedal. The coupe rocketed along the slippery street.

There was a green light gleaming from the snowy air above the nearest avenue. Luff growled for a left turn.

The driver applied the brakes; the car skidded leftward, just as the light changed. Luff saw a parked car beyond the far corner. He ordered the driver to stop. As the coupe slowed, Luff hurled his door open.

"Step on it!" he told the tuxedoed driver.

Bounding to the street, Luff slammed the door and grinned as the coupe leaped away like a scared animal. Luff had decided that the driver was yellow. He did not guess that the fellow had a reason other than fear, for clearing this vicinity. It was not until Luff was clambering into the cab that the explanation came.

Wheeling from the side street, the following sedan ignored the red light and swung left through light traffic. A spotlight gleamed from beside the windshield; the sudden illumination showed Luff halfway into the darkened cab.

The glare clicked off; Luff stood motionless. Trapped, the murderous gambler did not know whether to run for safety or scramble aboard the cab.

The sedan was alongside. The barrel of a submachine gun poked from a rear window. No light was needed for the gunner to spot Luff. The whole side of the taxi was a target. Two seconds more – and Luff and a helpless cab driver would have been riddled with bullets. Only a sudden intervention prevented the massacre.

A STREAMLINED cab whirled from the corner. A gloved hand thrust from the window and pumped the trigger of a big automatic. The Shadow's shots were timely and accurate. They found the machine gunner at his window. The machine gun clattered to the street. A head and shoulders followed, wedging in the opened window.

DEATH TOKEN

The Shadow had clipped one crook with two quick shots.

The driver of Luff's taxi needed no spurring words from the gambler. The cab detached itself from the curb and started along the avenue, while angered shouts came from the sedan. The big car started new pursuit, just as The Shadow's taxi completed its full swing.

The Shadow had swung from the right window to the left. He opened quick fire toward the right rear the of the sedan.

Gunshots were answered by the report of an exploding tire. The sedan sagged and jounced. The driver yanked it to the right at the first corner. Bucking one-way traffic, the car bounced along a side street.

Coming up the avenue, The Shadow looked from the window of his cab, to see men dragging the machine gunner from their crippled car. The Shadow wasted no bullets on that vanquished crew. He was after other game.

Up ahead, Luff Barrago was finding no easy flight. The coupe in which Luff had first ridden was back in the game; this time, its driver was prepared. He had stopped to watch developments at the corner. Seeing Luff escape, the man in the coupe was again in action, drawing up on the left of Luff's cab.

Shots were exchanged between the speeders. Luff was firing his blunt revolver; the man in the coupe was answering with a larger gun, aiming from the right window. Both were doing poorly in the running battle. Luff's gun was too puny; the other crook had trouble with the double task of handling both his gun and the coupe.

At the end of a few blocks, Luff's enemy changed tactics.

Stopping his gunfire, the tuxedoed crook cut in ahead of Luff's cab and forced it toward the curb. Luff's driver took the only course that offered; he applied the brakes and swung the cab into a side street. The coupe kept northward along the avenue.

From a block behind, The Shadow witnessed the maneuver. He recognized that the cab had purposely been forced into the side street. He ordered his own driver to take the same turn.

Just around the corner, The Shadow saw the result of Luff's forced flight. The side street was almost completely blocked by a tilted truck that was skewered across the thoroughfare. The angle of the truck showed that it had a broken axle.

Luff's cab came to a sudden stop. The gambler leaped to the sidewalk, started on the run past the truck.

Heads bobbed from the rear of the truck. Like lookouts behind a rampart, sharpshooters opened fire on Luff. Dodging along a darkened stretch of sidewalk, Luff escaped the opening shots. Fresh bullets would have clipped him, for he was promptly spotted; but those bullets never came.

THE SHADOW had arrived. Dropping from his own cab, he opened deadly fire along the edge of the truck. One marksman spilled; the others dropped flat and crawled for an opening into the front seat.

Luff was running along the sidewalk. The Shadow passed the truck, turned momentarily to look for the marksmen whom he had routed.

DEATH TOKEN

They were out of the truck, scurrying for a convenient alleyway, forgetting all about their fallen companion. Pursuit of them was useless. The Shadow still had Luff Barrago as his quarry. The gambler was many yards ahead, loping like a hunted deer.

In maddened flight, Luff took no time to congratulate himself upon his series of escapes. He still thought that danger pressed him. He wanted a clear path to reach Solo Juke, and he saw his opportunity.

Ahead lay Broadway; Luff could see its narrow chasm that stretched southward from Times Square. Luck seemed with the gambler, for he was on a side street that marked a subway station. Luff could see the jutting kiosk at the corner.

Snow had blanketed that stretch of Broadway. Pedestrians were absent as Luff turned the corner, to reach the subway steps. Traffic had lulled to a low point; that was why Luff noted a big limousine that slowed beside the Broadway curb just as he arrived.

Luff was glancing over his shoulder at the car, just as he took to the subway steps. He saw a face by the glow from the lighted corner.

At the window of the limousine, Luff recognized the tawny countenance of Courtney Radbard.

The man was alone, gazing from the window. The only other person in the limousine was an uniformed chauffeur, who was staring straight ahead. Radbard's dark eyes showed an angry glint at sight of Luff. The supercrook had believed that by this time Luff was dead.

SEEING Radbard undefended, Luff went berserk. Leaping up from the subway steps, he crossed the sidewalk with a bound; grabbed the limousine door and wrenched it open.

Radbard's brown-hatted head moved back; yanking off a glove, his hand sped pocketward for a gun. But Luff had gained the lead.

The gambler still clutched his own revolver. He jammed it deep against the breast of Radbard's overcoat and pulled the trigger.

The hammer clicked on an empty shell. Luff had emptied the revolver in his running fight with the driver of the coupe.

A sneer issued from Radbard's lips as Luff dropped back, still holding the opened door. There was a glimmer from the supercrook's fist. Before Luff could release the door handle, a revolver jabbed his ribs. Luff gave a hoarse scream and writhed away, as Radbard pulled the trigger.

Luff staggered on the curb. Radbard gave a hasty order, and his limousine pulled away.

Drooping on the curb, Luff Barrago pressed his left hand to his side. His right hand dangled; its fingers loosed their gun. The little revolver splashed the slush beside the curb. With strained face, Luff turned and started down Broadway with slow, mechanical steps.

The Shadow reached the corner as Luff began his death-walk. Keen eyes saw the gambler's peculiar gait. Following close to the building wall, The Shadow spied red drops of blood that dripped to the newly fallen snow. Those stains told that Luff had received a mortal wound from some vanished enemy who had met him at the corner.

DEATH TOKEN

Intuitively, The Shadow knew that he had missed a meeting with the unknown master-crook who had slated Luff for doom.

Again The Shadow's course was to keep on Luff's trail. Those faltering steps might lead to some obscure spot where Luff would blab forth dying words. Lurking well behind the crippled gambler, The Shadow kept pace with Luff's slow movement.

Luff reached a corner; faltered beside a sign post. He looked upward, but could not see the street sign, for it was directly above him. There was another sign across the street. Luff noted it with glassy stare. He had given up his plan of joining Solo Juke; but the sign must have given him a new idea.

Luff straightened. A sudden spasm produced a revival of his strength. With a long, quick stride, he turned away from Broadway and took to the side street. His frenzied pace was almost a run. The Shadow moved quickly to the corner; but when he reached there, Luff was gone.

A FLASHLIGHT glimmered in the darkness of the side street. The Shadow found no signs of Luff's footprints. Crossing the street, he moved back toward Broadway and came suddenly upon the marks he wanted.

Stepping to a doorway, The Shadow waited before resuming the trail. While he lingered, he heard a panting in the darkness.

It was Luff, returning. A groan came from his lips, as the gambler faltered past The Shadow. Like a moth attracted by a flame, Luff was groping toward the lights of Broadway. He stumbled as he advanced. He tripped as he neared the corner, and sprawled beside a fringe of light.

The Shadow moved outward. He paused as he approached Luff. A car was cruising slowly down Broadway; it stopped as its driver sighted the flattened figure of Luff. The Shadow recognized that car. It was the coupe in which Luff had traveled from the pier.

The coupe stopped. The Shadow saw the tuxedoed driver step forth, look about and hurry over to Luff's body.

The man made a quick search of Luff's clothing, but seemingly was unsuccessful in finding what he desired. He made a sudden dart back to his car, and prepared to drive away.

The Shadow followed swiftly. Passing Luff's body, he was ready to trail the man in the coupe. That rogue had contact with the supercrook who had slain Luff Barrago. With one trail ended, The Shadow was ready to take up a fresh one.

AT the corner, The Shadow turned right on Broadway, for the coupe was heading southward. There was a taxi a block ahead; not The Shadow's but one that could be used for the pursuit.

Ready for a quick dash, The Shadow came out into the light. His cloaked figure was plain amid the whiteness of the swirling snow.

A limousine was idling in from the north. Its motor silent, the big car turned the corner of the street that The Shadow had just left. The tawny face of Courtney Radbard came from the opened window on the left; his hand pushed forth a revolver. From the swinging car, Radbard took straight aim for The Shadow.

The cloaked figure halted; made a sudden side shift as it turned. Soft-toned though the approach of Radbard's car had been, The Shadow had caught the throb of the motor. Radbard's gun barked as The Shadow faded

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toward the building wall. Repeated shots sent bullets whistling past the shifty, black-cloaked shoulders.

The Shadow whipped out an automatic as he faded; he fired a prompt return shot that skimmed the stone edge of the building on the corner. The bullet whistled past the rear of Radbard's big car. The Shadow's protective inward shift had spoiled his chance for retaliation.

When he regained the corner, The Shadow saw only the twinkle of the limousine's tail-light, halfway to the next avenue. The big car had moved too speedily. It was out of range.

Looking down Broadway, The Shadow saw no sign of the coupe. It, too, was gone; all that remained as evidence of a supercrook and his evil workers was the body of Luff Barrago, whitening beneath the heavy snow.

The Shadow had gained no glimpse of Courtney Radbard; but the shots that the supercrook fired had been heard. Nothing could be gained by remaining in this vicinity. Quickly, The Shadow moved into the darkness, scruffing the footprints that he made in the thickening snow.

Amid the chill air came a whispered laugh from hidden lips; an eerie mockery that told that The Shadow was not thwarted. There would be an aftermath to the death of Luff Barrago. The Shadow, though he knew nothing of the coins that Luff had brought from Europe, had learned that something had not been found upon the body of the slain gambler.

The Shadow was right. The man from the coupe had discovered no trace of the rare coins that Courtney Radbard wanted. Those vanished tokens could give The Shadow a new trail to the supercrook.

CHAPTER VIII. THE SECRET MESSAGE

MORNING found New York in the grip of a fierce blizzard. Sidewalks were heaped deeply with snow; and one mound lay like a marble tomb upon the spot where Luff Barrago's body had been shaken from the snow, earlier.

A wizened little man plowed a path through that drift and came to the doorway of an office building. He unlocked a large mail-box that bore the name and title:

D. TARRYDON

Curio Dealer

Tarrydon took his mail up to a dingy office, second story front. He started to open letters; with them, he found a small pasteboard box that bore a penciled scrawl that read: "From Luff. Give these to -"

There the message ended. Tarrydon opened the box, dumped out a quantity of gold and silver coins. They were valuable, except for one large silver piece. It was a French two-franc piece; and plenty of its date could be obtained abroad. Tarrydon wondered why Luff had added this coin to the more valuable ones.

Tarrydon puzzled over the name "Luff." Then he suddenly remembered Luff Barrago, a man who had once sold him some curios. He linked the name further, when he happened to note the morning newspaper that was on his counter. Tarrydon read of Luff's death on the street outside this very building.

Tarrydon knew nothing of Courtney Radbard. The shipping magnate was a coin collector, but he bought entirely from recognized coin dealers. Tarrydon had never heard of Solo Juke. His one guess was that Luff's

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coins might be "hot"; that crooks would be coming after them. Tarrydon decided to unload.

When he went out to lunch at noon, Tarrydon made some telephone calls. Coming back, he noted a hunched figure shuffling through snowy drifts. The man was "Hawkeye," a crafty little spotter in The Shadow's service. Tarrydon, however, took him for an enemy.

Soon afterward, a man dropped into the curio shop and asked if Tarrydon carried coins. The wizened curio dealer said that he seldom had them in stock.

That visitor was the tuxedoed crook who had brought Luff from the pier. The fellow gave his name as Baskell, and said that he would drop back later to look at curios. Again, Tarrydon felt jittery.

Just after five o'clock, a young man entered the curio shop. He dropped the muffling collar of his overcoat and showed a friendly smile. Tarrydon was elated. The visitor was Roy Medwin, who worked for an advertising agency. Medwin was one of the customers whom Tarrydon had phoned at noon.

Tarrydon brought out the coins. He started to lay aside the two-franc piece, thinking it was not important. He dropped it, by chance, upon an old china plate. The coin plunked dully; Medwin did not hear it, but Tarrydon did.

It struck the dealer instantly that something was wrong with that particular coin. He had to get rid of it. Medwin was shaking his head; the gold coins were too expensive. Tarrydon offered the two-franc piece for a dollar. Roy Medwin bought it.

JUST as Medwin was leaving, Baskell entered. The criminal was attired in tuxedo, as though on his way to an evening party. His eyes gleamed when he saw the coins on the counter. He asked their price; Tarrydon sold him the lot for two hundred and fifty dollars.

He noted Baskell looking toward the door; and realized that the crook had seen Medwin pocket a silver coin.

"I sold an old two-franc piece to Mr. Medwin," remarked Tarrydon. "It was not a rare coin, Mr. Baskell. You would not have wanted it."

Baskell gave a curt nod and walked quickly from the little shop. Tarrydon showed relief. He was confident that he had shifted his own troubles to the broad shoulders of Roy Medwin. Tarrydon's assumption was correct.

On the street, Roy Medwin turned in the direction of Broadway. He had not taken a dozen paces before Baskell came from the doorway and hurried across the darkened street to his parked coupe. Driving away, Baskell looked toward the building at the Broadway corner. He gestured thumb downward, with his right hand.

Roy Medwin had reached the shelter of the eight-story building. From a darkened spot across the street came a sibilant hiss, that might have been a whistle of the wind. A hunchy little man shambled from a doorway, to accost Roy.

"Got a dime, bud?" the hoarse speaker was Hawkeye. "I'm hard up for a cup o' coffee."

Roy brought a quarter from his vest pocket, paused to give it to the supposed panhandler. Eight stories above, a long block of whiteness tilted from the cornice of the building. It looked like a bank of snow, tipping through the swirl. But as it toppled, the block left an ominous gap in the long line of stone.

DEATH TOKEN

Roy took two paces toward Broadway. The chunk of cornice landed fifteen feet in front of him, with all the force of its full ton weight. The sidewalk buckled as the large stone cracked. Stone fragments flew about like shrapnel, as Roy dived for the wall.

Crooks on the roof top had loosed that crushing block, in response to Baskell's signal.

The Shadow had countered with a signal to Hawkeye. The spotter's request for a dime had delayed Roy long enough to save the young man's life.

Danger had not ended. As stone chunks ended their bounce, Roy jumped out to the curb, away from the range of the cornice. He stared upward. Men from the cornice saw him.

So did others, in a sedan that halted by the Broadway corner. They had come to pick up a crushed body; to search it hastily before the police reached the scene of what would appear to be an accident.

The first thrust came from the cornice. Murderous eyes saw Roy below. Blinded by the swirl of snow, Roy didn't spy the hand that thrust over the cornice edge, aiming a revolver. The Shadow, gazing at an upward angle from the shelter across the street, gained a quick glimpse of the would-be killer, who aimed straight downward.

The Shadow made his presence known for the first time. He stabbed quick shots upward. His prompt bullets carried to the cornice. A glittering revolver dropped to the sidewalk; as a swirl of snow whisked clear, The Shadow saw a scrawny figure lose its hold upon the roof edge. Restraining hands were too late to catch the wounded gunman. The man came, plunging from the broken cornice.

As the figure cleared the roof edge, The Shadow jabbed new shots. The doomed crook's pals sought the shelter of the roof. Their game was up; their companion's fall was a give-away. They wanted to make quick flight.

With a shrieked wail that seemed to follow him, the falling killer crashed the sidewalk and crumpled into a huddled shape. Prompt death marked the finish of his drop. Roy, looking across the street, was startled by the gunshots. He was more astounded when he heard the crash beside him. He gaped as he viewed the evil killer whom The Shadow had brought down from the night.

Crooks in the waiting sedan were riveted also. Then they came to action. Their job was to rub out Roy Medwin; to carry away his body and search his pockets afterward. To complete that task, they had to pass The Shadow.

Seeing the gun flashes, they thought they knew the cloaked fighter's position. The sedan swung into the side street. Revolvers, barking from the windows, were pointed to the exact spot where The Shadow had been.

Automatics answered from twenty feet away. Shifting rapidly, The Shadow had outguessed the crooks. The sedan swerved; low behind its windows, the crooks tried a new barrage. Again, The Shadow was on the move. His shot clipped a man at a rear window.

Hawkeye, meanwhile, was busy. Springing from his doorway, the little man grabbed Roy, to drag him back to cover. Just then, a taxi sped in from Broadway, whizzing past the slowed sedan. Hawkeye recognized The Shadow's streamlined cab, handled by Moe Shrevnitz, the speediest driver in Manhattan.

The door was swinging open, Hawkeye shoved Roy aboard. The cab roared away through the snow, carrying the rescued man to safety.

DEATH TOKEN

THUGS in the sedan were withering under The Shadow's fire. The driver, alone unwounded, gave his car the gas. It started along the street, too late to follow the swift cab that had taken Roy away. The Shadow fired a last shot at a rear tire; the bullet found the joint of a skid chain and ricocheted from the revolving wheel.

Hawkeye whipped out an automatic and fired from a closer range; but the little man's shots lacked The Shadow's accuracy. Its tires intact, the sedan continued its flight.

The Shadow crossed the street and joined Hawkeye. He spoke a command; with Hawkeye following, The Shadow picked a course through the darkness. The matter of a new trail was settled. The Shadow knew that Moe would learn facts concerning the rider in his cab. When Moe reported, The Shadow would contact Roy Medwin.

AT that very moment, Roy Medwin was talking to Moe Shrevnitz through the open partition between the front and rear seats of the cab. Shakily, Roy was telling the driver that he knew nothing concerning the cause of the gunfire near Broadway.

Moe was nodding his head as if convinced. Satisfied that the driver would cause no future trouble, Roy studied the lights of the avenue on which they were riding; then told Moe to make a turn.

As the driver obeyed, Roy gave him the address of an apartment house. It was the place where Roy lived.

The address was on the East Side. Moe drew up in front of a ten-story apartment house and parked in a snow bank. He received his fare from Roy; then began to experience trouble in starting his cab after his passenger entered the apartment house.

Moe faked that his cab was stuck in the snow. He saw Roy cross the lobby and enter an elevator. Moe could make out the motion of the dial, that showed the elevator going to the top floor.

Just after the cab had gone, a tuxedoed man arrived in front of the apartment house. It was Baskell; he had trailed Moe's cab and had parked his coupe around the corner.

In the lobby of the apartment house, Baskell saw a desk that served as office. No one was on duty; Baskell looked over the mail-boxes and saw the name Medwin, listed with Apartment 10 B. Hurrying out, Baskell drove his coupe to a near-by parking lot and left it there.

Roy had already locked the door of his tenth-story apartment. The room was stuffy. He opened a window a few inches, then sat down beside a table and reviewed the events that had almost overwhelmed him. Roy knew that he was marked for death. The threat had begun with his purchase of the silver coin. Roy remembered the tuxedoed man who had seen him buy the silver piece from Tarrydon.

Wind, whistling through the window crack, jarred the door of the apartment and rattled it. Roy crossed the room; he fancied that he heard a slight scrape at the lock. Deciding that he imagined the noise, he went back to the table. He brought out the silver piece, laid it on the table with a slight clink.

There was another noise; more audible. It came from the window. Roy turned; he saw the sash rise. A blackened shoulder came over the sill. Roy viewed a black tie and white tuxedo front. The man from the outer ledge was Baskell!

BASKELL jammed a revolver inward. Roy's hands came up. Baskell chuckled. The trip was worth while. Coming up by the stairway, he had found an empty apartment. He had taken the outside ledge as the sure route to reach the man who held the silver two-franc piece.

DEATH TOKEN

Baskell had made no report to Radbard. He simply intended to murder Roy without a trace, and make his departure with the coin that Radbard wanted.

Roy saw Baskell's murderous expression. Wheeling from the table, the threatened man made a futile dash for the door. Baskell steadied his finger on the trigger, intending to drop the victim when he reached the door.

Before Roy could cover the ten-foot space, the door swung inward. In from the threshold came The Shadow, ready for new rescue.

Baskell saw his cloaked enemy; the crook gawked. Forgetting Roy, Baskell ducked for cover.

The killer used his left hand to grip the inner window sill. The cover that he chose was the space outside the window. He crouched on the stone ledge, shoving his right hand high enough to open fire through the window. It was an awkward shift on Baskell's part.

His left fingers slipped from the moist sill. Baskell heaved backward involuntarily, clawing to keep his hold. That move marked his finish.

The tuxedoed killer spun from the wall on a long dive to a cement courtyard, a hundred feet below.

The Shadow reached the window.

Up through the whistling wind came Baskell's fading scream. Then a snow-muffled crash told that another of Radbard's evil workers had finished his career with a death-plunge.

SOLEMNLY, The Shadow closed the window and locked the sash. He turned to see Roy Medwin sagging in a chair. Calmly, The Shadow approached the man whom he had again saved from death.

Roy looked up to see glowing eyes that peered from beneath a hat brim. He detected the mere outline of a hawkish face above the folds of The Shadow's cloak collar.

Hidden lips spoke. Their even tone restored Roy's shattered confidence. Stammering, the rescued man gave his story, knowing that his rescuer wanted it. Roy pointed to the coin upon the table. The Shadow stepped over and picked up the silver piece.

The Shadow's keen eyes must have detected more than had Tarrydon's, for a whispered laugh came from his lips. Roy watched long hands peel off their thin black gloves. Dropping the coin upon the table, The Shadow listened to its sound; then pressed the coin between the long fingers of each hand, holding it flat.

The Shadow gave a rotary twist. Roy stared as he saw the coin unscrew into two sections.

Each was the half of a coin, one smaller than the other. Both portions had some thickness; hence the coin, when joined together, was solid enough to ring, although its clang was not quite true. That, however, was scarcely important, when compared with the contents of the coin.

From between the separated portions, The Shadow produced a tiny slip of thin paper. He held it to the light. Roy, straining forward, could see an inscription the paper bore. It consisted of three figures; nothing else. They formed a number:

312

DEATH TOKEN

Carefully, The Shadow replaced the paper and tightened the halves of the coin together. He held out the two-franc piece; dropping it into Roy's slinky palm. In quiet tone, The Shadow ordered:

"Keep the coin; tell no one of its contents. Await developments. Fear nothing; you will be protected."

Roy nodded his willingness to maintain silence. He owed it to his rescuer. Moreover, he realized that it would be his safest policy.

The Shadow crossed the room, opened the door and stepped out into the hall. He left the door ajar; Roy went there and peered out. The Shadow was already gone. He could not have reached the stairway. Roy knew that his mysterious rescuer had chosen to remain, occupying the empty apartment on this floor.

New thrusts might come; if they did, The Shadow would frustrate them. Roy Medwin felt new confidence, as he returned to his apartment and locked the door. All that baffled him was the message that The Shadow had found within the coin that again rested in Roy's pocket. To Roy, the significance of the number, 312, remained unknown.

For the present, that message was a mystery to The Shadow also; but The Shadow foresaw that its significance could be learned. That opportunity would come later, when the coin itself had served as a trail to the supercreek who wanted it.

Though The Shadow had not learned the identity of Courtney Radbard, he knew that the master-criminal would again seek to gain the hidden message that Luff Barrago had failed to deliver.

CHAPTER IX. CRIME'S WARNING

"READ me the morning's news, Sideling."

Courtney Radbard spoke placidly from behind his desk. It was the beginning of a new day! Radbard's desk calendar displayed the date as March 8th; a small clock showed the time as seven-thirty.

Sideling eyed a newspaper through his thick-rimmed spectacles. Timidly, the secretary began to read the details of frustrated crime. Radbard became impatient.

"Come, Sideling!" he snapped. "Speak up, man! I know that failed last night. I want to hear the worst!"

Sideling read one news account – a police report of a private detective who had fallen from the roof of a building near Broadway, evidently on the roof looking for sneak thieves. But Radbard knew him to be one of his own secret henchmen.

"What else does the newspaper tell us, Sideling?" Radbard queried.

"Bad news, sir," replied the secretary. "Baskell was found dead in the courtyard behind an East Side apartment house. There was a revolver beside him. The police are sure that he fell from a window while trying to effect entry into one of the apartments."

"A logical assumption," smiled Radbard. "That makes it certain the law cannot link Baskell to me. Does it state whose apartment he tried to enter?"

"It doesn't, sir."

DEATH TOKEN

Radbard frowned. His straightened lips delivered a statement.

"It is plain – to me, even though the law does not suspect it – that Baskell went to that apartment house to filch the coin that I require."

Speculatively, Radbard leaned back in his chair; he reached for a cigar and puffed it when Sideling scrambled forward to apply a lighted match. After a few moments smoke, Radbard added:

"Tarrydon passed that coin to a customer. Baskell pointed out the man who had it. After The Shadow intervened, Baskell must have trailed the man with the coin. He should have reported, before he tried to enter by himself.

"His fall was an unlucky one, both for himself and for me. It leaves us a blank trail. Baskell is dead; and I learned last night that Tarrydon hurried out of town. No one has been able to trace him."

Radbard thought a while; then reached into a desk drawer and pulled out pad and paper. He snapped a question to Sideling:

"What is the name of that apartment house?"

"The Graywood, sir," replied the secretary. "It is ten stories high, with six apartments on each floor, except the first, which has only four. A total of fifty–eight apartments."

"We have less than that to deal with," decided Radbard. "Baskell must have fallen from the fourth floor or above. By eliminating the front apartments and allowing for a few vacant ones at the rear of the building, we can cut the total to approximately twenty possible apartments. Investigation at the Graywood would reduce that number; but I do not care to have a man spend too much time in that vicinity. Inquiries would be bad. I have a better plan."

Radbard wrote on the sheet of paper; tore it from the pad and passed it to Sideling.

"Have this printed immediately," ordered Radbard. "Make it a rush job, in the form of a small folder. Have a copy placed in every mail–box at the Graywood Apartments. Meanwhile, call the Apex Coin Co. and tell them to forward all replies to me."

There was a rap at the door from the library. It was Moshart, announcing that breakfast was ready. Radbard remarked to Sideling that he was going to the office of the International Shipping Exchange, after breakfast, and would return by three o'clock in the afternoon.

DAY passed. It was half past three when a straggly delivery man arrived at the Graywood Apartments and stopped by the deserted counter in the lobby. He saw the mail–boxes, where the elevator man, serving occasionally as clerk, placed letters for the various tenants.

Bringing out a stack of small, printed folders, the delivery man inserted one in each mail–box.

Shortly after five o'clock, Roy Medwin arrived back from the office. He took his mail from the box and went up to his apartment. Though it was not quite dusk, the living room had become gloomy; for the day was cloudy after the blizzard.

Roy turned on the light. Sorting his mail, he came to the printed folder.

DEATH TOKEN

The sheet bore the imprint of the Apex Coin Co. Roy recalled the name of the concern; it was one that acted as an agency in buying and selling rare coins for wealthy collectors.

The circular bore the title: "Old Coins Wanted," and continued with a list of items for which a premium was given. In the list, Roy found French two-franc pieces covering a series of years that included the date of his own coin.

As he sat down beside the table, Roy noted one of the coin company's circulars lying there. It had a note attached. Roy unfolded the message and read two words in brilliant blue ink:

Answer query.

The blue words faded as soon as Roy had read them. Staring at the blank sheet in his hand, the young man realized that the message had been left by The Shadow. Promptly, Roy picked up the telephone and called the Apex Coin Co.

A weary voice answered. When Roy stated that he had a two-franc piece for sale, the man at the other end replied that he had already received many offers of those particular coins. He asked for Roy's name and address. When Roy mentioned the Graywood Apartments, his words produced results.

"We want the coins for a special client," came the voice. "We shall notify him that you have called. If he is still interested, you will hear from him."

Half an hour passed. Dusk had settled when the telephone bell rang. Roy answered promptly; a deep voice asked his name. Roy gave it, and the speaker introduced himself.

"My name is Courtney Radbard," came the deep tone. "I specialize in the collecting of French coins. Could you call this evening, Mr. Medwin – say at eight? I believe that it would be worth your while."

"I think that I shall be free," returned Roy, tensely. "Suppose that we make the appointment. If I cannot come, I shall notify you very shortly, Mr. Radbard."

Radbard agreed. He gave his address. Roy hung up the telephone; as he did, he was conscious of a slight swish behind him. The Shadow had entered, to overhear Roy's end of the conversation.

Promptly, Roy stated what little he had learned. Mention of Courtney Radbard interested The Shadow immensely, for he knew the shipping magnate by reputation. The Shadow ordered Roy to keep the appointment; then departed.

SINCE eight o'clock was the hour set, Roy decided to dine early. He dressed for the evening, left the apartment and had dinner at a small restaurant close by. Returning to the apartment, he noted that it was nearly half past seven. He decided to have a short pipe before leaving for Radbard's.

Roy finished his smoke, knocked the ashes from his pipe into a heavy ash tray. As he did so, he thought he heard echoing taps from the hall door. Roy stopped his motion abruptly. He heard a distinct, though cautious rap.

Knowing that it could not be The Shadow, to whom locked doors seemed no barriers. Roy was hesitant as he put his pipe away. The knock came again, a trifle louder. It seemed to carry a sensitive plea for Roy to open the door.

DEATH TOKEN

Deciding that The Shadow must be close at hand, Roy regained his confidence. He went to the door, opened it and stepped back abruptly from the threshold. The person at the door was a woman. As Roy bowed for her to enter, she stepped into the light. Roy faced a brunette whose beauty amazed him.

Pressing a tapering finger to her ruddy lips, the girl closed the door and stepped farther into the room. With a whisper, she questioned:

"You are Monsieur Medwin?"

Roy nodded. The girl's use of the title "monsieur" told that she was French. Immediately, Roy remembered that the coin he was carrying to Radbard was of French mintage.

"I am Celeste Lebrunne," stated the girl. Her eyes seemed sad, her lips wistful, as she added: "You have heard the name before? Lebrunne?"

"No." Roy's voice seemed hoarse, compared with Celeste's soft tone. "The name is new to me, Miss Lebrunne."

The door from the hall was moving inward; Roy barely noted the motion. Celeste could not see it, for her back was turned. Roy saw blotting blackness; caught the glint of an eye; the warning entrance of a long-fingered hand, that displayed a fiery jewel – a girosol.

Roy had seen that gem before, on the left hand of The Shadow. It was a token of The Shadow's presence; a signal that Roy should continue his interview with Celeste Lebrunne.

That was not difficult. The girl was watching Roy's face. She was troubled by the slight turn of his eyes, even though she did not suspect that the door had opened.

"Speak truly, m'sieu'," pleaded Celeste. "Tell the again. You do not recognize the name Lebrunne? You have never heard of Pierre Lebrunne?"

"Never in my life," insisted Roy, concentrating fully upon Celeste. "That is" – he smiled pleasantly – "I had never heard the name before you mentioned it. Your name, you tell me, is Celeste Lebrunne. Is Pierre Lebrunne –"

Roy hesitated. Celeste smiled, despite her worryment.

"Pierre Lebrunne is not my husband," she declared, reading his unspoken thought. "He is my brother. I am sure that you have spoken true when you say that you have never heard of him. That tells me that you are not one of those men who –"

CELESTE stopped, hesitated, then spoke with ardent tone:

"Ah, m'sieu', you must trust me! You trust believe me! To make you believe, I must tell you all the truth. Pierre Lebrunne, my brother, is a criminal – the worst in all Europe, although his name is not spoken often in New York! That is why I am in America, because Pierre has sent me. He made me come here, because he has a confrere – a partner – here in New York.

"I can say nothing to the police. They would not believe. The man of whom I speak – this American – he would claim not to know my brother Pierre. He would accuse me, saying that I must be here to do crime myself. I would be deported, because I am the sister of Pierre Lebrunne!"

DEATH TOKEN

Celeste's words were genuine; yet, for the moment, Roy could not understand why the girl had come to confide in him. The explanation followed. Pleadingly, the girl gripped Roy's arm.

"I have warned no one," she declared, "until I heard of you. Those others were criminals; but you are not like them. That is why I have come to tell you of danger."

"At Courtney Radbard's home?"

"Yes! It will be best if you do not go there. Believe me, m'sieu', I speak to save you!"

Celeste was earnest and impressive. Nevertheless, Roy slowly shook his head.

"It is too late to drop the appointment," he declared. "Radbard expects me. I must go."

The girl turned toward the door, deep disappointment registered on her face. Roy was impressed more than ever by her beauty at that moment. It was with effort, that he refrained from altering his decision. Sight of the door, closing noiselessly, made him remember that he owed allegiance to The Shadow; that his rescuer's plans called for a trip to Radbard's.

"I thank you for your warning," Roy told Celeste, as he opened the door to the hall. "I shall be careful to-night."

"You trust me, m'sieu'," whispered the girl, as Roy accompanied her toward the elevator. "Be ready, at any instant, to protect your own life! If you must go there, I can tell you the only way to safety. You will be in a room with two doors. If there is danger, go by the back one. That way will be open."

Roy rang for the elevator. Celeste departed.

Roy returned to the apartment. The young man sat down in his favorite chair, stuffed his pipe and lighted it. The first cloud of smoke seemed to wreath itself fantastically, to form the image of Celeste Lebrunne.

Roy's hand was resting on the table. Paper crinkled beneath his finger. Mechanically, he lowered his pipe with his right hand, unfolded the paper with his left. His eyes turned downward; they read a single word, in vivid blue:

"Go."

The written word vanished; but it remained in Roy Medwin's brain as sharply etched as a spoken command. It seemed as though The Shadow himself had issued the order within this very room.

Slowly, Roy put away his pipe; donned his hat and coat to leave the apartment.

Roy did not doubt Celeste's sincerity; nor did he feel that The Shadow doubted it. He could not believe that any one, possessed of intuition, could do otherwise than regard the girl's plea as genuine. Roy felt a sweep of gratitude to Celeste for her effort to save him from a pressing danger.

He realized, though, that The Shadow could have foreseen the very hazards that Celeste had suggested. If so, the cloaked rescuer would be doubly vigilant because of the girl's warning.

Moreover, it seemed plain that Celeste had known nothing of The Shadow's presence. She had not guessed that Roy had gained mysterious protection in the past; that the same powerful rescuer could be guarding him

to–night.

Danger had been in this game from the start. It could continue, so far as Roy was concerned. Through danger, Roy foresaw that he might meet Celeste again.

That possibility, like his confidence in The Shadow, spurred Roy to follow the final command that he had received.

CHAPTER X. CROSSED TRAILS

ROY MEDWIN had calculated twenty minutes for a cab trip to Radbard's. He would have been astonished to learn that the route could be covered in half that interval. It had been five minutes before Roy had picked up The Shadow's single–worded message; it was five more before he hailed a cab outside the Graywood Apartments.

At the very time Roy was starting his actual ride to Radbard's, The Shadow arrived at the millionaire's mansion.

It had been The Shadow's original intent to follow Roy along the danger trail to–night. The Shadow had altered that decision, thanks to the statements that he had overheard Celeste make. Mention of two ways to Radbard's lair had shown possible advantages to be gained through an advance visit. The Shadow's speedy trip was made in Moe's cab, waiting outside the Graywood.

From darkness close to Radbard's mansion, The Shadow approached the house on foot. Gliding inside the fence that surrounded the building, he made a silent circuit of the grounds, studying the windows as he passed them. Wherever he saw dim lights on the ground floor, The Shadow observed the outlines of bars against the windows.

It was obvious that Radbard was protected against invaders, yet in a manner that would not excite the suspicion of the law. Many pretentious Manhattan houses were similarly barred against burglary. It was likely, also, that Radbard had installed an extensive alarm system.

Passing a shaded bay window at one side of the house, The Shadow came to a low doorway that was almost out of sight, near a rear corner of the building.

That door was heavily hinged; it boasted a formidable lock and a huge iron knob. It was the very sort of entrance that any prowler would have passed up as a bad venture. The Shadow, himself, might have ignored it under other circumstances. He was banking, however, on Celeste's statement regarding the back door that led to safety. The strong door that The Shadow saw was the only one that offered a special route from the house.

Edging to the low doorway, The Shadow tested the heavy knob. It was rigid, apparently latched. The very tightness of the knob, however, was proof to The Shadow that it was not latched from the inside. Latched knobs usually clicked slightly. The Shadow's assumption, therefore, was that the tightness depended upon some construction of the outside knob alone.

A deft gloved hand manipulated the knob, found that strong inward pressure made it yield in plunger fashion. There was a slight click within the door; the knob twisted loose. A slight outward pull of the turning knob, and it engaged the latch in normal fashion. The Shadow opened the door and entered.

DEATH TOKEN

WITH the door closed behind him, The Shadow stood in the thick darkness of a narrow-walled passage. He inspected the inner knob with a flashlight; found that it was quite ordinary. The big key hole was a fake; but there were large bolts on the inside of the door. The purpose of this special entrance was obvious.

Through this door could come privileged persons who wished to see Radbard privately – provided the supercrook had told them the secret of the tricky outside knob. If Radbard wished to bar such visitors, he could do so by fastening the bolts on the inside of the door. The passage itself offered only one route inside the house. It led up a short flight of steps, then along an inner wall. It made a sharp turn and terminated with a blocking door.

The Shadow found this route with a tiny, probing flashlight. He extinguished the torch as soon as he reached the door.

Carefully, The Shadow opened the door inward. He stepped into a lighted room: Radbard's office. The room was empty; but it was apparent that occupants would soon arrive. A lamp was glowing from Radbard's desk. Papers were stacked there, awaiting the shipping magnate's inspection. The big safe in back of the desk was wide open. So was the door of a small, square corner closet.

Looking across the room, The Shadow saw the door to the library. Closing the door by which he had just entered, he crossed the room and tried the far door. The Shadow peered into the library; saw that it was empty. He entered, closing the door of the office behind him.

He saw the route to the front hall, but did not take it. Instead, The Shadow sought the shelter of a deep alcove between two bookcases. Just as he blended with darkness, two men appeared from the hallway.

One, The Shadow knew, was Courtney Radbard; for he had seen the man in the past. The other was Sideling; The Shadow recognized the secretary's bespectacled face as the frightened one that he had seen peering from a beleaguered taxicab on Tenth Avenue.

A few moments later, The Shadow learned the name of the frail man whom he once had rescued; for Radbard spoke angrily to the secretary, as the pair entered the office.

"You neglected to bolt the other door, Sideling," stormed Radbard, referring to the back door of the office. "Keep it bolted! There is still a possibility of a visitor from that passage. I prefer to have him knock, rather than enter the office unannounced."

With this reference to Solo Juke, Radbard sat down behind the big desk. Sidling closed the door between the office and the library.

Alone in the book-lined library, The Shadow formed prompt conclusions regarding the link that had existed between Radbard and three crooks, two of whom were dead. In past investigations, The Shadow had learned of a tie-up between criminals in Europe and America. In Radbard, he had uncovered the mastermind capable of dealing directly with Pierre Lebrunne.

THOUGH blocked off from the rear passage by which he had entered, The Shadow had ample range for new inspection. Such was important, for he needed to know the details of the front portion of the mansion.

Coming from the darkened alcove, The Shadow approached the hall. He found it deserted. Reaching the front door, The Shadow turned to view the marble staircase.

DEATH TOKEN

The Shadow's burning gaze met the metal stare of the bronze Apollo. Its head tilted slightly downward, the huge statue was looking directly toward the front door, like a silent sentinel. The giant figure was marvelously lifelike.

Its sculptured form resembled a Goliath, ready to throw back an advancing horde. After a brief view of the statue, The Shadow shifted suddenly from the line of the Apollo's gaze. He found a perfect hiding place behind one of the maroon curtains beside the front door.

The Shadow had heard soft-footed steps from a far room. As he watched from the curtain's edge, a servant entered the hallway. The man was Moshart. The beefy-faced servitor halted near the front door; he assumed the pose of a man on sentry duty.

Moshart did not wait long. A bell jangled; he stepped toward the door. The Shadow saw another servant appear from the far room; a third menial poked his head over the balustrade from the second floor. Moshart pulled back the bolts that barred the front floor. The Shadow heard him question some one. Moshart stepped aside to admit Roy Medwin.

Even in the gloomy hallway, Roy showed traces of nervousness. There was something ominous in these surroundings; the huge figure of Apollo seemed to indicate a giant, latent power that ruled this domain.

Moshart closed the front door and barred it. He motioned Roy to an uncomfortable chair near The Shadow's curtain. The servant started off through the library.

It was then that Roy caught the tone of a sibilant whisper, so hushed that it reached his ears alone, unheard by Moshart or the spying servants. The Shadow's whisper was uttered with eerie effect; like the voice of a ventriloquist, its exact source was veiled.

Roy stared toward the mighty statue that held its fixed gaze toward the door. For the moment, he thought that the tone could have come from those bronze lips, for they alone were visible. Soon realization reached him. That whisper was a token of The Shadow's presence.

The change that came over Roy Medwin was instantly apparent. Roy straightened in his tall-backed chair. He looked toward the library, ready to take that route as soon as he was summoned to meet Courtney Radbard.

Moshart came back from the library. He had encountered Sideling on the way. It was the frail secretary, who approached Roy Medwin; introducing himself, Sideling invited Roy into the office.

As soon as the two had gone, Moshart went into the far room. The two peering servants had withdrawn as soon as Sideling appeared.

THE SHADOW came from this hiding place. Gliding through the library, he reached the door of the office. He moved the door slowly inward, to see Roy sitting at the desk, across from Radbard, with Sideling standing by.

Radbard was greeting his visitor with a friendly smile. As part of his policy, the supercrook had told Sideling not to lock the door by which Roy had entered. The Shadow noticed Roy make a sidelong glance toward the rear door of the room. Roy had remembered Celeste's admonition regarding that route to safety.

"You have the coin with you?" Radbard's query was a purred one. "Ah! It is a fine specimen!" He smiled with the pleasure of a connoisseur, as he received the coin from Roy. "Yes, the very sort that I require for my

DEATH TOKEN

collection! This coin is worth a high figure."

Placing the two-franc piece upon the desk, Radbard eyed it, then looked up with a slight smile.

"My specialty is the collection of unusual specimens," he explained. "I seek the best coin obtainable, of every variety, that was minted in each different year. Such a collection is sure to increase in value. This coin, for instance, may catalogue at only a few dollars. I shall be glad to offer fifty dollars for it. Would that price be satisfactory?"

"Quite!" replied Roy. "It is more than I expected."

"Tell me," suggested Radbard, as he reached for a check book, "how did you happen to acquire such an excellent coin of this particular date? I should like to know how you were so fortunate."

Roy began a flawless story of his trip to Tarrydon's, mentioning that the coin dealer had telephoned him. He was careful to avoid reference to Baskell, by name; he also omitted the fact that he had witnessed the fall of the building cornice.

It was during Roy's tale that The Shadow eased the door shut and made a quick glide to the alcove between the bookcases.

Again, he had caught the approach of a sneaky tread. A few seconds later, Moshart pussyfooted into the room, stopped by the office door and listened there. Unseen, The Shadow was learning a valuable and unexpected fact.

Moshart, one of Radbard's own guards, was harboring some secret purpose. The servant was spying on his own chief!

Moshart did not eavesdrop long. He backed suddenly from the door; began to fumble at a bookcase. Like The Shadow. Moshart had heard approaching footfalls. This time, Celeste Lebrunne entered the library.

WITH a passing glance at Moshart, the girl went to a corner shelf that held a set of leather-bound French classics. While Celeste was choosing one of the large volumes. Moshart went out to the hallway, looking as unconcerned as possible.

Celeste picked out one of the books and gave a troubled glance toward the door of Radbard's office. She suspected that Roy had arrived there. The fact that all was quiet served to allay her fears.

The office door opened. Radbard appeared on the threshold, shaking hands with Roy. Celeste turned away, busied herself with the books, to avoid any sign of recognition while Sideling conducted Roy to the front floor.

Celeste followed as soon as the pair had passed. From where he stood, The Shadow could view two separate occurrences.

He saw Moshart unlock the front door. Roy went out and Moshart bolted the door again, while Sideling stood by. Celeste had neared the staircase and paused there with her book in hand. She must have heard Roy drive away in a waiting taxi, for the girl's face showed relief. She disappeared up the staircase, passing the bronze statue of Apollo, which was not visible from where The Shadow watched.

DEATH TOKEN

Roy's prompt departure outside was proof that Moe's cab had been waiting. The Shadow felt no further concern for Roy. He would be safe in that cab. He had done well through his visit to Radbard. The supercrook suspected nothing. That was indicated by the second sight that The Shadow viewed.

The door of the office was half opened. The Shadow could see Radbard at the desk. He was unscrewing the silver coin. From between its layers, he drew the tiny slip of paper. Radbard's tawny face showed a knowing gleam, as he read the numerical message with its cryptic number "312." He wadded the thin bit of paper, flicked it into a wastebasket.

Radbard did not wait for Sideling's return. Instead, he came from the office and met the secretary at the wide doorway between the library and the hall. Radbard told Sideling that he could have the evening off as he, himself, was going to his club. Moshart brought Radbard a heavy overcoat and a high silk hat.

ALL had moved into the hallway. Clear of any possible observation, The Shadow made a shift into the lighted office. He began a quick inspection of Radbard's desk. In one drawer, he found a box that contained a number of foreign coins, among them some of the two-franc pieces.

Doubtless, those were hollow ones; if so, they had contained past messages. The Shadow did not waste time inspecting them.

He studied Radbard's opened safe, its contents all on display. He saw no signs of anything important, not even the express box that Sideling had carried from the pier. That had probably been sent to Radbard's business office.

All that The Shadow discovered elsewhere was a newspaper, folded and turned to the page that carried the shipping news. It bore checkmarks on the names of two steamships, one due to arrive from Europe on March 11th; the other, on March 13th.

Hearing Sideling coming from the library, The Shadow stepped into the square closet in the corner and closed its door part way. The secretary entered, but did not notice that the closet door was ajar. He closed the door of the safe, turned to the desk to wind the little clock. After that, Sideling methodically pulled the date slip from the desk calendar, changing it from March 8th to March 9th.

The secretary turned out some of the lights, then looked toward the bolted rear floor of the office. He remembered something; leaving the desk lamp aglow, he went out through the library.

Several minutes passed. Sideling did not return. He had been wearing hat and coat when he entered for his final duties; probably he had changed his mind about coming back. The Shadow edged halfway from the closet, glided out of sight again as Moshart soft-shoed into the office.

The beefy-faced servant had returned, instead of Sideling. It was plain from Moshart's manner that something was afoot. His stride was creepy; he stopped inside the door to close it and thus cut off connection with the library.

The Shadow watched Moshart pass the glow of the desk lamp. Keenly, the cloaked observer knew that he was soon to witness the reason for Moshart's sneaky spying. The servant reached the rear door of the office, gave a soft tap there with his finger tips.

An answering scratch came from the other side. Moshart eased back the bolts.

The door opened. A man came from darkness and joined Moshart beside the glowing desk lamp. The Shadow recognized a sullen, darkish face, with hard, thick lips beneath a straightened nose and forehead. The man whom Moshart had admitted was Solo Juke.

Moshart was the lone wolf's spy. Here, in Courtney Radbard's own headquarters, Solo Juke had come to plot against the master-criminal.

CHAPTER XI. RADBARD'S RETURN

SOLO JUKE lost no time in voicing his business to Moshart. He had come to get a line on Radbard's latest activities. Listening from the closet, The Shadow could hear Solo query:

"Radbard's gone out, like you thought he would?"

An affirmative response came from Moshart.

"What about the secretary?" demanded Solo. "Where's he at? And the French moll?"

"Sideling has taken the evening off," returned Moshart. "He instructed me to go through the passage and bar the rear door."

"Radbard's order, huh? In case I showed up while he was out. Did the dame go out, too?"

"Mademoiselle Lebrunne has retired. The other servants are either in the kitchen or in their rooms. I am on duty alone."

Solo displayed a grin when he received this news. Eying the office with suspicious gaze, he called for a further report. Moshart gave it in a disappointed tone.

"Radbard has given no indication that he has any jewels," declared the servant. "There are always times when he moves about the house alone. I admit that he could have them here, at least downstairs. Not on the second floor, though. I have been there too regularly, and I have searched thoroughly."

"Maybe Sideling knows something," asserted Solo. "I'd like to snatch that lug and put the heat on him!"

"Sideling knows very little," assured Moshart. "It is a sure thing that Radbard has told him nothing important. But the girl may know some facts –"

"About the sparklers?" snorted Solo. "Guess again, Moshart. I'm wise to the whole set-up! Pierre Lebrunne has shipped those rocks straight through to Courtney Radbard! They're working the racket together, and the moll is part of the front. Radbard brought her here to bluff guys like Leo, Beak, and myself."

"It worked, because they didn't let the moll in the know. Pierre hasn't put her wise to anything. Whatever dope he sends through goes straight to Radbard. There was a guy carried the news, without knowing it. That bird was Luff Barrago."

Solo, through his inside knowledge, was stating facts that The Shadow had already divined. The Shadow, however, could see added reasons for Celeste's presence in New York. Courtney Radbard was holding the girl as hostage, until the deal was finished.

DEATH TOKEN

Pierre Lebrunne had shrewdly agreed to send Celeste to New York because, in a pinch, he could communicate directly with his sister. Celeste, despite her ignorance of the arrangement, was serving as double surety in the deal between her brother and Radbard.

"THOSE sparklers are here," assured Solo, grimly. "Radbard fenced some, just to see if he could pull it without us getting wise. It didn't work, so he got rid of Leo and Beak. Radbard's hanging on to a big lot of the jewels, right now – and I'm not swell-headed enough to think it's on account of me. Radbard figures me as small-fry. He thinks it would be a cinch to rub me out, if I squawked.

"He's got a better reason for waiting. It's because all the jewels aren't here yet. There's a pile of them; they'd fill a box a foot square and a foot high, from what I've heard. That was too many for one shipment. Radbard's been storing them, as I figure it, and he was stalling while he stacked them up.

"But don't ask me how he got them through the customs. They weren't in those express boxes. Radbard proved that to us. Luff couldn't have carried them through. He would have told us. I'd like to know more, though, about Luff and his messages."

Moshart shook his head to indicate his ignorance of the subject. He opened the desk drawer and showed Solo the boxful of silver coins. Solo was quick with the query.

"What're these?"

"Foreign coins that Radbard collects," explained Moshart. "Luff may have brought him some; but I am not sure. There was a man here to-night. I think he sold Radbard more coins for the collection, but I can't be sure."

"Why not?"

"I was unable to listen outside the door because the girl was in the library."

Solo grunted; then maintained silence while he inspected the silver coins. There was a reading glass in Radbard's drawer; Solo used the lens, but failed to detect any scratches or peculiar marks upon the silver pieces. He closed the drawer and gestured impatiently.

"Radbard couldn't get sparklers through with a lot of junky coins," he decided. "The guy is just bugs about his coin collection, that's all. Come on, Moshart; let's tap the joint. We've got time."

MOSHART suggested that they begin their search in the office. Solo overruled the plan, arguing that it would be better to inspect the front of the house while all was quiet. The two went out through the library. Coming from the closet, The Shadow followed.

From the big door of the library, he watched the pair make expert search. With speed and precision, they covered every inch of the hallway – tapping the walls for secret panels, pressing the floor boards for hidden springs. Solo whispered to Moshart; the servant went across the hall. During Moshart's absence, Solo examined each step of the marble staircase, creeping almost to the second floor.

Moshart returned, bringing a hammer, with the head wrapped in a towel. Carefully; the servant began to tap the marble base of the Apollo statue; then he rapped the bronze itself. Muffled clangs sounded, barely audible in the hallway. All were solid.

DEATH TOKEN

Stretching, Moshart tapped the body of the massive figure and managed to reach its shoulders with his hammer strokes.

Solo whispered from above. Sliding down beside the statue, Moshart gave the hammer a lazy upward flip. Solo caught the turning handle; he stretched over the balustrade and managed to tap the top of the statue's head, circling the crown and clanging the bronze ears.

The metal was solid. Solo tossed the hammer down to Moshart.

Seating himself on the marble steps, Solo lighted a cigarette while Moshart was returning the hammer and towel to the pantry. During that interval, The Shadow glided from the library, took his place behind one of the draperies beside the doorway. He was there when Moshart returned.

Solo came down the staircase to join the servant. The two went into the library.

There they made another thorough search, cooperating to gain speed. Moshart lifted a stretch of books from the shelves, held them while Solo tapped the woodwork where the books had been. In this manner, they went through the entire library in rapid fashion.

They finished, without result. Solo growled the next move:

"The office is the only bet. I'll handle it, Moshart, while you stay out in the hall."

Solo went into the office. Coming to the hallway, Moshart brushed a curtain that hung at the side of the wide doorway. That was The Shadow's present station. Moshart almost grazed the unseen observer, as he passed.

The door of the office was ajar; Solo had left it that way, in case of word from Moshart. Gliding through the library, The Shadow reached the doorway and watched Solo search.

The darkish crook did a thorough job, covering the closet as well as the room. Finding the safe unlocked, Solo inspected its interior. When he returned to the lamplight, his face was sour. Solo had not found a single jewel, nor any clue to the wanted swag.

Disgusted, Solo saw no need to contact Moshart again. He opened the rear door of the office; the knob clicked as he turned it. Solo stepped through, closed the door with a slight slam. Those noises were made without purpose, but they served Solo in a lucky manner which he did not suspect.

They drowned other sounds that The Shadow should have heard: creeping footfalls coming through the library.

WHEN The Shadow did hear the creep, it was close behind him. He whirled, whipped out an automatic. He was too late; a husky form was already launching itself upon him.

The Shadow's gun scaled from his fist as Moshart grabbed his arm and drove him hard against the wall beside the office doorway.

Coming to contact Solo, Moshart had seen the blackness at the partly opened door. He had not recognized it as a living figure until The Shadow whirled; but at that moment, Moshart had been close enough to spring. He had a revolver of his own; he sledged a hard blow with it, as The Shadow flattened against the wall.

DEATH TOKEN

As his first automatic thudded the floor, The Shadow gripped a second .45 with his free left hand. He bobbed his head to avoid Moshart's stroke. The servant missed; his gun banged the wall, rebounded at a chance angle. Moshart's heavy fist thudded the back of The Shadow's neck.

The cloaked fighter sagged. His fresh gun dropped from his nerveless fingers. The numbing jolt passed quickly; The Shadow was able to grab Moshart, before slumping to the floor. Viciously, the servant tried another long-armed swing. Ramming his head forward, The Shadow battered his husky opponent squarely in the chest.

Moshart's slashing hand went beyond The Shadow's shoulder. The servant doubled toward the wall. Gloved hands made a quick grab for his neck. An instant later, Moshart was as helpless as a venomous cobra in the grip of a fighting mongoose.

Coming up from the floor, The Shadow reeled the bulky servant half across the library. Moshart's arms were flaying helplessly; his eyes were bulgy from The Shadow's choking clutch.

The gloved hands loosed their hold, as Moshart's head tilted back. As the crook rallied, The Shadow caught his chin with one hand, the lower part of his neck with the other. Up went Moshart's head; pressing fingers jabbed him below the Adam's apple.

It was the perfect knock-out treatment – a move more paralyzing than a hard punch to the jaw. Moshart crumpled without a murmur and flattened like dead weight upon the floor.

Instinctively, The Shadow turned toward the door of the office. On the threshold, he saw Solo Juke. The lone wolf had heard the sounds of thudding guns and crashing bodies, despite the intervening door that he had closed. Instead of going out by the passage, Solo had returned through the office, in time to witness Moshart's fall.

Had The Shadow paused to reclaim a gun. He would have met his doom. His only chance lay in the fact that Solo had not fully grasped the situation. The darkish crook was aiming a revolver; but he had not quite sighted The Shadow.

Instantly, The Shadow drove in upon the crook. Solo snarled his challenge; recognized his adversary as the black-clad avalanche hurled itself squarely for him.

Solo was carried backward before he had a chance to fire. His finger lost the trigger. Staggering halfway across the office, the crook was temporarily at disadvantage. All that saved him was the desk.

Solo stopped short as he struck it. His gun flipped from his fist; he responded with a barehanded rally.

Moshart had proven husky; but Solo was wiry as well as strong. In this grapple, he showed himself a capable adversary. He twisted free of The Shadow's neck-clutch; locked with his cloaked opponent and made a powerful bid for victory.

As they reeled across the room, Solo managed to pin The Shadow to the wall. He saw the slouch hat fall from The Shadow's head; drove one fist in a heavy punch for a hawkish face. The Shadow's arm swung up to turn the blow; grabbing for elusive shoulders, Solo ripped away The Shadow's cloak. He clutched for the shape beneath; managed to gain a lucky hold.

Again the fighters locked, with the cloak between them, each trying to smother the other in its folds. They swung toward the front door of the office; halted suddenly, locked motionless as each strove with full

DEATH TOKEN

strength. The outcome, at that moment, depended upon which fighter first yielded ground.

Whoever did would be the prey of the other.

The Shadow was staring across Solo's shoulder, viewing the library. He saw Moshart coming groggily to his feet, fumbling for the gun. It would be possible to finish Solo before Moshart came back into combat; but as he looked beyond the servant, The Shadow spied a sight that would have made any other fighter give up in despair.

The crash of battle had sounded the alarm. Through from the hallway appeared a pair of loyal servants belonging to Courtney Radbard. Both were armed with revolvers; and these reserves were not alone. Behind them, also carrying a gun, came Radbard himself.

The master-crook had returned to find the house in commotion. With armed men at his heels, Courtney Radbard was driving through to overwhelm The Shadow. Unarmed, already hampered by a clutching, stubborn foe in the person of Solo Juke, The Shadow was open to Radbard's attack.

AT that grim instant, The Shadow's cause seemed useless. Trapped in the lair of a criminal, only quick departure could save him. That was impossible at the moment, because of Solo's clutch.

Courtney Radbard's dark eyes now gleamed with anticipated triumph, as he saw the telltale cloak that hung from the locked arms of the fighters in the office.

Radbard was a murderer who dealt merciless death. He had found his chance to wreak that doom upon The Shadow!

CHAPTER XII. FORGOTTEN COMBAT

AS he neared the doorway, striking ahead of his followers, Courtney Radbard saw a sudden change in the struggle between The Shadow and Solo Juke. Radbard glimpsed burning eyes that shone from a hawkish face; then the fighters twisted. Radbard spied the darker countenance of Solo Juke, strained to livid fury. He recognized The Shadow's adversary.

Radbard aimed his revolver for The Shadow's shoulders. They swung sidewise; a quick foot hooked the edge of the opened door. An instant later, the barrier was swinging swiftly shut; impelled by a powerful kick. It slammed squarely in front of Radbard's face before the shipping magnate could reach it.

Radbard threw his shoulder against the door, twisting the knob at the same time. The barrier gave; then slammed again under the impetus of two figures from within. The Shadow and Solo were battering against the door.

Radbard sprang back from the door; motioned his two servants to put their shoulders to it. They made the drive; again, the door yielded and slammed.

A combined surge of The Shadow and Solo had outweighed the strength of Radbard's men. For a moment. Radbard was ready to add his own driving power to a new attempt; warily, he gave up the idea. Moshart had recovered; the big servant's bulk was all that was needed. Radbard boomed an order for Moshart to help the pair at the door.

Moshart hesitated, feigning grogginess. He was thinking of Solo Juke, wondering how the lone crook would fare later. Suddenly, it dawned on Moshart that Solo was in a worse jam with The Shadow than he would be

DEATH TOKEN

with Radbard. It would be preferable to play along with Radbard and bluff the supercreek afterward.

Radbard was fuming at Moshart's delay; the servant decided to fake no longer.

Willingly, Moshart lunged forward beside the servants at the door. One turned the knob; both shouldered forward and Moshart hurled his bulk with theirs. The door gave instantly; Radbard's three strong-arm servants went pellmell into the office, sprawling head-first across the floor.

THE resisting fighters had gone from within the door. The result was an unexpected plunge for the new attackers; one that left them helpless, as they came to hands and knees. They would have been an easy prey for attack, if it had not been for Radbard. The tawny-faced master of the mansion sized the situation while his followers sprawled.

Springing to the opened doorway, Radbard was ready with his revolver. Looking across the office, he saw the rear door slam shut, to mark the departure of an agile, quick-witted battler. Radbard snapped an order to his men to follow.

Moshart, first to come up, aimed his revolver at the rear door, ready to blast futile shots through the wooden barrier.

A sharp command from Radbard halted him. Radbard preferred pursuit; for he believed The Shadow to be unarmed, particularly when he saw the glimmer of Solo's discarded revolver, beneath the desk. By quick work, The Shadow could be overtaken at the outer door beyond the passage and dropped by muffled gunfire.

Moshart understood; he and the other two servants scrambled for the rear door of the office. As his men sprang to pursuit, Radbard cannily looked about the room.

Another command from Radbard halted the chase. The tawny lips emitted an elated snarl, that indicated pursuit would be unnecessary. Moshart and the others turned; they saw Radbard pointing toward the corner closet.

There, halfway through the door, was the cloaked figure of The Shadow. His shoulders slumped beneath the ripped garment, his slouch hat planted askew upon his head, the groggy battler was wavering helplessly. His left forearm had crooked the knob of the half-opened closet door.

Radbard and his servants watched the door wobble back and forth under the uncertain weight. Then the weakened arm slipped loose. Headlong, the cloaked fighter floundered into the closet and lay there, huddled motionless.

MOSHART grinned despite himself. He was pleased because Solo Juke had won out; also because Solo had been smart enough to make a get-away through the rear passage. Perhaps Radbard had not recognized Solo; that would be all for the better.

But even if Radbard guessed, or knew, that The Shadow's antagonist had been Solo, it would be a simple matter for Moshart to explain matters. The big servant had his story all prepared.

Still grinning, Moshart pointed his revolver toward the huddled fighter in black, intending to be the first to drill The Shadow with shots that would mean certain death. Radbard sprang over to Moshart, halted the big man's move.

DEATH TOKEN

"No gunfire, Moshart," warned the magnate. "It is unnecessary; and we have fortunately avoided it. We hold The Shadow helpless. He is unconscious."

"Maybe he's faking, sir –"

"No. If he had his senses, he would never try to hide himself like an ostrich. Look at him, with only his head buried from sight. Nevertheless, I shall give him no chance for trickery. Keep him covered, all of you."

The three servants pointed their guns, held their fingers ready on the triggers. Radbard kept his own revolver aimed straight for the closet; he stepped forward and gripped the cloaked shoulders that lay there. With a show of power that amazed his own men, Radbard wrenched the inert figure upward and backward with one hand.

"The Shadow!" sneered Radbard, as the cloaked form sprawled face upward. "I saw his face as he fought! We shall view it closer –"

He was whisking away the slouch hat as he spoke, jabbing his revolver toward the eyes beneath. Radbard's words were boastful, until they stopped in the middle of their sentence. Radbard's sneer became a wordless snarl.

Radbard was right when he stated that he had seen the unconscious fighter's face during the struggle. He was wrong, however, in his statement of identity. The sweat–streaked face that displayed closed eyelids was darkish and sullen, not keen and hawklike.

The cloaked captive was Solo Juke!

RADBARD'S harsh–hissed breath was showing his prompt recognition of The Shadow's artful ruse. The Shadow had choked Solo into submission. Rather than search futilely for Solo's gun, and with it meet the instant onslaught of foemen from the library, The Shadow had adopted a quicker, surer scheme.

He had swung Solo against the door of the closet; had let the ripped cloak fall upon the toppling crook's shoulders. The slouch hat happening to be handy, The Shadow had planted it on Solo's head; then made his exit by the door to the rear passage.

Radbard, mistaking Solo's cloaked form for The Shadow, had called off his hounds before they could pursue the actual victor. The delay finished any possibility of overtaking The Shadow.

Glaring wrathfully, Courtney Radbard held only one consolation. He had driven The Shadow to flight. That, at least, seemed proof that the master–fighter was not invincible. The thought brought an insidious smile to Radbard's lips.

The master–crook did not suspect the real truth – that The Shadow had chosen flight deliberately, to make Radbard less wary in the future. Nor did Radbard guess that The Shadow, like himself, had wanted to postpone battle–action noise that might bring in the law.

It was The Shadow's policy to play a waiting game; to keep the law away from Radbard's while the master–crook's plans were still unripened. The Shadow shared Solo's opinion, that Radbard still expected jewels from abroad.

Radbard was studying Solo Juke, who lay limp on the floor; clear of The Shadow's discarded cloak. Radbard wanted to know why Solo had come here; also how he had happened to gain entrance. Since Solo was

DEATH TOKEN

reviving too slowly to suit him, Radbard sought the explanation from Moshart.

"The Shadow must have entered soon after you left, sir," stated Moshart. "Sideling told me to bar the passage. I did not delay long; but I am sure that he must have entered in the meantime."

"What makes you think that?" demanded Radbard.

"I heard curious noises," returned Moshart. "Coming through the hallway, I fancied that I heard a scrape at the foot of the Apollo statue. Later, there was a noise in the library. Then" – Moshart was steady, as he came to the climax of his falsehood – "I came in here and found the rear passage unlocked."

The statement was logical. Radbard accepted it. The Shadow would logically have opened the back route before he began his prowl, judging from the speed that he had shown in taking it after the battle.

"I was startled by a noise in the library," continued Moshart, weaving his story further. "I hurried there. I encountered The Shadow. While I struggled with him, I saw Juke come into the office from the back door. He must have come to visit you, and heard my struggle. I managed to disarm The Shadow, but he overpowered me."

RADBARD went into the library; found The Shadow's lost automatics as testimony of Moshart's story. A sudden worry gnawed the supercrook; there was the chance that The Shadow could have armed himself outside, to return with followers.

Hastily, Radbard sent Moshart and the servant through the rear passage, to bar the outside door. While they were gone, Radbard shook Solo to revive him.

The sullen-faced crook came to life slowly, staging a bluff all the while. He had regained sufficient consciousness to overhear Moshart's story. When he was ready to talk, Solo supplied details that fitted perfectly with the servant's testimony.

Radbard showed no suspicion of the tale. He thanked Solo for his efforts, and propped the crook in a chair across from the desk.

The servants returned to announce that all was well: the passage cleared and the door barred. Radbard dismissed them and concentrated upon Solo Juke.

"Let us forget the past," purred Radbard. "This is your first visit, Solo, since the deaths of Leo Jebbrey and Beak Hadlett –"

"They got what was coming to them," interrupted Solo. "They both tried to double-cross you; and Luff Barrago did the same. That was why I breezed in here to-night – to let you know how I stood."

"I appreciate that, Solo. You have shown good judgment in not believing their ridiculous opinions regarding the jewels. I have received none from Lebrunne."

"Don't I know it? Didn't you show us the empty express box?"

"Of course!" Radbard nodded approvingly. "That settled it, for any one of your common sense. Ah! Here is Sideling. Go out by the front way, Solo. In the future, call me by telephone when you wish to see me. I must keep the back door barred to prevent The Shadow's entry."

DEATH TOKEN

Sideling, just returned from his evening off, was astonished to find Radbard in conference with Solo. Covering his surprise, the secretary ushered Solo out through the front hall. After that, he returned to find Radbard awaiting him. The arch-crook told Sideling the details of The Shadow's visit; showed him the only trophies: a torn cloak and a mashed hat, with a brace of automatics.

"We pulled The Shadow's fangs," sneered Radbard, "but he will produce new ones. Let him! We shall be ready for him, Sideling!"

TRUE to form, Radbard was confiding very little in his secretary. It was after Sideling had gone that the murderous shipping man indulged in his real thoughts, which were made plain both by certain actions and the expressions which showed upon his leonine countenance.

From the desk drawer, Radbard produced the box of silver coins; he jingled them, then let the pieces of money trickle back into the container. Striking together, the coins made a hollow sound that Solo Juke had not detected. Radbard, however, was willing to concede that some one keener than Solo might have detected the false clink, even with only a single coin to inspect.

Radbard was thinking of The Shadow.

Somehow, that cloaked master had gained a trail to this mansion. The only possible clue was the silver coin that Roy Medwin had brought to-night. The Shadow had figured in battle near Broadway, when Roy had narrowly escaped death. Remembering that Roy had said nothing about the falling cornice, Radbard chuckled deeply.

That fact had seemed unimportant, earlier in the evening. It meant something, in light of recent events. It proved that Roy Medwin had been sent here by The Shadow.

To Radbard, Roy was but a pawn, whose elimination might prove too costly; particularly since Roy could have learned but little from The Shadow. Radbard knew The Shadow's reputed methods of playing a lone game. Since he knew nothing of Celeste's secret visit to Roy's apartment, Radbard was quite sure that the young man could be regarded as quite unimportant.

The Shadow's visit was all that counted. Considering its significance, Radbard centered upon one definite answer. He was positive that The Shadow had learned the secret of the silver coin; that he had opened it to read the cryptic message that consisted solely of the figure 312. That belief did not perturb Radbard; instead, it caused a pleased, evil smile to flicker on his lips.

Leaning back in his chair, Radbard half spoke aloud as he stretched his hand and helped himself to a cigar.

"The Shadow knows," spoke Radbard. "This time, he has learned too little – and too much!"

The curl of Radbard's lips was proof that he believed The Shadow's knowledge would lead to The Shadow's own undoing.

CHAPTER XIII. THE CHANCE CLUE

TWO afternoons later found Roy Medwin seated at his desk in the advertising agency. Roy was idle; his thoughts refused to concentrate on his usual task of turning out advertising copy. Picturing past events, Roy invariably came back to one recollection.

He remembered Celeste Lebrunne.

DEATH TOKEN

Roy was convinced that Celeste's warning had been genuine. There was proof of it – the fact that he had seen Celeste in Radbard's library. Roy knew, too, from The Shadow's presence in Radbard's house, that danger must have lurked there.

One fact, however, was most impressive to Roy.

Celeste had not been purely impersonal in her warning of the night before. She had taken the risk of coming to see Roy, instead of simply calling him by telephone; and her reason had been to make sure that he was a man who deserved the help that she could give.

"I am Celeste Lebrunne."

Roy could remember the words with which the girl had introduced herself. As he recalled them, he could almost see Celeste's face; his ears caught the tone of that wistful whisper. Celeste's words had been those of self-reproach, as if she condemned herself for being who she was.

Indignation gripped Roy. Celeste was too fine a girl to live under the cloud that blemished her name. She meant too much to Roy. For a moment, he wondered why he kept repeating that thought; then came the answer, one he would have ridiculed the day before.

Roy Medwin knew that he was completely in love with Celeste Lebrunne.

It was a rather startling discovery, for Roy was a self-sufficient young man who had always scoffed at the theory of love at first sight. As he considered his present state, another fact dawned upon him; one that explained why he had melted so completely. Something beyond himself had certainly inspired him to love Celeste. That something had been the girl's own attitude.

Roy realized that Celeste had fallen in love with him; that her tender emotion was the inspiration that wakened him. He recognized how the girl had suffered in the past. Helplessly, she had been used as an instrument to serve men of crime. She had been protected, kept secure from harm, because her guileless nature made her an asset in the plans of supercriminals.

Her brother, Pierre Lebrunne, was unquestionably a man of culture, who kept up a constant pose as a person of importance. That was why Pierre had teamed with Courtney Radbard, also a man of amazing ability at pretense. Pierre had taken no risk in entrusting Celeste to Radbard's care. The deal had only served to strengthen their alliance.

Yet, all the while, Celeste had been unhappy, despite the luxury in which she lived. She had seen the sort of criminals who served her brother and Radbard. She knew that they – Pierre and Radbard – were as bad as the others, but merely glossed. If ever a woman had reason to lose faith in all men, Celeste was one. Nevertheless, the girl had held to the belief that some day she would meet a man whom she could love.

In meeting Roy, Celeste had found that man.

GRIMLY, Roy faced facts that concerned him personally. He had been willing to do his part in a battle against men of crime; but there was more than that at stake. If Radbard's career of evil could be halted, Roy would be the greatest winner; if Radbard triumphed against all attacks, Roy would suffer an irreparable loss. He would lose Celeste forever.

Radbard must be beaten. Celeste must be released from toils of crime while still in New York. Married to Roy, she would become an American citizen. Pierre Lebrunne could never recall her to France.

DEATH TOKEN

The obstacle – and a large one – was Radbard. Roy knew that he himself could never dent the prestige of the supercrook. There was one powerful being who alone could triumph over the insidious criminal.

That being was The Shadow.

Determined more than ever to cooperate with The Shadow, Roy found himself helpless. There was nothing he could do; no move he could make. His drab office annoyed him. He stared at the calendar that bore the date of March 10th; it reminded him of the one that he had seen at Radbard's. The desk clock rankled him also. It, too, reminded him of Radbard's lair.

Studying the time, Roy noticed that it was four–thirty. He wondered if the half hour to five o'clock would ever pass.

A jangle of the telephone roused him from his reverie. He answered the call, to learn that a man named Dugley had arrived and wished to see him.

Dugley proved to be a sad–eyed, dry–faced man. Alone with Roy, he announced that he was a dealer in rare coins; that he had asked the Apex Coin Co. for the name of a New York coin collector who was also an advertising man. They had found Roy's name upon their most recent list of clients.

Roy became alert at mention of the Apex Coin Co. He decided that they must have checked his name in the telephone book, to note that it had a double listing: His apartment and the advertising agency. He wondered if Dugley would mention the name of Courtney Radbard.

Dugley failed to do so. Instead, he produced a pencil–marked paper and passed it to Roy.

"This is an announcement that I send to prospects," stated Dugley, in a weary tone. "I mailed a few hundred of them before I came to New York, to display my stock of rare coins. The letter brought very poor results. I have tried to correct it, but I am not satisfied. If you will rewrite the copy for me, Mr. Medwin, I shall be glad to pay whatever fee you ask."

"Very well," agreed Roy, quite disappointed at the insignificance of Dugley's visit. "How long will you be in New York?"

"I leave to–morrow," replied the sad–eyed man. "To–night, I shall continue my display; I should be glad to have you call any time before eleven o'clock. If you do not come, I shall return here to–morrow."

Dugley departed. Roy studied the poorly written form letter that the coin dealer had left with him. Roy's eyes roamed to the bottom of the sheet there they halted. Three figures glared at him from the page – figures that formed the number 312!

Dugley's Headquarters in New York was an obscure hotel called the Belvant. No. 312 was the room which Dugley had taken for his display of coins.

ROY'S thoughts followed a logical sequence. Dugley, an itinerant coin dealer, unquestionably reserved rooms long beforehand in the cities where he expected to be. He had to be sure of the room number, on specific dates, in order to mail his announcements in advance.

It occurred to Roy that Dugley, like Luff Barrago, must be an unwitting messenger between Pierre Lebrunne and Courtney Radbard. Perhaps the dry–faced dealer had another hollow coin, that had reached him from abroad. It might carry a definite message. Luff's coin, with its cryptic paper marked "312," could well have

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been an advance notice to Radbard, telling him where to find the later message.

All this was speculation; yet Roy was positive that the number on Dugley's circular was more than coincidence. This very night, the evening of March 10th, might be the time when Radbard would call at Room 312 in the Belvant Hotel.

In his enthusiasm, Roy thought up an immediate pretext for leaving the office before five. Outside the building, he hailed a cab; started to tell the driver to take him to the Belvant Hotel. He suddenly changed the order; gave his own apartment address instead.

Roy's first thought had been to look up Dugley; give some excuse for having come to see him. That seemed too hasty a course. It would be better to wait until evening, then make the visit that Dugley himself had suggested.

When he reached his apartment, Roy began to plan every detail, even to the possibility that he might meet Radbard at the Belvant. Roy smiled to himself; the fact that he was doing advertising work for Dugley would be a good bluff. His smile suddenly faded. Would the bluff work with Radbard? Roy began to doubt it.

Darkness settled as Roy paced his apartment, puffing furiously at his pipe until his tongue ached and the room was laden with smoke. He was prompted by the urge to act on his own, that he might free Celeste from bondage. But Radbard's possible keenness was a menace that Roy could not overlook.

At last, sheer desperation started him on his trip. Roy pocketed the scrawled circular letter; opened the door of the apartment.

A cloaked figure blocked him. The Shadow, attired in new garb of black, stepped into the living room.

SHARP eyes surveyed Roy's strained face; hidden lips whispered for Roy to state whatever new event had occurred. Roy stood amazed; then realized his own foolhardiness.

In one brief gaze, The Shadow had learned that Roy had acquired some new purpose. That, alone, made Roy recognize that he could not stand the scrutiny of Courtney Radbard, should the master-crook meet him to-night. Roy produced the circular letter, handed it to The Shadow and blurted out the facts of Dugley's visit to the office.

A whispered laugh told Roy that he had overstepped his depth. Then came firm words of command. Roy was to remain in this apartment. The Shadow would undertake the visit to Dugley's hotel room.

Roy felt an immediate relief; then a last objection struck him. Without thinking, he expressed his thoughts aloud.

"I must act on my own, somehow," spoke Roy. "I must! On account of Celeste –"

"Celeste will be safe," interposed The Shadow, his tone an even one. "You can aid her best by remaining here. Your opportunity will arrive in time. Celeste will understand."

The words did more than allay Roy's qualms. They told him that The Shadow had recognized Roy's love for Celeste; and knew also that the girl was in love with Roy.

His confidence at its highest point, Roy spoke his willingness for The Shadow to undertake the mission in his place. He knew that The Shadow understood all. To Roy, The Shadow's promise of Celeste's safety was like a

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decree of final judgment.

When Roy looked up toward the door, The Shadow was gone. Roy was confident that the cloaked avenger was already on his way to the Belvant Hotel.

SUCH was the case. Riding in his swift taxi, The Shadow lost no time in approaching the obscure hotel. He had reason for early arrival at the Belvant. Events were scheduled there; Room 312 would become an all important spot, as soon as darkness offered a complete cover to any one who might visit the hotel.

Night's blanket was already settled. There was no time to lose.

The taxi reached the Belvant, rolled past the poorly lighted front of the old hotel. The Belvant was poorly located; it was flanked with grimy buildings, and the street behind it boasted nothing but low houses and a few garages.

At The Shadow's order, the cab circled the block until it reached the rear street. There, The Shadow left it.

Picking his way between two dingy buildings, The Shadow found a high fence at the end of a tiny blind-alley. He left this cul-de-sac by scaling the wall ahead; from there, he crawled a story higher, moving in beetlelike fashion up the side of an old house.

The climb was an easy one. It brought The Shadow to an irregular roof, from which he reached the flat top of a garage. He was directly behind the hotel, with only a ten-foot space between.

Just below the level of the third-story windows, The Shadow began a survey. He was looking for a window that might mark Room 312, knowing that it would be lighted and that the blinds would be drawn.

Starting with the corner, The Shadow noted a lighted room with its shades up. He saw a connecting doorway between it and another room like it. The second room, however, was not connected with the third, which happened to be dark.

Counting the first room as 300, the next as 302, The Shadow considered each succeeding pair to be connected rooms. If his numbering proved correct, Room 312 would be connected with 314. All that, however, depended on whether The Shadow had started his numbering correctly. If it proved wrong, he intended to descend from the garage roof and enter the hotel from below.

When he reached the window that might mark 312, The Shadow found evidence that his numbering was correct.

That room had lowered blinds; those shades were as tightly shut as possible. They failed, however, to blot out slight trickles of light from the edges. The Shadow saw that the window was closed; he assumed that the sash was locked.

Next to 312 was a darkened window, that of the connecting Room 314. There was just enough glow from the city's lights for The Shadow to observe a partial reflection of glass. The window of 314 was open at the bottom. Silently, The Shadow gauged the ten-foot space that lay ahead. He withdrew a short distance toward the front of the garage roof.

There was a swish as The Shadow sped toward the roof edge. His lithe body took a forward leap; his cloaked arms swung straight in front of his head, like those of a springboard diver.

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The space was short, but few athletes would have risked the unusual leap that The Shadow took. He was falling forward as his body went upward; his extended arms were aiming straight through the opened window.

The Shadow's forearms slithered the sill, broke the jolt that came to his body. Halted less than halfway through, his body slid outward; but his hands, spreading, caught the sides of the window, while his soft-shoed toes took hold upon a one-inch projection of bricks that topped the window of the floor below.

For half a second, The Shadow was motionless; in that space, he heard a scuffling noise within the darkened room. Tightening, The Shadow drove his legs straight upward, gave a powerful pull with his arms. His knees reached the sill; from them, The Shadow took another powerful dive squarely into the blankness of the darkened room.

Something about that wild plunge indicated that The Shadow knew it would be broken; that he wanted to gain full driving force for an obstacle that lay beyond. Not only did that prove correct; in addition, The Shadow's surge showed perfect timing.

As he launched himself into the room, a bulky figure drove to meet him. A big hand glimmered high, as the arm below it slashed downward. A man in the darkness was smashing a hard blow at The Shadow's head.

The gun stroke never reached its destination. A grunt came from darkness, as the thuggish attacker was bowled over by The Shadow's forceful drive. The bulky foeman flattened backward, his right hand jolting wide. The Shadow's ramming head knocked the breath from the fellow. With the weight of The Shadow's body upon him, the guardian of 314 felt choking fingers sink deep into his neck.

The Shadow's enemy subsided without a struggle. The sounds of muffled fray were ended. Complete silence reigned in the pitch-black room, where The Shadow had gained quick victory over the man who blocked his temporary goal.

CHAPTER XIV. THE BROKEN THRUST

A FLASHLIGHT flickered along the floor of Room 314. Held in the hand of The Shadow, that glow concentrated upon the face of a man who lay prone.

The Shadow was viewing the unconscious enemy whom he had mastered.

The man was well-dressed; only the hardness of his chin marked him as the potential thug that he was. His upper face was of intelligent mold; his forehead had the high bulge of a thinker. That was enough to mark him as one of Courtney Radbard's followers. This rogue, who had the appearance of a gentleman, had doubtless taken over duties that belonged to Baskell.

Evidently, the fellow had registered at the Belvant under a fictitious name. The Shadow found an expensive suitcase in the corner; its only contents were bricks that gave it weight. Removing the straps, The Shadow used them to bind the senseless prisoner; he found a handkerchief in the man's breast pocket and used it as a gag. Pocketing the crook's gun, The Shadow moved to the door that connected with Room 312.

The joining door was locked. It was strong enough to resist ordinary assault; but Radbard had taken no chances. He wanted to be sure that no one could take this outlet from Room 312, that was why he had stationed a guard on duty.

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By overpowering Radbard's watchman, The Shadow had gained double result. Not only had he opened the way from 312, he had also gained a means of entrance.

Before using that route, The Shadow decided to inspect the outside corridor. He did that by approaching the main door of the darkened room in which he stood. The door was locked; softly, he turned the key, brought the door a half inch inward and peered from 314.

The corridor was empty; every door along it was tightly shut. The scene was set to lull any visitor who might come to Room 312. To The Shadow, however, those doors meant waiting lurkers. The whole scene had the innocent appearance that fitted with the crafty schemes of Courtney Radbard.

Silently, The Shadow closed the door of 314. Locking it, he moved back to the connecting door. He unlocked it with a key that the guard had left there; noted that it was a skeleton key that did not belong to the hotel. Opening the door, The Shadow edged into Room 312, taking the skeleton key with him.

AS he closed the connecting door, The Shadow looked about to view a perfect trap. It contained the complete exhibit of Dugley, the coin dealer. Tilted cases were arranged to display rows of foreign coins, all neatly labeled.

Large suitcases indicated that they contained further supplies of items for collectors. There were cigars and cigarettes upon a central table, with them a typed note that read:

Back in five minutes.

DUGLEY.

It was obvious that Dugley was not a coin dealer. The man was another of Radbard's tools, working under an assumed name. The carefully arranged exhibits of coins had been planned by Radbard himself; and they revealed that the master-crook was penurious as well as crafty. Although the coins looked like a valuable display, brief inspection told The Shadow that there was not a costly item in the lot. Radbard had preferred not to risk any rarities.

It was definite proof that the snare, when it closed, would be a swift one. The note from Dugley told that the door of Room 312 was unlocked. Hence any one could enter; after that, trouble would start before the victim had time to inspect the valueless coins that were on display.

Radbard clearly was prepared for The Shadow's visit; but so far, The Shadow had frustrated the trap. The effectiveness of the snare depended upon entrance through the main door of the room: the one from the corridor that bore the significant number, 312.

Unquestionably, only Roy Medwin had been told of this coin display. Therefore, Radbard expected either Roy or The Shadow. Since Roy had remained in his apartment, there would be no chance of his arrival. The Shadow, by finding his own way in and out, could leave and let Radbard's snare remain unsprung. But there was another opportunity that would then present itself.

By careful inspection of the entire floor, The Shadow might find the chance to surprise a band of assassins, stationed in readiness by Radbard. The situation was all to The Shadow's advantage; for he had the entire evening ahead of him.

The Shadow placed his hand upon the knob of the connecting door, intending to go through Room 314 and reach the deserted corridor. Glancing across Room 312, he paused at sight of a slight motion. It came from

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the main door of the room. The knob of that door was turning.

The Shadow drew an automatic, as he pressed close to the connecting doorway. He watched the door from the corridor swing open, saw the number, 312, over the shoulder of the person who entered. The Shadow's chief interest, however, concerned the unexpected visitor.

The arrival was Celeste Lebrunne.

CLOSING the door almost shut behind her, Celeste looked about the room. Her eyes showed worryment, despite their sparkle. Her gaze was a quick one; she did not discern The Shadow, for she was looking for some one whom she expected to be in full view.

Celeste had heard new facts at Radbard's; enough to know that Roy Medwin might come to Room 312 at the Belvant Hotel. Partly through fear for Roy's safety, partly through her desire to see the young man again. Celeste had come to the meeting place.

Not seeing Roy, she was wondering whether to remain. She spied Dugley's note upon the table. It was the bait that made her close the snare. After a short hesitation, Celeste closed the door completely and took a step toward the table. She halted instantly.

A click had followed the shutting of the door. Simultaneously, there came a faint buzz, like a signal in some room on the other side of the corridor. With a sharp gasp, Celeste turned and tried the inner knob. It was locked. It had clamped tight automatically.

The fright that showed on Celeste's face was justified. It was not her own danger that made the girl fear; it was the knowledge that if she should be discovered, Courtney Radbard would know that she was interested in Roy Medwin. Her very presence here might bring doom upon the man whom she had sought to save.

Madly, Celeste dashed toward the windows. Sounds from the hall told her that she would have no time to open a locked windowsash. She turned toward the connecting door. As she did, The Shadow stepped beside her.

He had opened the connecting door; with one sweep of his cloaked arm, he gripped the girl and swung her through to the darkness of the adjoining room. Celeste caught one glimpse of her rescuer's keen eyes; heard the swift order:

"Stay by the wall! Away from the window!"

Celeste obeyed. Pressed against the wall, she saw The Shadow wheel back into the connecting doorway, half through into the doomed room that bore the fatal number, 312. She saw the cloaked fighter face the door from the hall.

That door had locked from the inside only. A hand outside had turned the knob, to fling the barrier inward. The Shadow, aiming his automatic, saw the muzzle of a machine gun shove past the doorway's edge; behind it, the shoulder and peering eye of the gunner. Another of Radbard's crooks de luxe was on the job; his hand and arm were protected by a shield that circled the butt of the submachine gun.

Slaughter, not subtlety, was Radbard's order to-night.

THE SHADOW'S gun spoke before the machine gun could clatter. A jab of flame left the muzzle of the aiming .45; a bullet clipped the point of the machine-gunner's shoulder. The man dropped, letting his weapon

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fall. The Shadow had forestalled the scheduled stream of bullets.

Shots came from two doorways across the hall. Firing through the narrow cracks of barely opened doors, reserve crooks were prompt with a barrage. Their bullets whistled high through the doorway of 312. Under cover of that sheltering fire, a man from the hallway crawled rapidly into view, to snatch up the machine gun that the crippled gunman had dropped.

Crooks thought that they had The Shadow cornered. They were wrong. While hasty bullets pounded the wall beside him, the cloaked battler gave a mocking laugh and faded through the connecting doorway, to reach the room where Celeste waited by the wall.

Tuxedo-clad men poured through the doorway of 312, thinking that The Shadow was on the run. They were four in all – two with revolvers; the third with the machine gun; while the fourth, the wounded man, was drawing a revolver with his left hand.

These well-dressed gunmen thought that The Shadow had gained a lucky break; that he would be stopped by the watcher in 314, long enough to be overtaken. They should have guessed their mistake, when they heard the connecting door slam shut. When they reached that barrier, it was locked.

One thug tried to bash the door with his gun. Another shouted a sudden warning. All wheeled toward the hallway; there they saw The Shadow. Cutting through 314, he had leaped along the corridor to reach the opened door of 312.

This time, The Shadow did not pause for battle. He realized that new attackers might arrive while he was handling these; and the longer the fray, the greater would become Celeste's predicament. The Shadow saw advantage in removing the girl before any of Radbard's men knew that she was here. Depending upon a buzzer signal, they had not watched the corridor prior to Celeste's arrival.

The Shadow made a quick left-handed flourish with an automatic. Crooks shifted while they took their aim. With his right hand, The Shadow grabbed the doorknob and wheeled out into the corridor, yanking the door shut with him.

Not a shot was fired in that short interval. Thinking that The Shadow was on the run, tuxedoed crooks surged forward to rip open the corridor door.

They suddenly discovered their own dilemma. The fixed inside knob would not turn. They were trapped. Frantically, they dashed back to the locked connecting door to the next room. Realizing the strength of that barrier, they sprang to the window, bashed it open, and stared downward, dismayed at sight of the three-story drop.

OUT in the corridor, The Shadow found Celeste. He started the girl toward a stairway, while he paused to make sure that there were no more of Radbard's reserves on hand.

At the opened door of 314, The Shadow looked back into that darkened room where a senseless crook lay bound and gagged. Beyond the window, he saw motion on the garage roof.

Crooks from below had come up by the very path which The Shadow had chosen earlier. They lacked both the nerve and the method to bridge the space between the garage and the hotel. They managed, however, to spy The Shadow outlined against the light of the corridor. The outside thugs were taking aim.

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The Shadow stabbed quick shots in their direction. One crook howled, as he dropped wounded; the others scrambled away from the line of fire, shooting uselessly as they dived. Before they could rally, The Shadow was gone again.

Overtaking Celeste, The Shadow led the way down a darkened stairway. He heard the clatter of footsteps from below; halted abruptly as he turned a gloomy corner. With his quick stop, The Shadow came head-on with a foeman who had come to block his path. There was another rogue, only a dozen steps below the first.

The Shadow's left hand came upward, knuckles first. A gun-weighted fist clipped the startled crook's chin. The fellow slumped; would have sprawled, but for The Shadow. With his right hand, The Shadow grabbed the lapels of the man's overcoat.

Back came that hand, then forward, with the straight drive of a steel piston rod. The sagging thug scaled through the air; a human missile, he struck the man behind him on the steps. The two hurtled backward; they bashed against the wall of the landing below. Neither stirred. The way was clear.

Celeste felt the grip of a guiding hand. Swiftly, The Shadow led her through an exit below, then along a narrow passage between two buildings, where they could hear mad shouts and angry oaths from voices in the darkness above. The crooks trapped in 312 were calling on their comrades to aid them.

The men on the garage roof were incapable. Already, they were planning flight of their own, for whistles were blowing and night sticks were clattering on sidewalks. The police were closing in upon the Belvant Hotel.

TO Celeste, the departure was an amazing one. The girl did not realize that she was safely away until she found herself in a streamlined taxi, riding off through traffic. Beside her was The Shadow. From his hidden lips the girl heard statements that amazed her.

Briefly, The Shadow spoke of Roy Medwin; told Celeste why Roy had not come into the trap. Calmly, he began a story of recent crime; explained how Courtney Radbard had disposed of unneeded partners and recounted the reasons why the master-crook had taken such action. When The Shadow was finished, Celeste spoke.

"You are right," declared the girl, solemnly. "There is a league between my brother and Radbard. I never suspected it; but that is because Pierre is too clever. Always, he has kept me helpless. Never before, have I dared to interfere with anything done by Pierre or those persons who have been friends to him –"

"Never before you met Roy Medwin."

"Oui," Celeste affirmed softly, in response to The Shadow's calm-toned statement. "When I have first heard of Monsieur Medwin, I know that he is in danger. I must warn him. I do so –"

The girl hesitated. Suddenly, she gripped The Shadow's arm and spoke words of sincere appeal.

"Ah, Monsieur L'Ombre!" Celeste used the title by which The Shadow was known in Paris. "I have heard of you, the great one who can make all evil ones tremble! You can be anywhere, everywhere! You must keep harm from Roy Medwin! I love him!"

"Roy Medwin holds the same concern for your safety," replied The Shadow. "I have promised him that you will be protected. I promise you that he will be safe. In return, like Roy, you must be ready with whatever aid I require."

"I shall be ready."

"You will return to Radbard's. He will know nothing of your visit to the Belvant. Remain at the mansion; two nights from now be ready for a flashlight signal from the building across the street. When you see it, come downstairs. Unlock the front door at your first opportunity."

CELESTE spoke her willingness. The agreement made, The Shadow glanced back through the rear window of the cab. He saw headlights following; knew that the cab had been trailed from somewhere near the Belvant Hotel. The Shadow gave an order to the driver. The cab slowed as it turned a corner.

The Shadow swung the door open, sprang swiftly to a lighted stretch of curb. He slammed the door shut. The cab sped away with Celeste, just as the trailing car turned the corner. The car was a limousine; eyes from within it spied The Shadow.

As the big car swerved, a hand at the rear window fired quick shots toward the cloaked figure on the sidewalk. Fading for darkness as the hurried shots came, The Shadow stabbed back bullets of his own, shots that were purposely wide. The limousine regained the street from which it had started to turn. It sped away amid the echoes of the double fusillade.

Courtney Radbard was the man in that limousine. The Shadow had bluffed the master-crook. Radbard thought that The Shadow had been in the cab alone. Celeste Lebrunne would be back in the mansion before Radbard arrived there.

Boldly, The Shadow had baited Radbard; then let him go. The time had not yet arrived to deal finally with him. Despite the risk that lay ahead, The Shadow had postponed the last settlement for the moment when Courtney Radbard's schemes of evil could be exposed in full.

CHAPTER XV. THE SOUTHERN TRAIL

WHEN Roy Medwin read the next morning's newspapers, he was astonished to learn of events at the Belvant Hotel.

According to the news accounts, a band of crooks had raided the exhibit room of an obscure coin dealer named Dugley. They had met with armed resistance; before they could escape, they were captured by the police.

Glumly, the crooks had submitted. They were identified as men presumably respectable, who had taken to secret crime. Whether or not they had a leader, was a mystery; for every one of the prisoners asserted stoutly that he was on his own.

The police linked Baskell with the crowd, even though all disclaimed any acquaintance with the gentleman crook who had fallen from the window of Roy Medwin's apartment.

Nevertheless, the case was sensational. It was the first time that the law had ever captured an organized crew of gentlemen burglars at one swoop. Newspaper columns teemed with speculations regarding the group that they styled the "Raffles Gang"; and all opinions took the obvious view that there must be a brain behind the outfit.

That fact pleased Roy Medwin. It meant that the game was becoming hot for Courtney Radbard. Prior to this date, March 10th, Roy had thought that it would be impossible ever to expose Radbard as a crook. That, however, could be done, since the law was definitely interested in uncovering a master-criminal who held

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some high station in life.

Yet whose word would be taken against Radbard's?

That question was the obstacle. It seemed insurmountable. Radbard stood firmly entrenched; nothing could he pinned upon him. The law would laugh if captured crooks named Radbard as the man who backed them. It would be taken as a ruse on the part of the prisoners, to shift suspicion from their real leader, whoever he was.

Newspapers mentioned that crooks had fooled themselves by going after an almost worthless display of coins. Dugley, it seemed, had disappeared. The police feared that he had been captured by outside gangmen. Roy knew differently; but he realized the uselessness of any information he could give. Dugley, if located, would pose as a victim in hiding. He would give no clue to Radbard.

AT his office, Roy found a letter that contained a blue-inked message. It told him to be on watch. The writing faded, leaving Roy with one hope. The Shadow believed that Roy might somehow figure in the game again. All during the day, Roy banked on that one chance.

It was nearly five o'clock when an envelope was brought to Roy's desk. The girl who brought it was puzzled.

"This came from a travel agency," she said. "Some one ordered Pullman reservations and failed to come back. Your name was given with the order, Mr. Medwin. So the envelope was sent here."

Roy opened the envelope. Inside he found a Pullman slip from Washington to Atlanta, Georgia, reserving a compartment on a train called the South Atlantic Limited. The space was paid for, which meant that the purchaser must have shown a through railroad ticket at the time he gave the order.

Leaving the office, Roy obtained a railroad time-table that contained a schedule of the South Atlantic Limited. He observed a notation which stated that the Atlanta-bound sleeping car was open for occupancy at ten p.m., which indicated that the train did not leave until some later hour. Consulting the schedule, Roy noted the time of the limited's departure. He received a surprise that struck him like an electric shock.

The South Atlantic Limited was scheduled to leave Washington at exactly 3:12 a.m.!

Instantly, Roy thought of Radbard; then his mind jumped to the missing coin collector, Dugley.

It was Dugley who had made the Pullman reservation!

The man must have made the reservation last night. Naturally, the travel bureau had asked him for his address. Dugley had not wanted to give the Belvant Hotel. Instead, he had given Roy's name and address. A smart trick; for if Dugley ran afoul of the law, any trail from the travel agency would lead to Roy instead of himself.

It was typical of the way Radbard's workers handled their jobs, turning trails to form a circle back to the starting point.

CONSIDERING the matter further, Roy decided that Dugley had left town in a hurry, after last night's fiasco at the Belvant. He could not have gone back to the travel agency, for it was closed. Either Dugley had forgotten all about the reservation after his flight, or had decided that there was nothing he could do about it. Probably he had gambled that if Roy received the Pullman reservation, he would think it a mistake and cancel it.

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But to Roy, that Pullman reservation was of vital importance.

Roy knew that the hotel room, with its number, 312, had been a hoax; that it had been intended as a trap for The Shadow. With it, however, he could see another purpose: to draw attention from the real meaning of the number.

It seemed plain that 312 referred to the South Atlantic Limited, with its departure time of 3:12 a.m.; that something important was due to happen aboard that train after it left Washington. Roy was swept by admiration for The Shadow's keen watchfulness. The Shadow had expected that Roy might gain another lucky lead. The Shadow's hope had been realized.

Roy lost no time in going to his apartment. He was sure that he would soon be contacted by the mysterious personage whose ways were manifold. Roy waited but a short while. The door of the apartment opened; The Shadow stepped in from the hallway.

Roy gave The Shadow the envelope, explained how he had received it. He heard a soft laugh, as The Shadow inspected the new clue; then came the calm order for Roy to remain in New York. Roy understood. The Shadow, himself, intended to follow the important trail.

IT was much later that evening when a swift plane took off from Newark Airport on a night flight to Washington. The plane reached the capital city shortly before midnight. The passenger who alighted was The Shadow; but he was not attired in garb of black.

Instead, he appeared as a tall, hawk-faced personage, apparently a notable traveler who had come to Washington in his own private plane. The Shadow spoke to the pilot, gave orders for him to continue in the plane to Atlanta. That arranged, The Shadow picked up a suitcase and entered a taxi. He ordered the driver to take him to the Union Station.

Midnight arrived while The Shadow was still aboard the cab. That hour marked the end of March 11th. It was a new day, only ten minutes gone, when The Shadow reached the Washington depot.

There, he bought a ticket to Atlanta, to go with the Pullman reservation that he carried. Stopping at a news stand, The Shadow purchased some newspapers. They bore different dates; some were New York evening newspapers, marked March 11th. The others were early editions of the Washington morning newspapers; those dailies carried the date of March 12th.

Passing from the huge waiting room, The Shadow crossed the concourse and went through a train gate. He descended to the lower level, where the southbound sleeping cars were located. Winter travel was still heavy southward; there were a dozen cars on one track, all waiting to be shifted to the proper train that came through from New York.

The Shadow boarded a Pullman; he showed his ticket stub to a sleepy porter, who led the way to Compartment B. There, The Shadow found the lower berth made up for occupancy.

Seating himself upon the berth, The Shadow began to read the newspapers. He glanced through the Washington journals first; then the New York papers. One page interested him; it reported the names of steamships due to arrive in New York harbor.

There had been no important corrections to the lists that The Shadow had seen at Radbard's. March 12th was a date that promised very few ships. There were liners from Bermuda, Cuba, South America; also some short-run coastwise vessels. Not a single transatlantic liner of consequence was due; the few that were listed

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were slow ships, and all were small ones.

Finishing the shipping page, The Shadow scanned the crime news. He referred to the Washington newspapers, to learn if they had new reports concerning the Raffles Gang in New York. Apparently, they had not; and New York crime did not command much space in Washington.

Their big headlines dealt with news of Congress; a blizzard in the Middle West; a record trip that the dirigible Hindenburg was making from Germany. The big air liner was out for a new record; it was expected in Lakehurst within the next twenty hours.

THE SHADOW laid the newspapers aside. He turned out the compartment light. Soon afterward, he was lying in the comfortable berth, with his suitcase projecting from beneath it. The only sounds that reached his ears were the noises of the railroad terminal: chugging of locomotives, the scrape of shifting cars, the occasional pacing of feet outside the window.

Amid the darkness of the closed compartment came a whispered laugh, that faded softly in the gloom. Miles away from Manhattan, The Shadow was headed farther from the city where crime lay. Yet The Shadow was still close to Courtney Radbard's game.

By taking this southern trail, The Shadow was making an essential move against the master-crook. When this night had ended, The Shadow would be ready for his final meeting with the superman of crime.

CHAPTER XVI. MENACE FROM ABOVE

HOURS had passed. The South Atlantic Limited was roaring southward, through the pitch-blackness that foretold dawn. All that was visible of the long train was the gleaming path of the locomotive's headlight. Behind the big engine lay invisible cars that followed like silent phantoms; even their clatter was lost amid the locomotive's heavy rumble.

A shrouding pall clung within the compartment where The Shadow lay. The click-clack of the wheels produced a monotone that was as deadly as silence. The steel-walled room resembled the confining spaces of a tomb.

From far ahead came the long wail of the locomotive whistle, a muffled shriek that sounded like the cry of a lost ghost. That call seemed answered by a sound that occurred in The Shadow's compartment.

The noise came from above – a muffled scrape of metal so slight that it would not have awakened the lightest sleeper. The sound was repeated; after that, it came no more. Yet the motion that had caused the slight noise was still in progress.

Inch by inch, the closed upper berth was moving downward, swinging in slow fashion to reach its level just above the lower. A bulky object totally obscured by blackness, that leveling berth was ominous. It was restrained by hands that gripped the supporting chain; hands that worked with trained accuracy in the darkness.

The berth came level. Something moved at the foot of it. Legs dangled; toes gained a silent hold on the cushioned arm of the seat that formed part of the lower berth. A figure crouched; softly gained the floor. With a creep that no ear could have heard, the crouching man moved toward the head of the lower berth.

A pause; again the mournful tone of the locomotive whistle carried drearily through the night. Once more the call was answered. A flashlight gleamed beside the lower berth. Held in the fist of the man who had come

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from above, the torch was directed on a spot below the pillows.

In the fringe of the circled light hovered the point of a long knife. Held in the attacker's free hand, the blade was ready for a death-thrust, straight to The Shadow's heart.

A snarl came from the man who held the knife. It was answered by a whispered laugh behind him. There was a click by the compartment door. Lights glimmered from the walls, to show a strange reversal of the scene.

The man from the upper bunk was the pretended coin collector, Dugley. He was crouched beside the lower berth, holding a flashlight that was dulled by the compartment's glow; a knife that had no target beneath it. Swinging away from the berth, Dugley faced the door of the compartment.

There, he saw The Shadow.

FULLY clad, the cloaked avenger had outguessed his foe. Long before Dugley had stirred within the upper berth, The Shadow had left his own resting place. The Shadow had recognized that this compartment would prove another trap. He had silently garbed himself in black, to leave his berth and wait beside the door.

From The Shadow's fist loomed a weapon that made Dugley's knife puny in contrast. The would-be killer was covered by the muzzle of a .45 that held him motionless. Dugley's dry lips produced another snarl; his usually listless eyes were ablaze with fury.

The man answered the description that Roy had given to The Shadow, after Dugley's visit to the advertising agency; but Roy had seen Dugley playing a drab part. The fellow had been too smart to display his real viciousness. He had reserved that phase of his nature for this occasion.

As he saw the cold gaze of The Shadow's eyes, Dugley recognized that his past was known. The thwarted killer saw no chance for mercy; but that did not disturb him. He was still guided by one impulse only: the desire to kill.

Swaying with the motion of the train; Dugley watched The Shadow. He saw the big automatic bulge forward; he felt the fierce burn of The Shadow's eyes. He heard accusing words from hidden lips. Savagely, he made a sudden effort.

Dugley swung his left arm at The Shadow, flinging his flashlight straight for the muzzle of the automatic. At the same instant, he performed an unexpected twist, wheeling rightward, toward the end wall of the compartment. As The Shadow lunged close behind him, Dugley stopped short, whipped his right hand backward and sideward in a reversed fling of the knife.

The Shadow saw the flash of the blade behind Dugley's back. As it came, The Shadow hurled himself sidewise, into the lower berth. The knife skimmed past The Shadow's shoulder, to clatter the other wall.

Dugley sprang about. He saw that his knife was too far away to regain before The Shadow aimed. Fiercely, Dugley pounced upon his cloaked opponent.

That move was Dugley's finish.

DROPPING his automatic, The Shadow met the murderer's drive with upward-jabbing hands. His long arms outdistanced Dugley's. The thug's clawing fingers stopped short before they reached The Shadow. Gloved hands gained a strangle hold on Dugley's throat.

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Slowly, Dugley sagged. The Shadow came up beside him, loosened his clutch, then tightened it again. Dugley's eyes bulged; his lips quivered, as The Shadow once more relaxed the pressure. Dugley heard a sinister whisper: a command for him to speak. He refused; again, The Shadow's fingers tightened.

It was treatment for which Dugley had not bargained. Each choke he made was followed by temporary relief that would continue only if he obeyed The Shadow's bidding. Gasping as fingers eased again, Dugley managed to nod his head.

"I'll talk!" he gulped, hoarsely. "Only I can't tell you who it is I worked for! I don't know –"

Warning fingers tightened. Dugley made frantic plea, as he felt The Shadow's significant gesture.

"Honest, I don't know!" gasped Dugley. "The guy knew that I could handle a knife – that I was a smooth worker – that for enough dough, I'd go through with anything –"

The coughed confession was sufficient for The Shadow. He knew that Dugley was telling the truth. This killer did not know Radbard by name. He had taken orders by telephone; by message. Enough money had kept him on Radbard's regular pay roll.

Dugley was due to talk in full, so long as The Shadow's fingers gave him just sufficient leeway to use his voice. Keeping his hold, The Shadow gave an order:

"State what you were to do, if you succeeded in murder."

"I'll spill it," panted Dugley. "I was to hop off this rattler – anywhere along the line to Atlanta – then send a telegram to – to –"

Dugley hesitated. He felt slow motion of the throttling fingers on his throat.

"To the Alliance Credit Bureau, in New York," added the crook. "Telling them I had settled the account in Washington. Signed with the name Hamphrey. That would get to the big-shot, somehow."

THE SHADOW kept his warning clutch on Dugley's throat, but with one hand only. With the other, he twisted the crook's arms behind him. Soon he had Dugley bound and gagged in the lower berth. A search of the crook's pockets brought evidence that Dugley had actually told the truth. Among other items was a card that marked him as a representative of the Alliance Credit Bureau. It bore the name, "J. Hamphrey."

The Shadow picked up the knife that Dugley had used. He studied it, then looked at the bound man. He saw Dugley's eyes shift – with good reason. The knife tip bore a green stain. It had been dipped in poison supplied by Radbard.

The Shadow had suspected that from the moment that Dugley had tried the back-hand knife-throw. That was why The Shadow had dived from the blade's path. Such a wild, unaimed swing had shown that Dugley was relying on something other than an accurate thrust.

A scratch from the poisoned knife could have proven fatal to The Shadow. Knowing that his game was uncovered, Dugley winced. He feared that The Shadow would take the easiest way to dispose of him: a simple scrape from that poisoned blade. Dugley's fear was groundless. The Shadow did not deal in such methods.

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There was a door to another compartment – one which The Shadow knew was empty. The Shadow unlocked his side of the door, then stepped out into the corridor. He entered the next compartment and unlocked the connecting door from that side. He came through; picked up Dugley from the lower berth and carried him into the empty compartment.

Dugley's eyes showed fear as they stared upward. The crook saw the closed lower berth. He feared that The Shadow would stow him there, to suffocate. Again, Dugley was wrong. The Shadow simply locked up the empty compartment and went back into his own, leaving Dugley on the floor of the other compartment.

Alone, The Shadow examined the upper berth of his own compartment, the spot from which Dugley had appeared as a menace from above. The crook had fixed this upper berth by tampering with the lock. Thus he had managed to obtain air through a narrow space. That bunk that had served Dugley as a lurking place would do also as a snug prison for the captured crook, in the morning.

Again, Courtney Radbard had failed with a false trail. Roy Medwin had supposed that the 3:12 a.m. train must certainly fit the cryptic message that had been found in Luff Barrago's coin. That had not been The Shadow's opinion.

He knew that this trail was a false one, like the room at the Belvant Hotel. The Shadow had boarded the South Atlantic Limited in Washington, prepared to deal with another of Radbard's workers. The encounter with Dugley had been the result.

IT was a few hours after daylight when the Pullman porter rang the bell of Compartment B, wondering why its occupant had slept so late. The door opened; The Shadow stepped out, attired in ordinary clothes.

The porter was ready to make up the compartment for day travel. The Shadow told him to proceed.

"Compartment C is empty, sah," remarked the porter. "You can stay there until Ah've finished here –"

"Never mind," interposed The Shadow. "I was going to have breakfast in the diner."

When he returned from the dining car, The Shadow found the compartment made up. He opened the door to the adjoining Compartment C and brought Dugley into his own compartment. He stowed the crook in the upper berth, as he had planned, and left the tampered catch loose enough for Dugley to gain air. With the killer, The Shadow placed the telltale knife.

Later, the porter would find Dugley. The knife would tell him that the man was dangerous. Dugley would be turned over to the law. Whatever the crook's past crimes they would be uncovered. Dugley would pay the penalty that he deserved.

THE limited was not due in Atlanta until after five o'clock that afternoon. Atlanta was on Central Time; such a late arrival did not suit The Shadow's plans. Accordingly, he left the train early in the afternoon, when it stopped at a fair-sized city. There, The Shadow sent three telegrams.

One was to the Atlanta airport, ordering his plane to come northward. The second was to Roy Medwin. The third telegram was to the Alliance Credit Bureau. It stated that the Washington account was settled. The Shadow signed it J. Humphrey.

Two hours later, The Shadow's plane arrived. The Shadow boarded it for a speedy trip northward. Following the coastline, the swift ship made most of its trip by daylight. It was over New Jersey just as dusk arrived. As the plane passed Lakehurst, The Shadow saw a gleaming play of searchlights from the sky ahead. Outlined

against the last rays of daylight was a huge bulk of shining silver.

The dirigible Hindenburg was completing its flight from Germany, to set another record. Helped by tail winds, the huge skyship was roaring along its last lap to Lakehurst. The Shadow's plane passed the dirigible. Soon the lights of Newark airport appeared from the darkened ground.

The Shadow's laugh sounded amid the roar of the airplane's motor. The end of another journey was near. Soon, The Shadow would come from the sky, ready for his final thrust against crime.

Courtney Radbard had threatened The Shadow with a menace from above, in the person of Dugley. The would-be murderer had failed. Again, another menace was coming from above.

This time, the menace was The Shadow. Descending from dusky heavens, The Shadow would soon meet Courtney Radbard.

CHAPTER XVII. ARRIVALS FROM THE NIGHT

EIGHT o'clock found Courtney Radbard at his desk, in the office located in his home. Sideling was not present. The secretary had left the mansion before dinner. Moshart was present instead of Sideling, ready to answer telephone calls or perform other duties that Radbard might request. So far, Moshart had been idle.

The ring of the telephone bell brought a response from Moshart. Picking up the telephone, the husky servant answered. His beefy face showed an expression of alarm, as he passed the instrument to Radbard. Covering the mouthpiece, Moshart spoke in a low, worried tone:

"It's from police headquarters, Mr. Radbard –"

Radbard smiled. He took the telephone and talked for a short while. At last, Moshart heard him say:

"Very well. At half past eight... No, wait a moment, inspector, until I look at my appointment book... Better make it nine o'clock..."

Hanging up, Radbard looked at Moshart. He indulged in a chuckle, as he saw the servant's strained face. Though he seldom confided in his servants, Radbard decided to break his usual policy on this occasion.

"That was Inspector Joe Cardona," Radbard told Moshart. "He wants to see me, regarding the activities of the Raffles Gang. A young man named Roy Medwin has been to see Cardona. You remember Medwin – the chap who was here the other night."

Radbard's chuckled statement did not decrease Moshart's worried look. Radbard seemed to enjoy the fact that the servant was jittery.

"Medwin knows nothing," declared the shipping magnate. "He is merely a tool who was employed by The Shadow. To-day, Medwin failed to hear from The Shadow. So he went to the law instead. He was wise enough, though, not to accuse me of crime; for he knew that he would not be believed.

"Medwin has simply suggested that I might have been a prospective victim of the Raffles Gang. That is his pretext to come here with Cardona. When they arrive, Medwin will look for an opportunity to accuse me. He will find none. My position is secure."

Moshart did not look entirely convinced. Angrily, Radbard snapped the question:

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"You doubt me, Moshart?"

"No, sir," replied the servant. "Only – if any of those men talk – if they mention your name –"

"You mean the prisoners who were captured at the Belvant?" laughed Radbard. "Not one of them knows my actual name."

"But The Shadow knows who you are, sir. Perhaps he sent Medwin to headquarters."

In response, Radbard arose. From a desk drawer, he produced a telegram and passed it to Moshart. The servant stared puzzled, noting that the telegram was addressed to the Alliance Credit Bureau and signed J. Hamphrey. Moshart had never heard either name before.

"Sideling picked that up this afternoon," explained Radbard. "An innocent-looking message, Moshart, yet one that holds a very important meaning. I shall tell you its significance. That telegram is a report, stating that The Shadow is dead!"

MOSHART stared, unbelieving, until he observed the complete confidence that was registered on Radbard's tawny face. Observing that, the servant felt a surge of elation. The grin that he delivered matched Radbard's look of triumph.

"With The Shadow eliminated," sneered Radbard, "no one can challenge my position! I knew that the news would please you, Moshart."

The news did please Moshart; but for a reason that Radbard did not suspect. The servant was thinking of Solo Juke, who had been wisely lying low ever since his encounter with The Shadow.

"Cardona wanted to come here at eight-thirty," remarked Radbard. "I postponed that until nine. Sideling will be back at that hour. By the way, Moshart" – Radbard's added tone was casual – "after Sideling arrives, I want you to go in the limousine to the tobacco shop and bring back a box of my special perfectos."

There was another pleased flicker on Moshart's face. The assignment gave Moshart an opportunity that he wanted. Once outside the house, he would be able to make a telephone call to Solo at the latter's hide-out.

Ever since dinner, Moshart had been wondering where Sideling had gone. That was one thing that he had not discovered; it puzzled him particularly, because Sideling was never sent on missions that required more than an hour's absence. This time, he had been gone for several hours.

New developments, however, made Moshart forget all about Sideling. A deep-dyed crook, Moshart was too enthusiastic over the supposed fate of The Shadow to think of anything else.

It was nearly half past eight when a ring of the doorbell announced Sideling's return. Moshart went through the library; when he reached the front door, he found that Radbard had followed him. Moshart unbarred the door. Sideling entered.

It was then that Moshart regained sudden interest in Sideling's recent journey. With him, the secretary had another of the steel express boxes. The chauffeur had helped him bring it from the car.

"Carry the box into the office." Radbard spoke the order to Sideling and Moshart. Then, to the chauffeur, he added: "Wait for Moshart. He is going to the tobacco shop."

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Sideling and Moshart reached the office with their burden. They placed the long express box on the desk. Radbard arrived; broke the customs seals and unlocked the box. From the thick-walled interior, he produced papers of the usual sort: valuable documents referring to his shipping enterprises.

"Hurry along," said Radbard, suddenly, to Moshart. "The car is waiting. And you, Sideling" – he turned to the secretary – "be spick and span this evening, as I expect visitors. After you have changed attire, summon the other servants. I shall want them all on duty."

Moshart and Sideling went out through the library door together. As they neared the front door, the servant remarked:

"Been down to the docks again, eh, Sideling? What ship came in to-day?"

"I went to Lakehurst," replied Sideling. "The express box came from Berlin, aboard the dirigible Hindenburg. There were no important liners scheduled to dock in New York on March 12th."

Moshart went out through the front door. Sideling took over the task of shoving the bolts. As he locked the front door, the secretary was under the scrutiny of watchful eyes. Courtney Radbard had come into the library, from his office. Unnoticed by his secretary, Radbard watched Sideling go upstairs to the second floor.

OTHER eyes were on watch within that house. Celeste Lebrunne, from an upstairs window, was looking toward the blackness across the street; she saw the limousine roll away with Moshart as its passenger. She wondered why the servant had gone out, for she knew that he was the only man on duty.

Slow minutes passed. Suddenly, Celeste became alert. She saw a light flicker from darkness. It was repeated. The Shadow's signal!

Elation seized the girl. The Shadow had chosen the right time for entry. With Moshart absent, Celeste might find a chance to admit the cloaked visitor. Hurriedly, the girl started from the room; then paused in the second-story hallway.

The Shadow had told her to arouse no suspicion within the house. Her best plan was to approach the front door in a natural manner, avoiding all appearance of stealth. Celeste saw a light from the door of Sideling's room, for the door was partly opened. Humming half aloud, Celeste strolled to the front stairs.

As she neared the top of the big staircase, she thought that she heard sounds below. Still humming, Celeste reached the steps and went slowly downward. As she passed the Apollo statue, she looked below and saw Courtney Radbard standing at the entrance to the library. He bowed when he saw Celeste.

"I was expecting Sideling," said Radbard, when the girl came to the bottom of the steps. "You are coming into the library, mademoiselle?"

Celeste nodded.

"When Sideling arrives," remarked Radbard, "tell him that I am in the office."

The request was something of a subterfuge; for Sideling always went to the office when he came downstairs. As she watched Radbard go through the library, Celeste was positive that the man had tried to cover something. She was disappointed because she had failed to gain a clue to Radbard's doings.

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The office door swung shut – a token that Radbard felt no insecurity. Celeste's dissatisfaction ended. At least, the closing of that door gave her the real opportunity that she needed.

Hurrying to the front door, she unlocked it. The moment that she opened the door, The Shadow entered.

Noiselessly, The Shadow bolted the door, while Celeste whispered the only details that she had gained; namely, that Radbard had been waiting either in the hallway or the library when she came downstairs.

The Shadow motioned Celeste into the library; told her to remain there until Sideling came down to the office. After that, she could go upstairs again.

Glancing back as she started into the library, Celeste saw The Shadow's tall form fade from view behind the curtain on the nearer side of the front door.

IT was not long before Sideling arrived in the library on his way to the office. The bespectacled secretary looked puzzled when Celeste gave him Radbard's message. Sideling entered the office. Celeste went out through the hallway.

As she went upstairs, she saw two servants coming from the kitchen. Sideling had called them on duty; they had come down by the back stairs.

Five minutes later, the front doorbell rang. It was Moshart. The servant took the cigars to Radbard; returned to go on duty in the front hall. Hardly had Moshart taken charge before another ring announced the expected visitors.

Moshart opened the front door; admitted Roy Medwin and a stocky, swarthy man. Moshart knew that Roy's companion was Inspector Joe Cardona.

Sideling came out to receive the visitors and conduct them into Radbard's office. Moshart waited a half minute, then went into the library, hoping to find a chance to listen at the office door.

The other servants had faded temporarily; they reappeared. They suspected nothing in Moshart's absence. They thought he had received some order from Radbard.

From behind the maroon curtain, The Shadow saw the two servants on duty. Looking beyond them, he spied the huge Apollo statue at the foot of the grand staircase. As The Shadow studied the statue's face, he met the direct gaze of the bronze eyes.

To others, that metal stare would have meant nothing. To The Shadow, it told a silent story.

The Shadow's flashlight blinks had been well timed. Celeste's aid had been more effective than the girl had realized.

The Shadow's plans were ready for completion.

CHAPTER XVIII. THREE – ONE – TWO

THE conference in Radbard's office had ended. Behind his big desk, the leonine crook was smiling pleasantly at Roy Medwin and Joe Cardona. In a heavy, but friendly tone, he expressed his thanks for the visit.

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"The case seems obvious," summed Radbard, speaking to Cardona. "Young Medwin, here, gained a French coin through odd circumstances that produced a threat against his life. He sold me the coin. Later, he was invited to Dugley's exhibit, and trouble occurred there.

"It is only natural that the threat might be transferred to me, particularly if this coin is involved." With that, Radbard clanged a two-franc piece upon the desk. "Yet I cannot understand why this coin should be important. It is of comparatively little value."

Cardona was examining the coin. Roy saw it; the silver piece had the same date as the one that he had sold to Radbard. Yet this coin was not hollow. Radbard had substituted a genuine two-franc piece for the one that had carried the numerical message, 312.

Roy started to say something; felt Radbard's eyes upon him and stopped. Grimly, Roy remembered his message from The Shadow. He was to bring Cardona here, but to avoid any direct accusations of Radbard unless they seemed opportune. So far, Radbard had staged a perfect bluff. His gaze was one of ridicule.

"Sorry to have troubled you, Mr. Radbard," announced Cardona, in a gruff but apologetic tone. "You're a busy man. We won't take up any more of your time. I thought you ought to know those details, though."

"Of course," agreed Radbard. Rising, he opened the express box and took out the foreign documents. "Sideling, get Moshart. Have him help you carry this express box to the storeroom. It can go to my downtown office in the morning. I shall show the visitors to the front door."

Sideling opened the door to the library; saw Moshart standing in an alcove. The servant had ducked away in time; he had heard everything, snooping at the door. The two picked up the express box, to lug it out through the library. When they reached the hallway, Sideling told Moshart to wait.

"Where are the other servants?" queried the secretary. "Weren't they on duty, Moshart?"

"They must have gone out to the kitchen," returned Moshart, as puzzled as Sideling. "But it was their job to stay here."

"Summon them, at once, Moshart!"

"All, right." Moshart started away; then paused: "Maybe you'd better do it, Sideling. Sometimes they resent it when I give orders."

Sideling started to the kitchen. Moshart watched him, then returned to the library.

A FEW minutes later, Radbard came out of his office with Roy and Cardona. Chatting, they had passed Moshart without noticing him. Radbard was too busy to observe the express box resting on a high-backed chair near the foot of the staircase.

As Radbard paused by the front door, Sideling arrived from the kitchen. The secretary's face showed alarm; his lips twitched, but he refrained from speech. He wanted to wait until the visitors had gone.

Radbard was shaking hands with his visitors. Just as he was ready to unlock the front door, Moshart came from the library and strolled over to the chair where the express box rested. He looked toward Sideling; the secretary shook his head in puzzled fashion, to indicate that he had not found the missing servants. Moshart looked perplexed, when he received the silent information.

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Though one of these two henchmen was loyal to Radbard while the other was false, neither could understand the disappearance of the two servants who had taken turns at watching the hallway. They wondered what the answer could be. As they speculated, they learned.

As Radbard purred a final good night to his visitors, a chilling sound filled the gloomy hallway. It came, seemingly, from nowhere; for walls caught the echoes of that weird laugh and spread its tones to every nook.

It was the sheer response of instinct that made every startled listener turn toward the mighty statue of Apollo, as if bronze lips alone could be responsible for that unearthly peal of mockery. As they gazed, the astounded men saw the actual author of the taunting laugh.

THE SHADOW had stepped from gloom beside the statue. Against whitened marble and shining bronze, his cloaked figure was plainly revealed. So were the fists that wielded automatics. One gun covered Courtney Radbard. The other pointed toward Sideling and Moshart, who were almost side by side.

As hands came upward, Joe Cardona whipped out a revolver to cover Radbard also. The inspector shoved another gun to Roy, told him to watch Sideling and Moshart. The Shadow had pointed out those men with his automatics; that was sufficient for Joe Cardona.

The stocky inspector knew The Shadow from the past. In an instant, all the effect of Radbard's bluff was gone. Cardona would have arrested any one – even the police commissioner – if The Shadow gave the order.

Despite his predicament, Radbard smiled. The master-crook was confident. He felt that The Shadow had blundered by this move; in fact, Radbard almost doubted that this intruder was The Shadow. True, that weird laugh had sounded genuine, but Radbard was willing to attribute it to the echoing qualities of the hallway walls.

This very day, Radbard had received news that The Shadow was dead; and he was not yet willing to disbelieve it.

Granting, though, that the black-clad being was The Shadow, Radbard knew that even the cloaked avenger would not shoot him in Cardona's presence, without evidence that would prove Radbard's ways of crime. That evidence was where Radbard believed no one could find it. No one, not even The Shadow.

SLOWLY, The Shadow advanced. He lowered his automatics; cloaked them as he came eye to eye with Radbard. In steady tone, The Shadow spoke the message that Radbard knew:

"Three – one – two!"

Radbard did not blink. His tawny lips held the semblance of a smile.

"Your false trails failed," declared The Shadow. "The number, 312, was neither the number of a hotel room, nor the time of a train's departure. It referred to the only matter that could interest you: the date when you were to receive another shipment from abroad. 312 is to-day: the twelfth of March."

Roy Medwin stared as he heard The Shadow's statement. He realized that The Shadow had been following that assumption all along. This was the third month, March, to-day was the twelfth. Radbard had received a shipment from abroad: the steel express box that lay between Moshart and Sideling.

Radbard's eyes turned slowly as The Shadow stepped toward the high-backed chair. He watched the gloved hands raise the lid of the unlocked express box. Long fingers probed the inner walls. Suddenly, they gained

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results. The steel container slid open like a Japanese puzzle box.

Moshart, gulping, realized how Radbard's crooked associates had been bluffed. The thick sides of the express box were hollow, mere shells of steel. They were divided into small sections, each large enough to contain a quota of jewels. The bottom was solid, to give weight and prevent any hollow sound when the box was set upon floor or table.

Customs inspectors, passing Radbard's documents after examination, had let huge stores of jewels go by them. Crooks like Leo, Beak and Solo had been totally bluffed when Radbard had broken the customs seals in their presence and shown them the papers in the express box.

Only The Shadow, knowing that the express boxes were Radbard's one means of receiving jewel shipments, had divined that the containers must be false ones. Waiting for the final shipment from the dirigible, The Shadow had revealed the working of Radbard's game. Joe Cardona, a representative of the law, was here to see the master-crook exposed.

THE hard smile never faded from Radbard's lips. The supercrook had good reason to preserve it. The compartments in the hollow-walled express box were empty. Not a single stolen gem was there to gleam its proof that Radbard was a man of crime.

Radbard watched The Shadow step away from the high-backed chair. The master-criminal thought that his cloaked adversary stood balked.

Again, a strange laugh quivered through the hallway. The Shadow turned; his cloaked shape moved with ghostly swiftness, as it ascended the staircase and stopped above the huge statue of Apollo. It was then that Radbard's confidence ended. Staring upward, he saw something that The Shadow had previously observed:

The eyes of the statue were not turned squarely toward the front floor.

Instead, they shone toward the curtained alcove on the right. Radbard shot a glance in that direction, saw feet beneath the curtain's edge.

The Shadow had overpowered the hallway servants, to place each in a separate alcove. That, however, meant nothing to Radbard at this moment.

All that concerned Radbard was the fact that The Shadow had been behind that curtain to view the slightly turned gaze of the bronze Apollo. His smile gone, Radbard again looked toward the statue. He saw The Shadow reaching far from the high balustrade, to turn the massive head of bronze.

The Shadow unscrewed the weighty object from the shoulders that supported it. He lifted the bronze head, tilted it. From a hollow interior compartment poured a flood of sparkling jewels that clattered from the decapitated statue and showered to the floor. That glittering rain of wealth revealed the crimes of Courtney Radbard.

Crooks had failed to guess the hiding place, even when they tapped the top of the statue's head; for the crown was thick and solid. Celeste had not seen Radbard when he had come with new jewels from the express box. Alone on the staircase, Radbard had stowed away the final hoard received from Pierre Lebrunne.

But Celeste, following The Shadow's instructions, had appeared when Radbard did not expect her. Hurried in his hiding of the jewels, Radbard had failed to give the bronze head the last tightening twist it needed. The Apollo, with its changed stare, had told The Shadow that it held the stolen wealth.

DEATH TOKEN

SNARLING, Radbard made a shift. Cardona's jabbing gun forced him back against the front door. Open-mouthed, Sideling and Moshart were staring at the pool of gems upon the floor, realizing that they would be incriminated with Radbard, even though they had never seen those gems before.

Again came The Shadow's laugh, like a solemn toll that sounded the end of crime. Holding the Apollo's head, The Shadow descended the staircase. Almost at the bottom, he paused. His gaze turned suddenly toward the library door.

Figures sprang suddenly to view. There was a shout; from the library came Solo Juke, a pair of thugs behind him. Moshart had contacted the lone wolf; had found a chance to unbar the rear passage.

Coming through, Solo had heard The Shadow's laugh; he had faltered, then shouted for attack as he saw The Shadow himself. Solo had caught The Shadow off guard. Instead of automatics, The Shadow was holding the bronze head.

Cardona and Roy did what The Shadow expected. Totally unnoticed by Solo, who had sighted only The Shadow, the two wheeled and opened fire. Solo pitched forward as a bullet clipped him. His pals dived back into the library, followed by a fusillade.

There were others, though, who profited by the diverted attention. Courtney Radbard gave a shout to Moshart and Sideling.

As he sounded the call for battle, Radbard whipped forth a revolver, to aim for The Shadow. Despite his speed, Radbard was belated. In leaving Solo to Cardona and Roy, The Shadow had chosen Radbard. Already whirling toward the master-crook, The Shadow launched both arms in a long throw.

Through the air came the head of Apollo, heavy despite its hollow interior, a gleaming missile hurled by accurate hands. Radbard dodged, as he aimed his gun. The bronze head struck his left shoulder and flattened him to the floor. Radbard's hand lost its gun, as the Apollo head bounded hard against the front door and clanged to the floor beside the jolted crime-master.

Swinging with the force of his powerful heave, The Shadow twisted toward the staircase. A gun barked from Moshart's hand. The desperate servant's hasty shot was wide. The Shadow's left hand had whipped out an automatic; his finger pressed the trigger while the gun was still in the draw. The Shadow's first shot found Moshart.

Sideling was springing forward, pulling a revolver as he came. With a forward twist, The Shadow met the secretary; disarmed him with an upward swing of the automatic and caught the frail man as he tried to grapple.

Shoving Sideling across the floor with one hand, The Shadow saw the library door. Cardona and Roy had settled the attack from that direction. They were coming back to take Radbard.

The master-crook was on his feet again; he had snatched up his gun to open furious fire. The Shadow, turning, was prepared to cover him before he could cut loose. All that Radbard's face showed was evil savagery. His snarl was one that promised death, if he could find a chance to give it.

A GUN spoke from above. The shot was delivered from the head of the stairs, by a person who could see only Radbard. Celeste had come from her room at the sound of gunfire. Bravely, she was trying to do her part in the struggle. The gun that the girl had was a small .22; its shot was ill-timed.

DEATH TOKEN

Not only did the bullet miss Radbard; the sound of the shot made the girl a target. Radbard, swinging, would have halted when he saw The Shadow and the others aiming toward him. He had not seen them; and Celeste, above the balustrade, was squarely in the direction of Radbard's turning aim.

The snarling murderer pointed his gun over the headless shoulders of the Apollo statue.

Three guns spoke before Radbard could press his trigger. Revolvers held by Joe Cardona and Roy Medwin flashed their messages with the burst of The Shadow's automatic.

Courtney Radbard quivered, as he received the triple fire. He stretched high, his useless gun above his head, then took a long pitch forward and lay still.

Roy dashed up the staircase, caught the trembling form of Celeste in his arms. Below them, Cardona reached the dead shape of Courtney Radbard. Flattened at the foot of the statue that had betrayed him, Radbard lay amid the glitter of the stolen jewels that were his no longer.

The Shadow stood by the library door. Near him was the body of Solo Juke. The lone crook was dead. His pals, like Moshart, were lying wounded, helpless. Sideling was cringing, as he moved toward Joe Cardona. The secretary was anxious to surrender to the law; ready to give all the evidence he could, concerning Radbard's ways of crime.

The Shadow turned toward the office that had been Radbard's lair. Choosing the back passage as a route for departure, he paused only to deliver a final laugh that awoke new echoes from the walls of death's mansion.

Solemn, mirthless, that peal declared The Shadow's long-awaited triumph over the schemes of Courtney Radbard.

Justice, like The Shadow, stood victor over crime.

Again, in the near future, would The Shadow mete out the stern justice that is crime's due – when he investigated the murderous pall that hung over "Murder House." From the New York underworld to a Long Island estate would The Shadow go; thence to an upstate village to penetrate the veil of death that made a "Murder House" in a peaceful farming community!

THE END